For hundreds of years, people have thought that the groundhog can predict the weather. It’s believed that if the groundhog sees its shadow when it leaves its burrow on the second day of February, the winter will last another six weeks.

But, if the sun isn’t shining, then there are no shadows to be seen. People say when this happens, spring will arrive soon.

The Most Famous Groundhog

In the town of Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, there is a special groundhog called Punxsutawney Phil.

Each year on the morning of February 2nd, people in the town wait patiently for Punxsutawney Phil to come out of his burrow. News shows and newspapers around the country will tell everyone whether or not he sees his shadow.

Is Phil correct?

Punxsutawney Phil is not right about the weather every year. Circle every other letter to see how often Phil is right about the end of winter weather.

A B


Make a Groundhog Weather Detector

Color and cut out the little groundhog above. Glue it onto some heavier paper and cut out the groundhog again. Stand your little groundhog outside and see if it casts a shadow.
Standards Link: Life Science: Understand that humans and animals have structures that aid in survival.

Do Not Disturb!
Each August the groundhog starts eating a lot. It eats and eats. A layer of fat forms under its skin.

As the weather gets colder in the fall, the fat groundhog goes to its little underground bedroom with its cushion of grass to curl up and sleep. It falls into such a deep sleep that it appears dead. This is called hibernation.

What is another name for a groundhog?

Scientists have found a special chemical in the blood of hibernating animals. The chemical is called HIT or Hibernation Inducement Trigger. Although scientists do not know what this chemical is, they do know that it appears when one of three things happen:

- The days become shorter and there is less light.
- There is a big drop in temperature.
- Food is scarce.

One summer day, blood with HIT taken from a hibernating groundhog was injected into a lively one. Result: Hibernation!

If you were the scientist—what would be your conclusion about this experiment?

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How do animals know when to hibernate?

Scientists have found a special chemical in the blood of hibernating animals. The chemical is called HIT or Hibernation Inducement Trigger. Although scientists do not know what this chemical is, they do know that it appears when one of three things happen:

- The days become shorter and there is less light.
- There is a big drop in temperature.
- Food is scarce.

C = □  N = □
D = □  O = □
H = □  U = □
K = □  W = □

Standards Link: Life Science: Understand that humans and animals have structures that aid in survival.
Weather Words
Look outside. What is your weather like today? Look through the newspaper for five words that describe your weather. Circle each word.

Standards Link: Science: Identify different kinds of weather.
Puzzler

Light travels in a straight line from its source. When light reaches an opaque (solid) object, the light is prevented from moving through the object, leaving an area of darkness on the other side (a shadow).

Find the shadow for each of these shapes.

Standards Link: Science: Understand physical properties of light.

VOCABULARY BUILDERS

**HIBERNATE**

The verb *hibernate* means to sleep through the winter in a den or burrow to save energy.

The groundhog *hibernates* about six months a year.

Try to use the word *hibernate* in a sentence today when talking with your friends and family members.

What’s round, covered in cheese and tomato sauce, and is very sleepy?

ANSWER: A PIZZA!

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Write On! Hello, Spring!

What does spring look like where you live? Write a description of some of the signs of spring in your area.

Hello, Spring!

News Photo Pose
Find a newspaper photo with one or more people in it. Mimic the pose of a person. Can you hold it for 10 seconds? Find another photo and repeat.

Standards Link: Language Arts: Apply syllabication rules.
Kid Scoop Jumbo Word Search

Find the words by looking up, down, backwards, forwards, sideways and diagonally. Then see how many of these words you can find in today’s newspaper.

AUGUST
BURROW
CASTS
CURL
EATS
END
FOOD
GROUNDHOG
LIGHT
PHIL
SHADOW
SLEEP
SUN
TOWN
WINTER

Answers

Page 1
Is Phil correct?
About forty percent of the time

Page 2
What is another name for a groundhog?
Woodchuck

Page 4

Page 6

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