

## *Groundhog Day and Possum Nights* Lesson Plan

**Title:** All about Groundhog Day

**Objective:** The students will participate in a variety of Groundhog Day themed activities.

**Materials:**

eBook, *Groundhog Days and Possum Nights*

Quiz, *Groundhog Days and Possum Nights* (printable or online version)

Flashlight (or overhead/film projector), paper, tape, crayons

Activity Sheet: Groundhog Day Alphabetical Vocabulary Words (printable)

Activity Sheet: Writing Assignment – Groundhog Phil’s Weather Prediction (printable)

Activity Sheet: The Groundhog Color and Fact Sheet (printable)

Other materials are listed in the activity descriptions.

**1. Introduction and Song:** Greet the students by saying, “Happy Groundhog Day!” to let them know it is Groundhog Day. Call on students to share what they already know about Groundhog Day. Sing together the Groundhog song:

***I’m a Little Groundhog*** - (sing to the tune of “I’m a Little Teapot”)

I’m a little groundhog,

Small and round.

I sleep in a burrow

Deep in the ground.

I look to find my shadow

On Groundhog Day

To tell you if spring is

On its way!

**2.** Discuss the Groundhog Day key terms before viewing the eBook, *Groundhog Day and Possum Nights*. Key terms: night creatures, wise, burrow, groundhog, possum, imposture, limelight, hibernate, shadow, predict, Punxsutawney Phil and February 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**3. Engage:** The students will view the eBook, *Groundhog Day and Possum Nights*.

**4. Book Discussion/Character Analysis:** Ask the students questions about the story, such as these below.

Teacher Ask: In the beginning of the story, why was Phil rude to Possum?

Teacher Ask: How did Possum feel when Phil did not want to include him in the celebration?

Teacher Ask: Raise your hand if you can relate to how Possum was treated in the story.

Teacher Ask: Raise your hand if you can relate to how Phil treated Possum.

\* Has anyone tried to exclude you from something you wanted to be a part of?  
(How did that make you feel?)

\* Have you ever tried to exclude someone from joining you?  
(Did it hurt the other person’s feelings?)  
(Did you feel good or bad about your actions?)  
(Would you do it again?)

Teacher Ask: Back to the story, what was the main problem in the story? **Answer -**  
*(Night animals are asleep during the Groundhog Day festivities and missed out on all the fun.)*

Teacher Ask: Which character had a solution to the problem? **Answer -** *(Phil)*

Teacher Ask: What was his solution? **Answer -**  
*(February 2 will be called Groundhog Day and Possum Nights!)*

Teacher Ask: Did Phil's solution make everyone happy?

Teacher Ask: Possum said that Phil was wise and kind. What does it mean to be wise?

Teacher Ask: Do you agree or disagree with Possum about Phil being wise and kind?

Teacher Ask: What did Phil learn about treating others?

**5. Teach:** Lead discussion about Groundhog Day, what is a groundhog, what the groundhog does, what is the weather prediction if he sees his shadow or not, etc.

Explain to the students when the groundhog gets in the way of the sunlight, a shadow will appear. Demonstrate how to make a shadow by dimming the lights in the room and shine the light from an overhead projector, a film projector or a flashlight on the bare wall. Let the students experiment in making shadows. Have them make big shadows, little shadows and animal shadows.

**6. Groundhog Day Activity #1: Tracing Shadows (full body or facial silhouettes)**

Tape paper on the wall and have the students take turns standing in front of the flashlight, or any projected light source, while the classmates trace each others shadow on the paper. When all the students' shadows have been traced on paper and their names written on the back, mix up and display the papers and let the students guess whose shadow is whose. Students may also use a ruler to measure how tall and wide their shadow is and compare measurements.

**7. Groundhog Day Activity #2: Groundhog Day Vocabulary Words (printable)**

The students will rewrite 10 Groundhog Day words in alphabetical order.

**8. Groundhog Day Activity #3: Writing Assignment – Groundhog Phil's Weather Prediction (printable)**

The students will draw a picture about Groundhog Day and then write about Groundhog Phil's weather prediction. Will we have six more weeks of winter or is spring here?

**9. Groundhog Day Activity #4: The Groundhog Color and Fact Sheet (printable)**

The students will read interesting facts about groundhogs and color the groundhog.

**10. Groundhog Day Activity #5: The Burrow Box**

Materials needed: 3 or 4 large cardboard boxes, such as empty computer boxes, crayons and any decorating supplies, such as finger paint, glitter, markers etc.

Assign about 5 students to each box. Each group will decorate the sides of their box.

Then, the students will take turns getting inside their "burrow box" and will pretend to be a groundhog waking up from hibernation to emerging from the burrow. The students may reenact what the groundhog does if it sees its shadow, and what it does if it does not see

its shadow.

**11. Groundhog Day Activity #6: Quiz Groundhog Days and Possum Nights**  
(printable or online version) This quiz will test the student's comprehension skills.

**12. Closure:** Ask the students to retell the tradition of Groundhog Day, why is it celebrated, what does the tradition say about the groundhog's weather prediction, etc. Ask the students to share their favorite part about celebrating Groundhog Day.

(SCROLL DOWN FOR QUIZ ANSWER KEY)

## **Teacher's Quiz Answer Key**

### *Groundhog Day and Possum Nights*

**1. What day is Groundhog Day celebrated?**

- c. July 4
- a. October 31
- b. December 25
- d. February 2**

**2. What was the name of the groundhog in the story?**

- a. Los Angles Louie
- b. Miami Max
- c. Punxsutawney Phil**
- d. Denver Danny

**3. What does the famous groundhog do every year on Groundhog Day?**

- a. He looks out of his burrow.**
- b. He rolls in mud.
- c. He flies south for the winter.
- d. He plant spring flowers.

**4. What prediction is made if the groundhog sees his shadow?**

- a. We will have a leap year.
- b. There will be six more weeks of winter.**
- c. Spring time will begin early.
- d. We will see a rainbow.

**5. What prediction is made if the groundhog does not see his shadow?**

- a. Winter is over and spring will begin.**
- b. There will be a full moon.
- c. There will be a rain storm in the forecast.
- d. There will be shooting stars in the sky.

**6. In the story, what animal pretended to be a groundhog?**

- a. the raccoon
- b. the possum**
- c. the bat
- d. the owl

**7. When does Possum usually sleep?**

- a. He usually sleeps during the day.**
- b. He usually sleeps during the night.
- c. He never sleeps.
- d. He only sleeps during the winter.

**8. Why was Phil angry when Possum showed up?**

- a. Phil was afraid of Possum.
- b. Phil thought Possum wore a better costume.
- c. Phil thought Possum would eat all snacks.
- d. Phil did not want to share the limelight with Possum.**

**9. How did Possum feel about being unwelcome to celebrate Groundhog Day?**

- a. Possum felt sad because he wanted to join the fun.**
- b. Possum felt happy because he could predict the weather too.
- c. Possum laughed because he thought Groundhog Day was silly.
- d. Possum felt brave because he was not afraid of his shadow.

**10. How did Phil feel about hurting Possum's feelings?**

- a. He felt very bad.**
- b. He did not care because he did not like Possum.
- c. He enjoyed being mean to the night animals.
- d. He felt Possum deserved to be sad.

**11. What was Phil's solution for making everyone happy on Groundhog Day?**

- a. Phil decided to never celebrate Groundhog Day again.
- b. Phil decided to have Groundhog Day on September 2nd instead.
- c. Phil decided to call February 2<sup>nd</sup>, "Groundhog Day and Possum Nights."**
- d. Phil decided to invite only groundhogs to celebrate Groundhog Day.