



APRIL FOOL, PHYLLIS!

Susanna Leonard Hill

illustrated by Jeffrey Ebbeler

GRADES
PRE–3

About the Book

It might be April Fool's Day, but Punxsutawney Phyllis knows that winter isn't over yet.

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SUGGESTED CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Language Arts

Vocabulary—To familiarize students with terms mentioned in the book, discuss and define the following words before reading the story: *burrow, confetti, sap, sap line, sugar maple, swap, whiff.*

Fiction Versus Nonfiction—*April Fool, Phyllis!* shows groundhogs doing things that real groundhogs do not do. Discuss the meaning of fiction versus nonfiction, and have students decide which actions/objects in the story are imaginary. Read a nonfiction book about groundhogs and compare the behavior of real groundhogs with that of Phyllis and her family.

Writing Activity—In the story, no one pays any attention to Phyllis' prediction. Discuss how Phyllis solved this problem and then have students write of an experience they've had when no one believed them and what they did to solve the problem. They can share what they have written and then discuss how what they did was the same or different from what Phyllis did.

Geography

Atlas/Wall Map—Students can locate Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, on a map. Using the scale of miles on the map, they can compute how far Punxsutawney is from their home town.

Science

Research

Groundhogs—Have students use print or online resources to find facts about groundhogs, including where groundhogs live, how big their families are, and what they eat. Students can create a fact chart showing the information they have found.

Maple Trees—Students can use multiple resources to find facts on maple trees including where maple trees grow, how sap is collected, and how maple syrup is made. (See Online Resources below.)

Weather

Predicting/Forecasting—Students have probably all seen weather reporters on TV. Have students discuss exactly how these people forecast the weather, what kinds of signs they look for, what it takes to become a meteorologist, and the difference between meteorologists and weathercasters. (See "Online Resources" below.) Students can also discuss what Phyllis did in the story that helped her to predict that there would be a blizzard.

Comparing Weather—Using an almanac or online resource, students can chart the weather/temperature for April 1 for the past ten years in Punxsutawney to find out how many times it snowed on April 1. They can also chart the same in their own neighborhood.

Online Resources for APRIL FOOL, PHYLLIS!

<http://weather.about.com/od/weatherfaqs/f/meteorologist.htm>

Provides information on various types of meteorologists, exactly what they do, and what one has to do to become a meteorologist.

www.vermontmaple.org/classroom-resources.php

Provides information on how maple syrup is made, and other classroom resources that go into the subject of sugaring more deeply, including how to make maple sugar cakes (molded candy).

<http://www.stormfax.com/ghogday.htm>

Provides a history of Groundhog Day and the part that Punxsutawney, PA, has played in this day since it was established in 1886; also includes a list of Punxsutawney Phil's predictions since that time.

Classroom activities prepared by Sandy Schuckett, school library consultant.

About the Author and the Illustrator

Susanna Leonard Hill grew up in New York City. Her work includes children's picture books, board books, and an easy reader. She lives on Long Island in New York. Visit her online at www.susannahill.com.

Jeffrey Ebbeler has worked as an art director, a book designer, and a children's picture-book and magazine illustrator. He lives in Cincinnati, Ohio. Visit him online at www.jeffillustration.com.

Also by Susanna Leonard Hill and Jeffrey Ebbeler:

PUNXSUTAWNEY PHYLLIS **An Amelia Bloomer Project Book**

"Colorful, cozy, and plucky."—*Booklist*
"A welcome addition."—*School Library Journal*

