

Grade 2
Classroom Guide

Susanna Leonard Hill

Author, April Fool, Phyllis!

Susanna Leonard Hill grew up in New York City with her parents, one sister, two brothers, and an assortment of cats. Susanna began writing as soon as she could hold a pencil, lying on the kitchen floor and asking her mom how to spell things. She wrote her first book in second grade, called *The Girl and The Witch*. Later she earned degrees from Middlebury College and Columbia University, and worked for many years teaching dyslexic students. Now she spends her time being a mom, writing, and visiting schools. Since *The House That Mack Built* was published in 2002, she has published eight more books, including *April Fool, Phyllis!* Susanna lives in New York with her husband, children, and two beloved rescue dogs.

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Author's Note

April Fool, Phyllis! came to me from several different places. One of them was Phyllis. She does not have the shy, retiring characteristics usually associated with her species, and she informed me, loudly, that she wanted another story. So, I thought, what should her next story be about? I grew up in a family that enjoyed treasure hunts. We had them at Easter for jelly beans, hidden around the living room. And we had them at birthdays. My dad devised elaborate clues with riddles, ciphers, and codes of all kinds — a challenge to solve before school! — and the clues led us to our birthday presents. So that's where the treasure hunt part came from. The maple syrup part came from my mom who, in a very *Little House In The Big Woods* way, took us out to tap trees, gather sap, and boil it down to syrup on our kitchen stove, even though we grew up in the '70s and could have just gone to the supermarket. We even tried making maple candy. Both treasure hunts and syrup making were delightful, memorable parts of my childhood, so I wanted to share them with Phyllis and with my young readers.

— Susanna Leonard Hill
2011

How to Use This Guide

This classroom guide for *April Fool, Phyllis!* is designed for students in second grade. It offers activities to help you integrate *April Fool, Phyllis!* into English language arts (ELA), mathematics, science, social studies, and art curricula.

All activities in this guide are linked to content standards.

ELA and math activities are linked to the Common Core standards currently being adopted by most states. Science and social studies activities are linked to relevant content standards for Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania. At the back of this guide, you will find a list of the guide activities and their related content standards.

A table of contents follows this page for easy reference.

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2-1: Story Comprehension

Before you read or listen to *April Fool, Phyllis!*, look at the cover.

- What do you think the book will be about? Why do you think so?

Now read or listen to the book.

- Who is the main character? Why do you think so?
- Who are some of the other characters?
- What kind of animal is Phyllis?
- Why do you think the book is called *April Fool, Phyllis!*?
- Do you think the story in *April Fool, Phyllis!* is fiction (make-believe) or nonfiction (fact)? Explain your thinking.

Where do you think the story takes place?

- What clues can you find in the story or the pictures?



Describe Phyllis's home.

- How is it different from your home?
- How is it the same as your home?
- Why do you think Phyllis and her family live underground? How might that help in the winter? How about in the summer?

Phyllis and her cousins go on a treasure hunt.

- Have you ever been on a treasure hunt? Describe the things you looked for.
- What are some of the clues the young groundhogs follow?
- Why didn't the groundhogs find the treasure on their first try?
- Explain how the clues have more than one meaning.

Let's talk about the people who made *April Fool, Phyllis!*

- Who is the author?
- Who is the illustrator?
- What kind of work did each person do to make the book?
- If you could make a picture book, would you rather be the author or the illustrator? Or both? Give your reasons.

Compare the illustration on pages 14 and 15 to the one on pages 26 and 27.

- What is happening in each illustration?
- How does the illustrator use color to make you feel the weather?

As a class, read *Punxsutawney Phyllis*, by Susanna Leonard Hill.

- How is it similar to *April Fool, Phyllis!*? How is it different?

Now read *The Schoolchildren's Blizzard*, by Marty Rhodes Figley.

- How is it similar to *April Fool, Phyllis!*? How is it different?



2-2: Compound Words

A compound word is made of two or more base words put together. You can usually use those base words to find the meaning of a compound word. For example, CLASSROOM is a compound word:

CLASSROOM = CLASS + ROOM

It describes a place (ROOM) where a group of students (CLASS) meets to learn.

The compound words below appear in *April Fool, Phyllis!* Break down each word into its base words. Discuss what the base words mean separately and what they may mean put together. On the page listed, read the compound word in its sentence. Does the compound word mean what you thought it would?

everything	=	_____	+	_____	(check page 4)
something	=	_____	+	_____	(4)
breakfast	=	_____	+	_____	(6)
everyone	=	_____	+	_____	(6)
pancake	=	_____	+	_____	(8)
grandfather	=	_____	+	_____	(8, 18)
groundhog	=	_____	+	_____	(8, 15)
outside	=	_____	+	_____	(11)
nobody	=	_____	+	_____	(13)
grown-up	=	_____	+	_____	(15)
nothing	=	_____	+	_____	(15)
inside	=	_____	+	_____	(17)
nowhere	=	_____	+	_____	(18)
blackberry	=	_____	+	_____	(20)
snowflake	=	_____	+	_____	(20)
another	=	_____	+	_____	(23)
indeed	=	_____	+	_____	(25)
nearby	=	_____	+	_____	(25)
handful	=	_____	+	_____	(31)

2-3: Shades of Meaning

Many words are similar in meaning, but with important differences. Below are all the ways the characters of *April Fool, Phyllis!* say something. On the page given, read each word in its sentence. Use the sentence and the story around it to determine what the word means. Use the word in a new sentence. Then, pick two words from the list — two ways of saying something — and demonstrate them by saying this sentence:

“I will read the book.”

- announce (page 6)
- snicker (6)
- insist (6)
- exclaim (11)
- shout (11)
- yell (13)
- suggest (15)
- demand (17)
- explain (23)
- cry (25)

Bonus words

- whisper
- murmur
- screech
- mumble
- shriek
- bellow



Can you think of more ways to say something?



2-4: Word Problems

The young groundhogs catch fireflies one summer night. All together, they catch 54 fireflies. Pete accidentally lets a bunch of the fireflies escape. At the end of the night, the cousins count 19 fireflies in their jars. How many fireflies did Pete let escape?

$$54 - ? = 19$$

Cousin Jill helps Grandfather Groundhog store maple syrup jugs. Grandfather puts 38 jugs on the shelf. Together, he and Jill store 67 jugs. How many jugs did Jill put on the shelf?

$$38 + ? = 67$$

This winter, Phyllis recorded 14 fewer days with snow on the ground than last year. This year, there were 73 days with snow cover. On how many days last year was there snow on the ground?

$$73 + 14 = ?$$

Phil Junior carries buckets of maple sap to the sugar house. After he carries 32 buckets, there are still 23 buckets left. How many buckets of maple sap were there when Phil Junior began?

$$? - 32 = 23$$

On the way to the stream, Phyllis counted 11 daffodils. From there to the pond, she counted 8 more. By the time Phyllis got back to the burrow, she had counted 31 daffodils in all. How many daffodils did Phyllis count between the pond and the burrow?

$$11 + 8 + ? = 31$$

Partway up her tree house, Phyllis begins counting the stairs; she counts 24. On the way back down, Phyllis counts all of the stairs and finds there are 43. How many stairs had Phyllis climbed up before she started counting?

$$? + 24 = 43$$

After the first week of syrup making this year, Grandfather Groundhog counted 26 jugs of maple syrup stored in the sugar house. Aunt Sassy took 15 of the jugs to the market to trade for other things. The next week, Grandfather bottled another 19 jugs and stored them. At the end of the second week, how many jugs of maple syrup were stored in the sugar house?

$$26 - 15 + 19 = ?$$



2-5: Using Data

Willis saw these animals at Punxsutawney Pond:

- 7 black birds
- 10 orange birds
- 21 brown frogs
- 15 black frogs
- 2 brown moose
- 9 orange fish
- 13 brown fish



Make a bar graph with three bars: **Birds**, **Frogs**, **Moose**, and **Fish**. Using a scale with whole numbers, make each bar represent how many of that animal Willis saw.

- How many of each animal did Willis see?
- Which kind of animal did he see the fewest of?
- Which kind of animal did Willis see the most of?
- How many more fish did Willis see, compared to birds?
- How many fewer birds did Willis see, compared to frogs?
- How many animals did Willis see in all?

Now make a new bar graph with three bars: **Black**, **Brown**, and **Orange**. Using a scale with whole numbers, make each bar represent how many animals of each color Willis saw at the pond.

- How many animals were black? How many were brown? How many were orange?
- How many black animals and brown animals did Willis see all together?
- How many fewer orange animals did Willis see, compared to brown?
- How many orange animals and black animals did Willis see all together?
- How many more black animals did Willis see, compared to orange?



2-6: Geometry: Equal Portions

These are three of the pancakes Uncle Phil made for breakfast.



A



B



C

Using your pencil, draw a line that divides Pancake A into 2 equal portions.

Next, draw lines that divide Pancake B into 3 equal portions.

Finally, draw lines that divide Pancake C into 4 equal portions.

Now answer these questions:

- What do you call 1 portion of Pancake A?
- What do you call 1 portion of Pancake B?
- What do you call 1 portion of Pancake C?
- Compare Pancake B to Pancake A. Which pancake has larger portions?
- Compare Pancake B to Pancake C. Which pancake has smaller portions?
- How many portions of Pancake C equal 1 portion of Pancake A?
- How many portions of Pancake B equal 2 portions of Pancake A?
- How many portions of Pancake A equal 2 portions of Pancake C?
- How can you make the portions of Pancake B equal the portions of Pancake C?
- If you could eat 1 portion of any of the pancakes, which pancake would you choose and why?



2-7: Classroom Weather Station

Weather happens all around us. It can affect all kinds of things, from how well crops grow on a farm to how fast a ship can travel across an ocean. Keeping track of weather, and then looking at our records, helps us to predict what kind of weather may happen in the future.

Work together as a class to make a weather board. To the top half of the board, draw or attach a monthly calendar. On the bottom half, leave space to describe today's weather. Make cutouts to represent these weather conditions:

- Sunny
- Part sun / part cloud
- Cloudy
- Rain
- Thunder / lightning
- Sleet
- Snow
- Breezy
- Windy
- Full moon
- $\frac{3}{4}$ moon
- $\frac{1}{2}$ moon
- $\frac{1}{4}$ moon
- New moon



Mount a thermometer outside your classroom. Every morning, discuss the current weather. Display the cutouts that represent those conditions, and write a brief description on the calendar (e.g.: sunny and windy). Measure the outside temperature and record it on the calendar, too. Every evening, look at the moon. When you talk about the weather the next morning, display the moon cutout that matches what you saw the previous night.

After several weeks, review your calendar. Do you see patterns? Can you predict what the moon will look like tonight? Tomorrow night? Next week? Try measuring weather using additional tools, like an anemometer for wind, a barometer for air pressure, or a rain gauge.

Talk about how people get information about weather.

- How does your family use that information?
- Does weather information affect the kind of clothes you wear to school?
- What kinds of weather information would be useful to the characters in *April Fool, Phyllis!*?

2-8: Maple Syrup

Maple syrup is made from the sap of maple trees. All trees have sap, a water-based liquid that flows through the tree. In maple trees, sugars formed during photosynthesis are stored in the wood fibers. When outside temperatures rise from freezing to just above freezing, those stored sugars dissolve into the sap. If a tap is inserted into the tree, the sap will flow out. There it can be collected in buckets or through plastic tubes called sap lines, as in *April Fool, Phyllis!*

This “sap run” will last as long as temperatures drop below freezing at night and rise above freezing during the day. One maple tree can produce from 5 to 80 gallons of sap in a year, depending on weather conditions. Sugar maples are preferred for making maple syrup because they tend to have longer sap runs and sweeter sap than other types of maple trees.

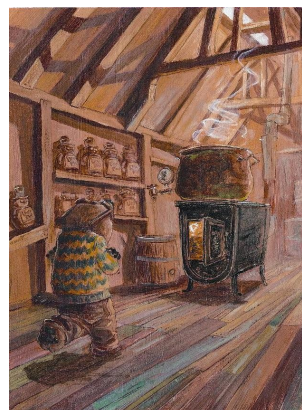
To make maple syrup, maple sap is boiled until most of the water has evaporated. What is left over — the syrup — is very sweet because the sugar has been concentrated. **It takes about 40 gallons of maple sap to produce 1 gallon of maple syrup.** So one maple tree can produce enough sap in a year to make 2 cups to 2 gallons of maple syrup.

After the sap is boiled down, most maple syrup producers filter the syrup to remove any small bits of debris or sugar crystals. Then the syrup is given a grade based on its color. Those grades vary, depending on where the maple syrup is produced. In general, syrup graded A is lighter in color than syrup graded B, C, D, or lower. All are tasty!

“Jack Wax”: *Maple on Snow*

Maple candy comes in many forms, from soft and melting to hard and crunchy. One of the easiest ways to make maple candy is to use snow. Try it with your class! You will need:

- maple syrup
- snow (or finely crushed ice)
- a pan to boil the syrup
- a pan for the snow (or none if outside)
- a stove or hotplate
- oven mitts
- candy thermometer



Teacher:

1. Pour the syrup in the pan and put it on the stove.
2. Heat the syrup to 18° to 40° F above boiling temperature (which is 212°F at sea level; lower if you are at altitude). Heating to the lower end of the range will produce taffy-like candy; the higher end will make candy that is crunchy. *Take care to protect yourself and students from the hot syrup.*
3. Meanwhile, have students prepare the snow. Brush off the top layer to clear away debris, then pack the clean snow down in place, or collect it in a pan and pack it down.
4. Pour heated syrup immediately over packed snow. It will begin to cool and solidify right away. When cool enough to touch, share with students.

For maple resources, see Appendix.

2-9: April Fools Day

Read the information about April Fools Day on page 32 of *April Fool, Phyllis!*

How did April Fools Day begin?

- What did it have to do with the seasons of the year?
- Why do you think some people didn't hear about the new calendar in 1582?

Describe what happens on April Fools Day in the United States.

- Has anyone ever played an April Fools prank on you? Describe what happened.
- Have you ever played an April Fools prank on someone else? How did they react?
- Who is the best prankster in your family? Why?

How are April Fools pranks played...

- ...in Scotland?
- ...in France?
- ...in Iran?
- ...in New Zealand?
- How are these traditions similar to those in the United States?
- How are they different?
- Locate the countries above on a globe or world map. Which is farthest from where you live? Which is closest?



What do you think would make a good April Fools prank?

- Would the person you pranked enjoy the prank as much as you would as the prankster?

Choose one of the countries in the text. In the space below, write a story describing a prank you would play in that country. Share your story with your class.

Title: _____

2-10: Eyewitness Account: The Blizzard of 1888

One of the best ways to study history is to read reports and stories written by the people who lived through events long ago. The most famous (and infamous) blizzard in United States history happened over 100 years ago, in 1888. Although the Blizzard of 1888 is remembered for closing down business and shipping operations on the East coast, it was actually a series of severe storms across the country.

One eyewitness account comes to us from a man named O. W. Meier, who was a boy when the blizzard came. His memories of the blizzard have been recorded and archived by the Library of Congress at:

<http://memory.loc.gov/wpa/17120802.html>

As a class, read Mr. Meier's personal account of the Blizzard of 1888.

Where did Mr. Meier live?

- Find the approximate location on a map of the United States.
- How far away do you live?

What was the weather like when Mr. Meier set out for school?

- Why do you think his parents made his sisters stay home?

Mr. Meier mentions a game called "fox and geese."

- Look up the game. How is it played?
- Does it remind you of a game you already know?

Describe Mr. Meier's school.

- How was it similar to your school?
- How was it different?

Describe the moment the storm hit the schoolhouse.

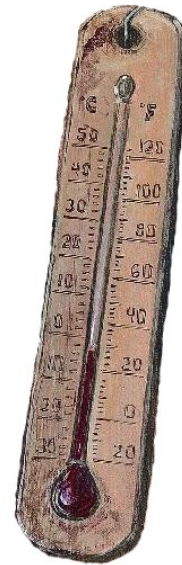
- Have you ever experienced a storm like that?
- Why do you think the teacher allowed southbound students to leave for home?
- Do you think your teacher would let you walk home in a storm like the one Mr. Meier describes?

Describe how the Meier brothers found their way home.

- What did they do to keep from getting lost?
- How did they help each other?
- What did they find when they got home? When they woke up the next day?

Read other eyewitness accounts of storms like the Blizzard of 1888.

- How are they similar to Mr. Meier's? How are they different?
- If you've experienced a blizzard, write your own eyewitness account and share it with your class.



2-11: Story Collage

A collage is a two- or three-dimensional work of art. It uses color, texture, and images to represent a subject. Using materials provided by your teacher, create a collage that represents *April Fool, Phyllis!* in some way. Your collage may show a scene, a character, a thing, an event, or it may describe a feeling.

When you finish, share your collage with the class. Answer these questions:

- What does your collage show or describe?
 - Why did you choose this subject?
- Is there a character in your collage?
 - If so, what is he or she doing?
- Does your collage represent something that can't be seen, like a feeling?
- Describe the materials you used to make your collage.
 - Why did you choose the colors and textures you used?
 - How did you build it?
 - How did you decide where to place different materials?
- Look at all of the collages your class made.
 - How are the collages similar?
 - How are they different?
- Can you learn anything from the collages your classmates made?

Teacher:

For this exercise, provide collage materials with a variety of colors and textures, as well as structural materials, such as cardboard and glue. Equalize student access to materials by making this an in-class exercise, rather than homework.

Materials to consider include:

- *scrap paper*
- *magazines*
- *newspaper articles / advertisements*
- *cloth samples*
- *carpet samples*
- *yarn*
- *twine*
- *cotton balls*
- *plastic grocery bags*
- *pipe cleaners*
- *twigs*
- *natural stone pebbles*
- *dry beans*
- *raffia*
- *glass pebbles*
- *beads*

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

(ELA & Math only)

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Standard(s)</u>
2-1	ELA 2.RL.1-3, 7, 9-10; 2.SL.2
2-2	ELA 2.L.4
2-3	ELA 2.L.4-5
2-4	Math 2.OA.1-2
2-5	Math 2.MD.10
2-6	Math 2.G.3

CONNECTICUT

2-7	Science 1.1.5; 1.4.6-8
2-8	Science 2.1.1-2; 2.2.1, 3
2-9	Soc Studies 2.1.4, 21
2-10	Soc Studies 2.1.4, 6, 8; 2.2.1; 2.3.1
2-11	Visual Arts 1-3, 5

MASSACHUSETTS

2-7	Science Earth 3-5
2-8	Science Life 7, Phys 2
2-9	Soc Studies 2.8
2-10	Soc Studies 2.8, 10
2-11	Visual Arts 1-3, 5

NEW JERSEY

2-7	Science 5.1.4.A.3; 5.1.4.B.1-3; 5.4.2.A.1; 5.4.2.F.1
2-8	Science 5.2.2.A.2; 5.3.2.B.3; 5.4.2.F.1; 5.4.2.G.1
2-9	Soc Studies 6.1.4.D.13
2-10	Soc Studies 6.1.4.B.4; 6.1.4.D.19
2-11	Arts 1.1.2.D, 1.3.2.D, 1.4.2.B

NEW YORK

2-7	Science Inquiry 2.3; 3.1-3; Phys 1.1; 2.1
2-8	Science Phys 3.1-2; Life 3.1, 5.2, 6.2
2-9	Soc Studies 1.1-2; 2.1
2-10	Soc Studies 1.1, 4; 3.1-2
2-11	Visual Arts 1-3

PENNSYLVANIA

2-7	Science 3.3.3.A4-5
2-8	Science 3.1.3.A5; 3.2.3.A1; 3.2.3.A3-4
2-9	Soc Studies 8.4.3.A, C
2-10	Soc Studies 7.1.3.B; 7.4.3.A; 8.1.3.B-C
2-11	Arts 9.1.3, 9.3.3.A-B, 9.4.3.A-B, D

MAPLE SYRUP

Cornell Sugar Maple Research & Extension Program
<http://maple.dnr.cornell.edu/FAQ.htm>

University of Maine Cooperative Extension
<http://www.umext.maine.edu/onlinepubs/PDFpubs/7036.pdf>

The Ohio State University Extension
<http://ohioline.osu.edu/for-fact/0046.html>

BLIZZARD OF 1888

Library of Congress
<http://memory.loc.gov/wpa/17120802.html>

InfoPlease
<http://www.infoplease.com/spot/blizzard1.html>