

1 When is Groundhog Day? Read and find out. Then read the Groundhog Day poem and complete the gaps with the words in the list.

• inside • play • all • Day • round • now • way • cheeks

In the USA and Canada, there is a festival people celebrate on 2nd February. They call it Groundhog Day. On this day, people get together around a hole in the ground. Why? Because that's where a groundhog lives and on this day, the groundhog gets out of his hole and shows us when spring will come.

GROUNDHOG DAY



In wintertime the snowflakes fall,
the wind blows hard; it's cold for **1)** _____ !

In February there's a day
That lets us know spring's on its **2)** _____ !

A friendly groundhog, small and **3)** _____
Comes from its hole deep in the ground.

When it's sunny and bright outside,
The groundhog goes back **4)** _____ .

We are all sad with tears on our **5)** _____
The winter stays for six more weeks!

But when the sky is cloudy and grey
The groundhog will come out to **6)** _____ .

The wintertime is over **7)** _____
The cold wind leaves and spring comes! Wow!

So what's this festival, I hear you say?
We all call it Groundhog **8)** _____ !

2 **ICT** In groups, find pictures for each part of the poem. Then show them to the class.

- 1 What is Groundhog Day? Where do people celebrate it? What is it about? Read the text to find out.

GROUNDHOG DAY



Groundhog Day is a festival on 2nd February in the USA and Canada. It is an exciting day for a lot of people because they can find out when the winter will end.

On this day, people get around the groundhog's hole and wait for it to come out. When it does, if the sun is bright in the sky, it means the winter will last for six more weeks. But, if the weather is cloudy when it comes out of its hole, the winter will end very soon! There are famous groundhogs all over the USA and Canada that are a part of Groundhog Day. But the most famous groundhog is Punxsutawney Phil from Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, USA.

Wherever people celebrate Groundhog Day, it's always a fun day! Everyone comes together to hope for the end of winter and the beginning of spring.

DID YOU KNOW?

A groundhog is also called a woodchuck. There's a tongue-twister* about woodchucks that people can say:

How much wood would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood?

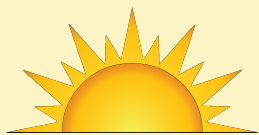
Try to say it as fast as you can!

*a sentence that is difficult to say, especially when we repeat it or say it quickly

- 2 Read the Groundhog Day tongue-twisters below and unscramble the letters to complete the missing words.



- 1 The _____ **O G N R H D G U N O** grew round in his hole in the ground.



- 2 We want to see the _____ **U S N** in the sky soon.



- 3 Groundhog Day is fun for friends in _____ **Y R U R F B E A**.



- 3 Use words from the text in Ex. 1 to write your own tongue-twister about Groundhog Day.

1 Read the text and for questions 1-3, choose the best answer A, B or C.



Groundhog Day hero: *Punxsutawney Phil*

All over the USA and Canada, people wait for 2nd February to come round so they can find out how much longer winter will last. But who are the animals that predict the weather on Groundhog Day? Read below to learn about the best-known of them all, Punxsutawney Phil.

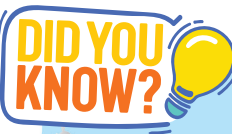
Punxsutawney Phil is the most famous animal in the world when it comes to Groundhog Day. Every year, people in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, crowd round his burrow at 7:24 am. The locals, along with the city council, news cameras and reporters all wait in excitement for Phil to come out and tell them what the weather will be like for the next six weeks.

People have looked to Phil to predict the weather since 1886. But wait! How can one groundhog live for over 130 years? The locals say that the secret is in a special "Groundhog Punch" that is given to Phil every summer. They say it keeps him strong and healthy for seven more years every time he drinks just a tiny bit!

Punxsutawney Phil is one of the reasons Groundhog Day has become such a popular festival. He has starred in many films, TV shows and news reports over the years, and has even met important figures like former US president Ronald Reagan in 1986 and celebrities like Oprah Winfrey in 1995. People love Phil not only because of his cute furry face, but also because he brings hope that the long winter in North America will soon end and spring will arrive.

- 1** What does Punxsutawney Phil predict on Groundhog Day?
A when winter will end
B when summer will end
C when spring will end
- 2** Where does Punxsutawney Phil live?
A in Canada
B in California
C in Pennsylvania
- 3** When did Groundhog Day start in Punxsutawney?
A 1995 **B** 1886 **C** 1986
- 4** According to stories, how has Punxsutawney Phil lived for so long?
A His burrow is unusual.
B He drinks a special punch.
C The locals keep him healthy.
- 5** Why is Punxsutawney Phil so popular?
A Because he's a symbol of hope.
B Because he only comes out once a year.
C Because he met Oprah.

- 2** **ICT** In groups, find information on another famous animal that can predict the weather. Present it to the class.



Groundhogs don't live in deserts. So, in southern California, instead of a groundhog, people turn to a tortoise to predict the end of winter on Groundhog Day. Her name is Mojave Maxine, and she lives in the Mojave Desert.



1 Read the text and match the subheadings to the correct paragraphs.

- And can it predict the weather?
- So when did the groundhog become part of this?
- OK, but first – why 2nd February?
- What's a groundhog anyway?

The History of GROUNDHOG Day

*I see a little groundhog, furry and brown.
He's popping up to look around.
If he sees his shadow, down he'll go.
Six more weeks of winter - oh, no!*

Perhaps you've heard this poem before, or perhaps you're wondering what a groundhog is and what it's got to do with the weather. Let's find out!

1) _____
It's a type of rodent that belongs to the squirrel family. It spends the winter sleeping in its underground burrow and comes out again in early spring.

2) _____
Well, not exactly! In Canada and the USA, there is a superstition that says if a groundhog comes out of its burrow on 2nd February and the sky is cloudy, then it will stay above ground and spring will begin. However, if it's sunny and the groundhog sees its shadow, it will go back under the ground and winter will last another six weeks! This is a rather strange way of predicting the weather, but it actually has a long history.

3) _____
This is the halfway point between the Winter Solstice – the shortest day of the year – and the Spring Equinox, which is the first day of spring. On this day in Europe long ago, Christians celebrated a festival called Candlemas. They said that, if the weather was sunny on Candlemas, winter would carry on. If it was cloudy and raining, however, spring would soon begin. This idea probably came from an even older Gaelic superstition about 2nd February and the goddess Cailleach.

4) _____
Well, the Europeans thought that hibernating animals such as hedgehogs, badgers and bears woke up at Candlemas and came out of their holes and caves to greet the Virgin Mary. When European settlers moved to North America, they brought the tradition with them. They chose the groundhog to make their predictions about winter because it was a hibernating animal. Also, in Native American folklore the groundhog was an important symbol of wisdom. The first arranged Groundhog Day celebration was held in Pennsylvania in 1887. The tradition spread across the USA and Canada, and continues to this day!



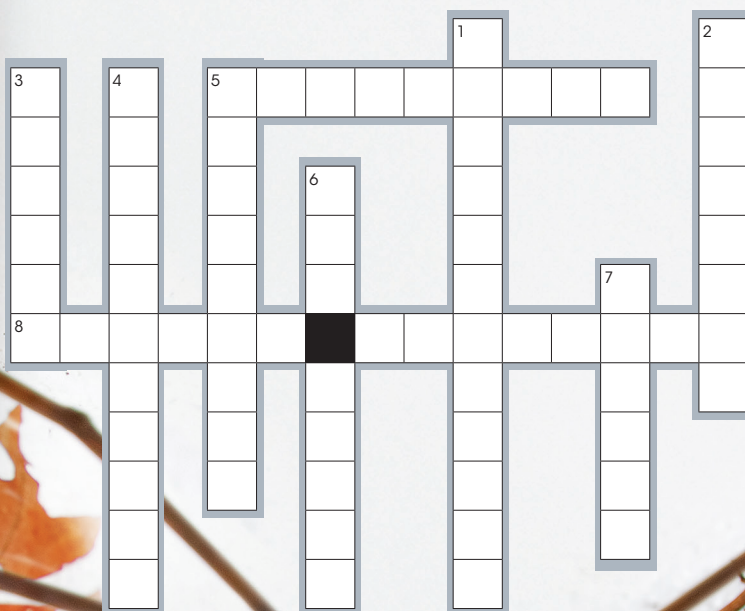
2 Read the clues and complete the crossword.

Down

- The location of the first organised Groundhog Day celebration
- The groundhog belongs to this family.
- If a groundhog sees this, it goes back into its burrow.
- Hedgehogs, badgers, groundhogs and bears are this type of animal.
- The name of a Gaelic goddess
- This is how much longer winter will last if the groundhog goes back underground.
- The groundhog symbolises this in Native American folklore.

Across

- An old Christian festival celebrated in Europe
- Another name for the shortest day of the year



Groundhog Day A1

1

1 all

2 way

3 round

4 inside

5 cheeks

6 play

7 now

8 Day

2

Ss' own answers

Groundhog Day A2

1

Groundhog Day is a festival taking place on 2nd February every year in the USA and Canada. Traditionally, on this day people can find out when winter ends by getting around the groundhog's hole and waiting for it to come out. If the groundhog comes out and the sun is bright in the sky, then, winter is going to last for six more weeks. If the sky is cloudy, then the winter will end very soon.

2

1 GROUNDHOG

2 SUN

3 FEBRUARY

3

Ss' own answers

Groundhog Day B1

1

1A

2C

3B

4B

5A

2

Ss' own answers

Groundhog Day B2

1

1 What's a groundhog anyway?

2 And can it predict the weather?

3 OK, but first – why 2nd February?

4 So when did the groundhog become part of this?

2

DOWN

1 PENNSYLVANIA

2 SQUIRREL

3 SHADOW

4 HIBERNATING

5 CAILLEACH

6 SIX WEEKS

7 WISDOM

ACROSS

5 CANDLEMAS

8 WINTER SOLSTICE

