

Groundhog Day Trivia

by Eryn Clark, ADPC

From groundhogs to shadows to holiday history, we cover it all with this Groundhog Day trivia quiz. Without a shadow of a doubt, you're in for some fun.

1. On what date do we celebrate Groundhog Day?

Answer: February 2. This date falls halfway between the winter solstice and the spring equinox. Many believe Groundhog Day is derived from the Christian feast *Candlemas*, also held on February 2.



2. What two countries celebrate Groundhog Day?

Answer: The United States and Canada. Groundhogs are found only in these two countries, ranging as far south as Alabama, and as far north as Alaska. The U.S. first celebrated Groundhog Day in 1887. Canada later adopted the tradition in 1956.

3. On February 2, 1887, what Pennsylvania town celebrated the first official Groundhog Day in the U.S.?

Answer: Punxsutawney. Specifically, the main celebrations take place at Gobbler's Knob, a popular park in Punxsutawney.

4. What is the name of the famous groundhog honored in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania?

Answer: Punxsutawney Phil. His full title is Punxsutawney Phil, Seer of Seers, Sage of Sages, Prognosticator of Prognosticators, and Weather Prophet Extraordinary.

5. In Canada, what is the name of the albino groundhog honored in Wiarton, Ontario?

Answer: Wiarton Willie. Wiarton is located on the Bruce Peninsula in Ontario. Wiarton Willie has been predicting the weather there since 1956.

6. What does it mean to "have it made in the shade"?

Answer: To be set for life or in an ideal situation. Some say the phrase comes from an old children's rhyme that goes, "ice-cold lemonade, made in the shade, stirred with a spade, by an old maid"—a version of which was quoted in Tennessee Williams' play *The Glass Menagerie*.

7. What do you call a groundhog in the United Kingdom: wejack, woodchuck, or woodshaw?

Answer: A woodchuck. However, *wejack* and *woodshaw* are terms used by some Native American cultures to identify the same animal.

8. According to legend, if the groundhog sees its shadow what will happen?

Answer: There will be six more weeks of winter weather. The last time Punxsutawney Phil predicted this was in 2018.

9. What happens if the groundhog does not see its shadow?

Answer: Spring weather will arrive early. According to historical records, Punxsutawney Phil's predictions have been accurate only 64.4 percent of the time. Those in Punxsutawney say Phil's predictions are always right, but they are occasionally mistranslated from Groundhogese to English.

10. What actor starred in the 1993 movie *Groundhog Day*? **Hint:** He was also in the *Ghostbusters* franchise.

Answer: Bill Murray. Murray plays a cynical TV weatherman forced to live the same day over and over again.

11. Which of the following are **NOT** related to groundhogs: squirrels, raccoons, chipmunks, or prairie dogs?

Answer: Raccoons. Groundhogs are some of the largest members of the *Sciuridae* (squirrel) family. They can weigh up to 15 pounds and grow to 20 inches in length. Chipmunks and prairie dogs also belong to the squirrel family.

12. According to one American radio program, who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men?

Answer: The Shadow. The line "The Shadow knows" is from the introduction to *The Shadow* radio show that ran from 1937 to 1954. The program featured a caped vigilante with powers of invisibility who would track down killers.

13. During Prohibition, Punxsutawney Phil famously threatened to have 60 more weeks of winter if he was not allowed to drink what?

Answer: Alcohol. The Eighteenth Amendment was ratified in 1919, prohibiting the manufacture and sale of alcohol. This period called Prohibition officially began in 1920 and lasted until 1933.

14. What is Punxsutawney Phil's wife's name: Philomena, Phillipa, or Phyllis?

Answer: Phyllis. Phil and Phyllis currently have no children. According to one inquiring journalist, they claim their lives are "too busy to raise a family."

15. Groundhogs have a reputation for being skilled in meteorology. What is another term for a meteorologist?

Answer: Weather forecaster. Meteorology is the study of weather, climate, and the processes of the atmosphere.

16. What does "beyond a shadow of a doubt" mean?

Answer: With absolute certainty. The earliest documentation of this expression was found in the English newspaper *The Derby Mercury* in 1772.

17. Complete this Biblical phrase: "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death..."

Answer: "I will fear no evil, for you are with me." This line comes from Psalm 23:4 of the English Standard Version of the Bible.

18. Groundhogs go into an inactive or resting state throughout the winter months. What is this dormant period called?

Answer: Hibernation. Groundhogs are one of the few “true hibernators.” They significantly reduce their metabolic rate and body temperature during the winter. Some lose up to half their body weight during this time.

19. What do you call a group of groundhogs: a parade, a coterie, or a drove?

Answer: A coterie. A coterie is defined as a group unified with a common interest or purpose. A coterie of groundhogs will dig burrows together, and members will guard the entrance to alert others if there is danger.

20. Groundhogs are sometimes called “whistle-pigs.” What do they use their high-pitched whistling sound for?

Answer: To warn other groundhogs when they are feeling threatened. As mentioned above, those guarding the entrance will alert the others if they sense trouble. They do this by whistling.
