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Activity Guide

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Gregory's Shadow

ABOUT THE STORY

Gregory the groundhog has always had his shadow nearby. They help each other feel brave. Then one day, Gregory is frightened by something and runs home without his shadow. Shadow is lost and scared, and he hides in a barn. When Gregory realizes what has happened, he begins to look for Shadow. Will they find each other in time for Groundhog Day?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

A native Californian who attended school in Missouri and pursued a career as a musician and artist in New York, Don Freeman returned to California to settle down to creating picture books for children. As prolific as he is popular, Mr. Freeman, who passed away in 1978, left a legacy of books that have delighted and continue to delight generations of new readers.

INTRODUCING THE STORY

Ask children to tell what they know about Groundhog Day. Explain the holiday to them and tell them that it is one way people try to determine how much longer winter will last. Then tell them that the book they will read is about a groundhog and his shadow.

READING ACTIVITIES

Comprehension/Thinking Skills

- "How do Gregory and his shadow help each other?"
- "What frightens Gregory?"
- "What do the scarecrow and the tree tell Shadow?"
- "What do the farmers find out from Gregory?"
- "How does Gregory change when he begins to look for Shadow?" (*Compare and Contrast*)
- "What does Gregory's concern for the farmers tell you about his character?"

Vocabulary

Write these words in columns on the board. Ask children to copy the columns and draw lines matching each pair of words that makes up a compound word. Then have volunteers give definitions for each compound word.

hay	crow
ground	light
scare	loft
in	thing
some	hog
moon	side

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Social Studies: Late Winter Festivals

Have children look in books about holidays to find out how other cultures celebrate the ending of winter. Children can work in small groups to report on a celebration, such as Winter Solstice, Chinese New Year, or Carnival, that commemorates the end of winter.

Science: About the Groundhog

Have children work in pairs to learn about groundhogs and their habits. Using encyclopedias or books about animals, children can find out where groundhogs live, what they eat, and how they behave. Partners can write brief reports on the information they find.

Art: Shadow Puppets

The Javanese and Indonesians use shadows in puppetry, creating elaborate puppets that cast wondrous shadows. Help children find information on shadow puppets and how they are made and used, in books, encyclopedias, or on the Internet. Encourage children to try to make their own shadow puppets, using stiff construction paper and popsicle sticks.

Science: Shadows Throughout the Day

On a sunny day, have children experiment with their shadows. At various times throughout the day, ask them to work in pairs to stand outside and measure their shadows. They can record the shadows' lengths and the time of day of each measurement. Encourage them to draw conclusions about the time of day, the angle of the sun, and the length of their shadows.

INTERNET ACTIVITY

Before you send children to do research using any of the keywords suggested below, you may wish to try them yourself to make sure the sites are suitable.

Groundhog Day

Have children use the keywords "Groundhog Day" to find information about this celebration on the Internet. Children may find the official website of Punxsutawney Phil. Have them print out pictures of the groundhog and the celebration and write down a description of what happened.