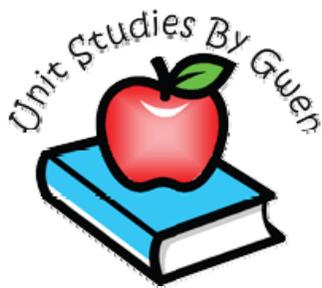


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# Groundhog Day



by Gwen Nicodemus

Groundhogs are rodents. They are similar to squirrels.

Most groundhogs can live to be 8 years old.

What do you like about groundhogs?

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\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

Groundhog Day is celebrated on February 2<sup>nd</sup> each year.

February 2<sup>nd</sup> is half way between the middle of winter and the middle of spring.

February						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28			

2007

### What is Groundhog Day?

Groundhog Day started about 1,500 years ago. It wasn't called Groundhog Day though.

People believed that bears or groundhogs came out of their winter dens on a special day. The day was between the Winter Solstice (the darkest day of the year) and the Spring Equinox.



Warton Willie is another groundhog. He lives in Canada.

Willie was an albino groundhog, unlike the rest of the famous groundhogs. Albino groundhogs are white with red eyes.



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Another famous groundhog is Staten Island Chuck. He lives in the Staten Island Zoo in Staten Island, New York.

The zoo claims that Chuck has been correct in his predictions 80% of the time.



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If the groundhog or bear saw its shadow, the animal would be scared. It would run back to its den.

People believed if the animal got scared and went back to its den that winter would last another 4 to 6 weeks.



3

A Scottish poem talks about Groundhog Day:

*As the light grows longer  
The cold grows stronger*

*If Candlemas be fair and bright  
Winter will have another flight*

*If Candlemas be cloud and rain  
Winter will be gone and not come  
again*

*A farmer should on Candlemas  
day  
Have half his corn and half his  
hay*

*On Candlemas day if thorns hang  
a drop  
You can be sure of a good pea  
crop*

8

The Celts started this tradition. The Celts also started the Halloween tradition.



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If the groundhog or bear did not see its shadow, people thought spring would come earlier.



4

One famous Groundhog is Punxsutawney Phil.

Most of the year Phil lives at the town library with his wife, Phyllis.

On Groundhog Day he spends the night at a special place called Gobbler's Knob.



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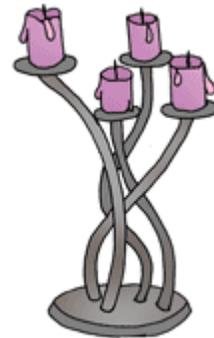
Today, Groundhog Day is celebrated in many parts of the United States.



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Christians called Groundhog Day "Candlemas."

Candlemas was the day a priest would bless the candles to be used for the upcoming year.



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