

February 2nd is Groundhog Day.

Groundhog Facts:

- Groundhogs are also known as woodchucks. They are closely related to squirrels, although groundhogs live in underground burrows rather than in trees.
- Groundhogs are diggers! Their burrows can have up to 66 feet of tunnels, several exits, and multiple rooms, including separate areas that they use as bathrooms and sleeping rooms.
- Groundhogs are true hibernators which means they're able to lower their body temperature and slow their heart rate to conserve energy when they hibernate. They spend autumn fattening up.
- According to folklore, the groundhog emerges from his burrow on February 2nd, looking for his shadow. If he sees it (sunny morning), winter will last another six weeks. If the groundhog doesn't see his shadow (cloudy morning), the legend says that spring will arrive early.
- The first official USA Groundhog Day celebration was on February 2, 1887, at Gobbler's Knob in Punxsutawney, PA, and introduced a groundhog named Phil. The town has continued the holiday for over 125 years. When not predicting the weather, the current Phil lives at the Punxsutawney Library. He weighs 15 pounds and eats dog food. He also really likes ice cream!



Shadow: A shadow is a dark shape that occurs on a surface when something blocks light rays from it. Visit the NAEYC website (www.naeyc.org/blogs/what-is-a-shadow) for additional shadow activities for students.

Fun Reading About Shadows and Groundhog Day:

Danny's Shadow (level 6/C, 76 words)

Danny's Groundhog Day (level 10/F, 126 words)

Hands-On Groundhog Day Craft Activity

Materials:

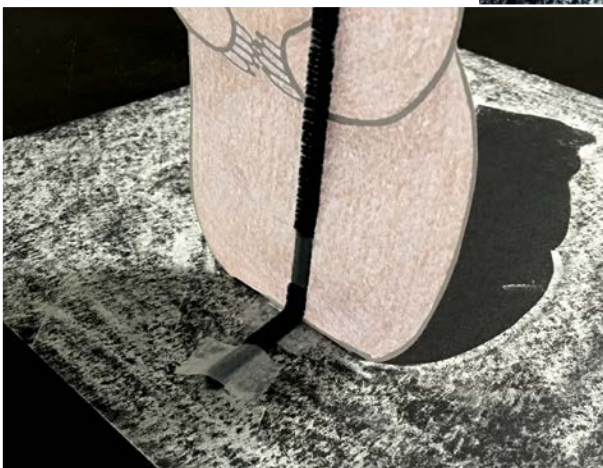
Each child will need: 1 groundhog image (included in this activity); 1 sheet black construction paper; 1/3 pipe cleaner; black and brown crayons; 1 piece of white chalk; and tape

1. Have each child use the brown and black crayons to color in their groundhog image and then cut it out.

2. Lay each cut-out groundhog face down on a vertical sheet of black paper and trace around the image with white chalk. Instruct students to color the black sheet white, around the face-down groundhog image, using the chalk.

3. After coloring is complete, have students tape one end of a pipe cleaner to the bottom of the face-down image. Bend the pipe cleaner to a 90 degree angle and tape it to the black paper, making the image stand up.

4. If the groundhog can see its shadow, there will be six more weeks of winter!



This activity is based on a craft we found at owlsandowlsoffun.blogspot.com/2013/02/groundhog-day.html.

