

Master Teacher

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Time Allotment

Two 30-minute class periods

Overview

In this lesson students are presented information about groundhogs, what they look like and where they live and their ability to predict spring or winter weather. The students are asked to predict how a groundhog could forecast the weather. The video *America's Special Days*, Lesson 15: "Groundhog Day," is shown to teach the students about Groundhog Day. There are references to weather, hibernation and how animals act during hibernation. In the video, a master storyteller creates a myth to explain how the groundhog became a weather predictor. The students write to Phil on the Web site *Groundhog.org* and they receive replies from him.

Subject Matter

Science, Reading and Language Arts

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- ✎ Participate in a discussion about the origins of Groundhog Day, Feb. 2nd;
- ✎ Demonstrate knowledge about groundhogs (what they look like, habitat, etc.) by drawing a picture and writing a factual paragraph about a groundhog using correct letter format/grammar etc;
- ✎ Answer oral questions about the weather;

✎ Identify vocabulary used in the video pertaining to groundhogs and weather: hibernation, predict;

✎ Write a postcard or letter on the Internet to Punxsutawney Phil.

South Carolina Standards

(These Standards are available online at http://www.myschools.com/Offices/CSO/Standards_Page.htm.)

II Life science

Unit of study: Habitats and Adaptations
Investigate and describe behavioral adaptations, such as hibernation, migration and dormancy that allow things to respond to seasonal conditions.

Reading and Language Arts

3-W1.6.2 Demonstrate the ability to use the Internet with teacher support and guidance to communicate with family and friends.

3-W2.1 Demonstrate the ability to use writing to explain and inform.

Media Components

Video

America's Special Days, Lesson 15: "Groundhog Day," shows Groundhog Day being celebrated in Punxsutawney, PA. It describes the groundhog's habitat and explains about hibernation. Organizers of the festival in Punxsutawney explain the myth of a groundhog's shadow predicting the end of winter. A storyteller tells his story of how the groundhog myth started.

Web Sites

Dunkirk Dave's Family Album
(<http://www.dunkirkdave.com/>)

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album.html). This site shows pictures of Phil's relatives.

Punxsutawney Phil.com

(<http://www.punxsutawneyphil.com/interactive>) Sign in and say hello to Phil or send a postcard to a friend.

Materials

weather pages from the newspaper, several copies of different days, 1 per group of 3 students

white construction paper

pencils, crayons, magic markers

small lamp without a lampshade





white sheet to cast shadows on

chart paper and marker for KWL chart

chart paper for vocabulary words

copy of the current year or last year's February newspaper showing Punxsutawney Phil predicting spring or winter.

Prep for Teachers

-  Preview and cue the video.
-  Preview and bookmark the Web sites on all computers used by you and the students.
-  Gather materials for the activities.
-  When using media, provide students with a **Focus for Media Interaction**, a specific task to complete and/or information to identify during or after viewing of video segments, Web sites, or other multimedia elements.

Introductory Activity

Step 1: Begin the lesson by asking the students if they enjoy snow and cold weather. Take a survey of the students to see who would like to have winter until March 15 or who would like to see warm weather every day. Give the student groups the newspaper pages with long-range weather predictions. Introduce the vocabulary word, *predict*. Use the weather chart to guide the students to form a definition for *predict*. Write the word and definition on the vocabulary chart. Have the students explain what the different symbols (clouds, sun and clouds, snow, rain wind) mean. Ask the students to describe the weather yesterday, today and the rest of the week. Ask the students if they watch the weather on TV. Does the TV weatherman use the same symbols?

Facilitate a discussion to discover where the students think weather forecasters get their information to predict the weather. Accept any explanations.

Step 2: Explain to the students that February 2 is Groundhog Day and some people believe that a groundhog can predict the continuation of winter. Ask them if they think this is a good way to predict weather. Why? Why not? Tell the students that they are going to learn more about groundhogs from exploring Web sites and looking at video clips.

Step 3: Provide students with a **Focus for Media Interaction** by asking them to note where the groundhog lives and what it looks like. View the Web page *Dunkirk Dave's Family Album* (<http://www.dunkirkdave.org/album>). The students will go to the bookmarked site. Check the students' comprehension by having them answer the focus questions. (**Note to Teacher:** The pictures are drawings, not photographs.)

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Have students PREDICT what they think a real groundhog will look like. Guide the students in the beginning of a KWL chart about groundhogs.

Learning Activities

Step 1: Explain to the students that they will watch a video that will show them what a groundhog looks like and where it lives. Before starting the video, provide students with a **Focus for Media Interaction:** Are the characteristics of a real groundhog what you predicted they would be? START the video, *America's Special Days*, Lesson 15: "Groundhog Day." The clip begins with a student with groundhog ears made out of construction paper talking on the telephone. He is asking "What does...look like?" The clip ends with a man sitting at a desk on the telephone, saying, "...and that's what a groundhog looks like." Ask the students if their predictions were correct? Change/add to the KWL chart.

Step 3: FAST FORWARD to the picture of a groundhog with speech balloons on the screen. The speech balloons contain the words, "Listen to this." And "Tell me more about groundhogs." Tell the students that this segment is a zookeeper telling more about groundhogs. **Focus for Media Interaction:** Raise your hand each time you hear the zookeeper tell or show a characteristic of a groundhog that we do not have on our KWL chart. STOP the video when the groundhog is on the zookeeper's lap and the zookeeper is stroking his fur. The zookeeper says, "For the most part this is the color they are." Students will change/add information to the KWL chart.

REWIND the video to the start point of this segment. PLAY the video. **Focus for Media Interaction:** Raise your hand when you want the video paused so that you can add information that we do not have on the

KWL chart about groundhogs. Listen for the vocabulary word, *hibernation*. Raise your hand to pause the video when you know the definition of hibernation.

Step 4: Ask the students if they can tell you what a shadow is. Use the light bulb and white paper to show them how a person or things cast shadows. Explain to them that it is a dark image made when an object comes between the surface and a light source. Have several students stand in various places to see if they can cast shadows. Ask the students if they can use this information (whether they made a shadow or not) to predict the weather.

Step 5: Focus for Media Interaction: Tell the students that some people say that the groundhog comes out of hibernation on February 2 and whether or not he sees his shadow will predict a longer winter or an early spring. Explain that the next video segment will be Robin Moore, author and storyteller, telling the folktale of how the groundhog's shadow became a predictor of early spring or longer winter. Provide the children with a **Focus for Media Interaction** by asking them to be able to explain how the groundhog became the predictor of spring or winter.

PLAY the video. Robin Moore's name is on the screen and he is sitting in front of a bookcase. Robin is saying, "This is a traditional Pennsylvania folktale..." STOP the video. Robin is saying, "Spring is here. Wake up everywhere." He is sitting on a stool in front of the bookcase using his hands to illustrate his statement. Guide the students through the retelling of the story to determine how the bears made the groundhog the predictor of spring. Complete the "Learned" section of KWL chart. Guide the students to determine if the groundhog is used by weathermen to predict spring. Is this

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information about the groundhog to be labeled as fact or not on the KWL chart?
Ask the students what they think Punxsutawney Phil predicted the weather to be on February 2 of current and/or last year. Will he be or was he correct?

Culminating Activity

Step 1: Have the students draw a picture of a groundhog and where it lives. They will write a short paragraph about the groundhog. The students can use the KWL chart for information.

Step 2: While students are working on the pictures and paragraphs, let them take turns accessing the bookmarked Web site: *Dunkirk Dave's Groundhog Haven* (<http://www.groundhog.org/activities>) and clicking on the Send a Message to Phil link. They will type and submit their message. They are to ask Phil a question based on the information gained from the video and Web site and his record for predicting weather correctly. The messages can be viewed on the Web page.


Cross-Curricular Extensions


Math: Students will solve math problems to find secret messages from Punxsutawney Phil. Direct students to <http://www.groundhog.org/activities/mathmessage.shtml>.

Science/Social Studies: Tell students to find Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, on the map and learn about the climate in that area.

Reading/Language Arts: Write myths about other animals and how they predict the weather.

Community Connections

 Learn how children in other areas celebrate Groundhog Day.

 Lesson planning: *Come to the Groundhog Day party* (<http://www.groundhog.org/activities>).