

Kindergarten
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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Illustrator, April Fool, Phyllis!

Jeffrey Ebbeler has been creating art for children for almost a decade. He loves the creative potential of storybook art. He has given many lectures and demonstrations in grade-schools, colleges, and museums about the process of bringing words to life through pictures. He has worked on a variety of projects including illustrations for magazines, CD covers, and book covers as well as paper engineering for pop-up books, creating large scale murals for schools and churches, and sculpting puppets and performing for several marionette theaters. He and his wife Eileen both attended the Art Academy of Cincinnati. They currently live in Ohio.

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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 kindergarten. 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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K-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?

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?

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?

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?

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

- What is happening in each illustration?
- How are the illustrations different?

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 Snowy Day*, by Ezra Jack Keats.

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

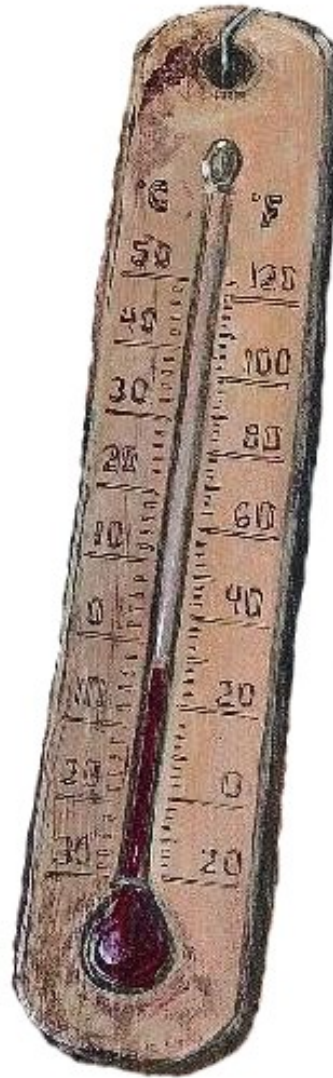


K-2: New Words

The following words appear in *April Fool, Phyllis!* On the page given, read each word in its sentence. Use the whole sentence to help you discover and describe what the word means.

Remember: you may find additional clues in the illustrations.

- prophet (pg. 4)
- treasure (4)
- whiff (4)
- cancel (6)
- blizzard (6)
- stunned (6)
- icicles (11)
- burrow (13)
- tunnel (13)
- confetti (13)
- swap (15)
- youngsters (15)
- thermometer (17)
- kettle (17)
- steam (17)
- noticed (17)
- degrees (17)
- engine (18)
- patch (20)
- tucked (23)
- solved (23)
- clung (26)
- handfuls (31)



K-3: Do a Story Interview

An interview is when one person asks another person questions about a certain subject. When a news reporter interviews someone, the reporter asks questions that begin with **who**, **what**, **when**, **where**, **why**, and **how**.

Now it's your turn to be the reporter! After your class reads *April Fool, Phyllis!*, use the spaces below to write questions about the story. When your questions are ready, choose a partner and interview each other about the story.

After your interviews, gather as a class again. What did you learn by asking your questions? What did you learn by answering your partner's questions?

Who _____ ?

What _____ ?

Why _____ ?

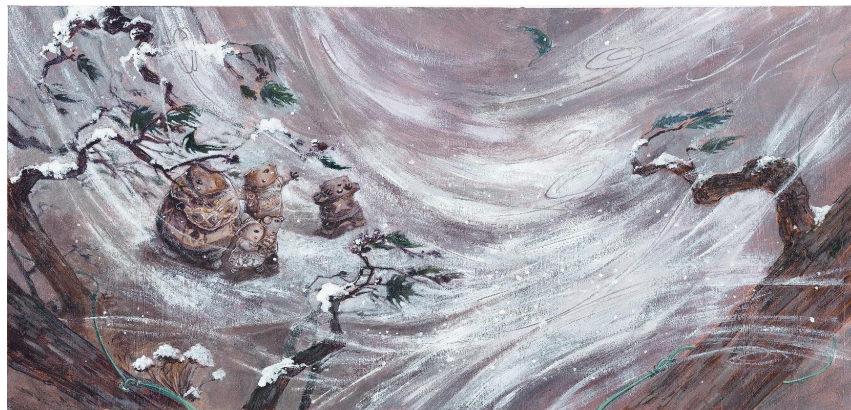
When _____ ?

Where _____ ?

How _____ ?

Bonus question:

How many _____ ?



K-4: Word Problems

1. Grandfather Groundhog bottles 5 jugs of maple syrup from one batch of sap. The next batch gives him 6 more jugs. How many jugs of syrup has Grandfather Groundhog bottled?



2. These portraits hang in the Hall of Phils:



If Phyllis adds her own portrait, how many will there be?

3. Uncle Phil makes 11 pancakes for breakfast. Hungry cousin Jill eats 3 of them. How many pancakes are left?



4. Phyllis ate 4 pieces of maple candy, Pete ate 2 pieces, and Phil Junior ate 3 pieces:



How many pieces of maple candy did the three young groundhogs eat in all?

5. Aunt Sassy creates a treasure hunt with 9 clues. Willis solves 1 clue. Phyllis solves another clue. Then Pete solves 2 clues. How many clues are left to solve?



K-5: Geometry: Find Shapes

Look at the following illustrations in *April Fool, Phyllis!* Describe the shapes of the objects in the illustrations.

Page 5: the window in the door of Phyllis's tree house

Page 7: the plates and pancakes

Page 7: the green shapes on Pete's shirt

Page 8: the map Phyllis is holding

Page 10: the shape on Phil Junior's shirt

Page 14: cousin Willis's glasses

Page 16: the floorboards in the sugar house

Page 18: the face of the clock

Page 21: the treasure hunt clue

Page 31: the black eyeglasses

What other shapes can you find?



K-6: Measurement: How Many?

Look at the illustration on pages 30 and 31 of *April Fool, Phyllis!*

Make a table to answer these questions:

- How many grown-up groundhogs are there?
- How many young groundhogs are there?
- Which group has the higher number?

Make a second table to answer these questions:

- How many groundhogs are wearing glasses?
- How many groundhogs are not wearing glasses?
- Which group has the lower number?

Make a third table to answer these questions:

- How many groundhogs are looking up?
- How many groundhogs are looking down?
- Which group has the higher number?



K-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 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
- Snow
- Windy

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.

After several weeks, review your calendar. Do you see patterns? Can you predict what the weather will be tomorrow?

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!*?



K-8: Groundhogs

A groundhog is a rodent that lives in an underground home called a burrow. A groundhog (whose scientific name is *Marmota monax*) is also called a woodchuck.

- Who in your class can say this fastest: “How much wood would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood?”

Adult groundhogs usually weigh 12 to 15 pounds.

- Using a scale, add weight or objects until you have 12 to 15 pounds.
- Look at what you put on the scale. Do you think a groundhog would feel heavy?

Adult groundhogs are about 20 inches long.

- Using a tape measure or ruler, measure 20 inches. Would a groundhog look long or short to you?
- What else besides a groundhog is about 20 inches long?

Groundhogs eat green plants, including grass, clover, and even garden vegetables. They drink very little water; instead, they get their water in their food and from the dew that settles on grass overnight. Groundhogs eat extra food in warm months to put on fat for winter.

- How is your diet (the food you eat) the same as a groundhog’s diet?
- How is your diet different from a groundhog’s diet?
- Think about ***April Fool, Phyllis!*** How is her diet different from a real groundhog’s diet?

When groundhogs hibernate for the winter, they really hibernate! Their body temperature can drop to 39°F (water freezes at 32°F), and their heartbeat and breathing become very slow. In the spring, it’s time for groundhogs to become active again. Scientists think that changes in the amount of sunlight entering the groundhog burrow tell the groundhog’s brain that spring has come.

- Do you hibernate for the winter?
- Can you name other animals besides groundhogs that hibernate?
- Imagine you didn’t have a calendar. How would you know when spring began?

Spring is when groundhogs have babies, which are called kits or cubs. A mother groundhog usually has 4 to 9 kits in April or May. They stay in the burrow nursing on their mother’s milk until midsummer, when they are big enough to venture into the world outside the burrow.

There, they begin to find their own food.

- How old were you when you learned to walk on your own?
- Can you find your own food now, or do you still need help from grownups?



For more information about groundhogs, see Appendix.

K-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?

In the space below, draw a picture of a prank. Share it with your class.

K-10: Families

Families come in all shapes and sizes. By studying families around the world and in literature, we can learn more about the cultures of places and people.

In *Punxsutawney Phyllis* and *April Fool, Phyllis!* we see that Phyllis has a big family.

- Who does Phyllis live with?
- Who do you live with?
- Do you have family members who don't live with you?
- Do you have animals you consider family members?

What sorts of things does Phyllis's family do together?

- Are they the same things you do with your family?
- What does your family do that Phyllis's family doesn't do?

Think about how Phyllis's family members help each other.

- How do the grown-ups help the young groundhogs?
- How do the young groundhogs help each other?
- How is it the same in your family?
- How is it different?



Phyllis tries to tell the grown-ups in her family about the blizzard that's coming.

- Why do you think they don't pay attention to her warnings?
- Do you sometimes feel that grown-ups in your family don't listen to you?
- Why is it important for you to listen to grown-ups, including those in your family?

What kinds of things are the young groundhogs in Phyllis's family learning from the grown-ups?

- Are you learning the same sorts of things from the grown-ups in your family?
- Describe how children can learn from their older family members.

Look at the illustration on pages 2 and 3 of *April Fool, Phyllis*.

- Who do you think the groundhogs in the portraits are?
- Do you have pictures like those in your house? Who are the people in your pictures?

Think about the time you spend with your family.

- What is a happy memory you have of your family?
- What sorts of things would you like to do with your family that you don't already do?

On a separate sheet of paper, draw a picture of your family to share with the class.

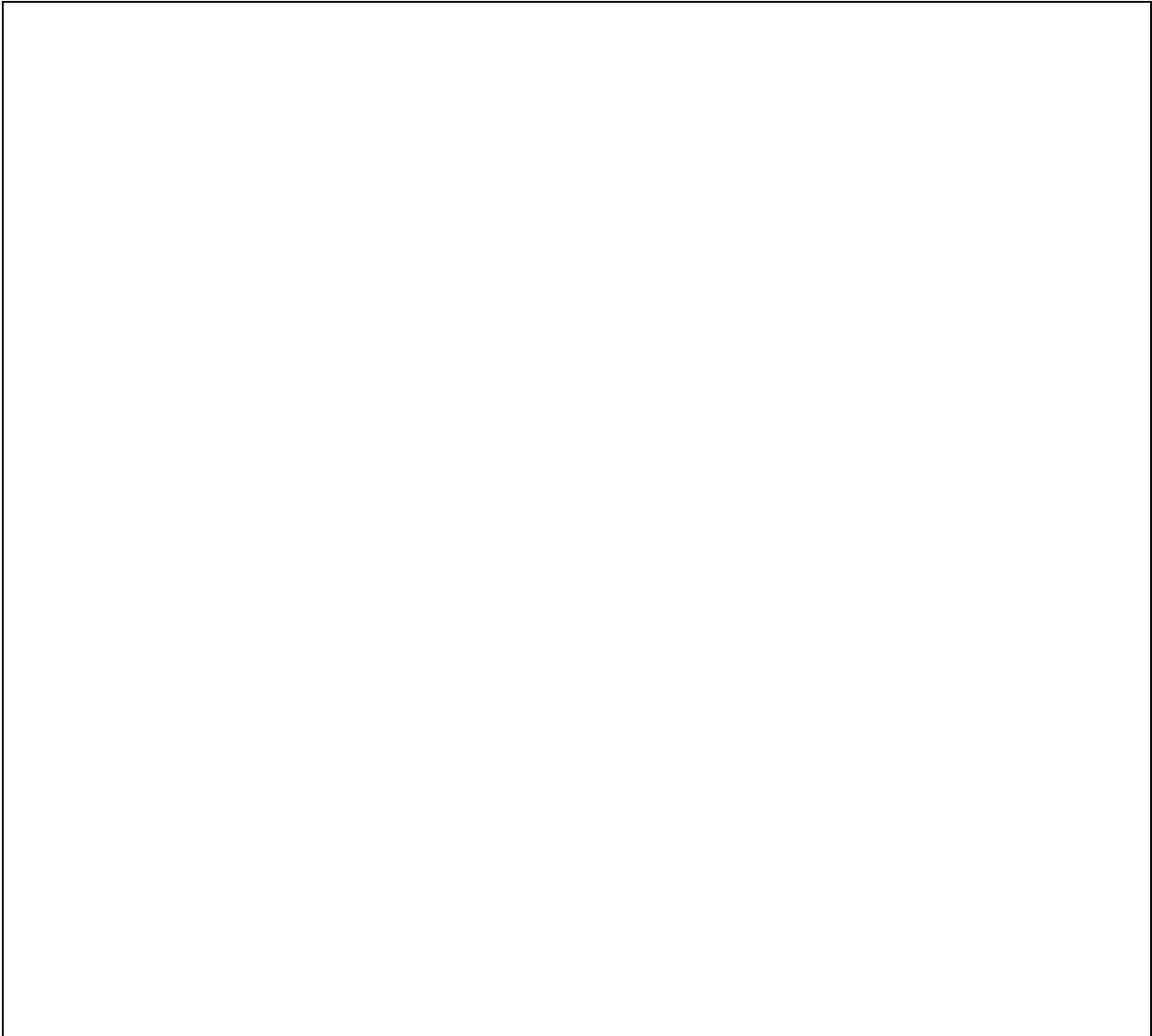
- Who is in your picture?
- Is anything happening in your picture?
- Where does your picture take place?
- If your picture was a real moment, what would happen next?

K-11: Story Drawing

Choose your favorite moment from *April Fool, Phyllis!* Use the space below to draw a picture of that moment. Use your own colors and style to show that scene however you want to.

When you finish, share your picture with your class. Be ready to answer questions about your picture, such as:

- Who does your picture show?
- What is happening in your picture?
- Why did you choose the colors you used?
- How did you show emotions (feelings) in your picture?
- What happened just before the moment you drew? What will happen just afterward?
- Did anyone else draw the same moment you drew?
 - How is their picture similar?
 - How is it different?



COMMON CORE STANDARDS

(ELA & Math only)

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

CONNECTICUT

K-7	Science K.3.1-5
K-8	Science K.2.3-4, 6
K-9	Soc Studies K.1.6, 22
K-10	Soc Studies K.1.6, 22
K-11	Visual Arts 1-3, 5

MASSACHUSETTS

K-7	Science Earth 3-5
K-8	Science Life 1, 6-8
K-9	Soc Studies K.1-2
K-10	Soc Studies K.2
K-11	Visual Arts 1-3, 5

NEW JERSEY

K-7	Science 5.1.4.A.3; 5.1.4.B.1-3; 5.4.2.A.1; 5.4.2.F.1
K-8	Science 5.3.P.A.2; 5.3.2.B.1-2; 5.3.2.C.1-2
K-9	Soc Studies 6.1.4.D.13
K-10	Soc Studies 6.1.P.D.1-4
K-11	Arts 1.1.2.D, 1.3.2.D, 1.4.2.B

NEW YORK

K-7	Science Inquiry 2.3; 3.1-3; Phys 1.1; Phys 2.1
K-8	Science Life 1.2; Life 3.1, 4.1, 5.1-2
K-9	Soc Studies 1.1-2; 2.1
K-10	Soc Studies 1.1
K-11	Visual Arts 1-3

PENNSYLVANIA

K-7	Science 3.3.3.A4-5
K-8	Science 3.1.3.A2; 3.2.3.A1
K-9	Soc Studies 8.4.3.A, C
K-10	Soc Studies 5.2.3.A-B; 8.4.3.A, C
K-11	Arts 9.1.3, 9.3.3.A-B, 9.4.3.A-B, D

GROUNDHOGS

Groundhog Day

<http://www.groundhog.org/groundhog-day/fun-facts>

Cornell Chronicle

<http://www.news.cornell.edu/chronicle/96/2.1.96/facts.html>