

Groundhog Day

Name _____

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Groundhog's Day is celebrated in Canada and the United States on February 2nd each year. We watch our favorite groundhog on this day. If it is cloudy, he will come out of his burrow and, tradition says, spring will start soon. If it is sunny, he will see his shadow and scoot back into his burrow for six more weeks of winter sleep.

When German settlers arrived in the United States in the 1700s, they brought a tradition known as Candlemas Day. Candlemas Day came at the mid-point between the Winter Solstice and the Spring Equinox. Superstition told that if the weather was nice on that day, the second half of Winter would be stormy and cold. These settlers first celebrated "Groundhog's Day" in Pennsylvania -- "Punxsutawney Phil" from Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania remains one of the favourite groundhogs to watch each year!

For the early Christians in Europe, it was the custom on Candlemas Day for clergy to bless candles and distribute them to the people in the dark of Winter. A lighted candle was placed in each window of the home.

The weather continued to be important to the early Christians. If the sun came out on February 2, the day halfway between Winter and Spring, it meant six more weeks of wintry weather.

In Europe, it was a hedgehog that was watched with hope that he'd not see his shadow. When settlers arrived in America, there were no hedgehogs to be found. So they adopted the groundhog as the new world's weather forecaster.

The groundhog was chosen because it wintered underground like the hedgehog and because the Native Americans in the region respected the animal greatly. They considered the groundhog to be a wise and sensible animal.

To do:

- _____ underline all the adjectives with green
- _____ underline all the verbs with red
- _____ underline all the common nouns with blue
- _____ highlight all the proper nouns with yellow

