

Groundhog Day

(Comedy) (1993)

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Major Characters

Phil Connor.....Bill Murray

A weatherman for a Pittsburgh TV station
who is cynical and self centered.

Rita.....Andie MacDowell

A charming producer for the TV station where Phil works.

Larry.....Chris Elliot

The cameraman who works with Rita and Phil.

Ned.....Stephen Tabolowsky

An old high school friend of Phil who now sells insurance.

Plot Summary

Phil Connor is an egocentric weatherman in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, who is assigned to cover "Groundhog Day," the annual festival in the town of Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania. A groundhog is a type of very large squirrel or similar rodent that has become important in American legend because it is said that when a groundhog comes out from its underground home in early February, it predicts whether or not winter will continue. If it looks at its own shadow, winter will last six more weeks, and if it doesn't, Spring will arrive early.

In the movie, Phil goes to Punxsutawney to broadcast this event with his producer, Rita, and their cameraman, Larry. The groundhog sees his shadow, and thus winter should last six more weeks. And that should be the end of it. But in fact, it's just the beginning, for Phil wakes up the next day to find.... that it is Groundhog Day all over again. Unfortunately, he's the only one who seems to realize that this much loved day had already come and gone.

The rest of the movie is a comic exploration of a very extreme example of "deja vu," the feeling that one has already seen or experienced something. Trapped in some kind of time warp, Phil seems condemned to relive the same day over and over and over.

Fortunately, Phil is able to learn from the dilemma he finds himself in, and gradually takes advantage of all the knowledge he gets after continually reliving the same day. Once he knows what people will do, and how they think, and what they like, he soon learns to use his knowledge of the immediate future. He learns to make money, impress women, and eventually grow beyond his angry and selfish ways in order to help as many people as he can, including himself.

Words and Expressions that You may not Know

Phil, Rita and Larry get ready for the trip from Pittsburgh to Punxsutawney.

Groundhog Day

A day in which it is said that a groundhog's behavior can predict how much longer winter will last (see plot summary).

Alco, Nevada.

A small town in the State of Nevada, in the Western US.

Real estate.

Land and other property such as houses and buildings.

A front coming our way.

In a weather context, this refers to a system that will bring different temperature and climate ("a cold front").

The Three Rivers area.

The area around Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Frigid air out of the Gulf.

"Frigid" is very cold, and here, "gulf" refers to the Gulf of Mexico.

Pittsburgh.

A major city in Western Pennsylvania, a state on the East Coast

Going out on a limb.

A useful expression meaning approximately "to take a risk."
(In this case, by predicting whether conditions that the other weathermen don't think is going to happen).

Galoshes.

Plastic overshoes designed to protect shoes from the rain.

If the groundhog wakes and sees his shadow, six weeks of winter!
 The dark image formed by the blocking of light between
 the source of light and the object blocking it.

Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania.
 The small town a couple hours from Pittsburgh
 where Groundhog Day is celebrated.

The Home Shopping Network.
 A cable TV network where viewers can purchase various products.

Come on. I want to stay in Punxsutawney?
 The most diverse phrasal verb in English:
 Here, meaning "Stop lying and talk to me seriously!"

I'm leaving PBH.
 The call letters that represent the TV station where Phil works.

Groundhog Festival.
 The party in Punxsutawney for the groundhog
 who predicts what the weather will be like.

I could see the swallows return to Capistrano six years in a row.
 "Swallows" are beautiful birds. This refers to the fact that every year on
 the same day, swallows return to the town of Capistrano, California.

He wiggles his little nose and looks in his shadow.
 "To wiggle" is to move from side to side with twisting motions.

Blood sausage.
 A type of sausage that most Americans would
 think sounds pretty unpleasant!

People are morons.
 A useful word for an idiot or anybody who is particularly stupid.

It's a flea bag. I'm not staying here.
 Colloquial expression for a very dirty and unpleasant home or hotel
 ("Fleas" are the tiny insects that always bother dogs and cats).

I booked you at a very nice bed and breakfast.
 "To book" a hotel is to reserve it, and a "bed and breakfast"
 (called a "B & B") is a private home that rents out rooms like a hotel.

The trait of a good producer is to keep the talent happy.

A "trait" is a characteristic or feature of a person, and here, the "talent" is a colloquial way to refer to important employees.

Groundhog Day Arrives, and Phil prepares to broadcast the whether from the festivities.

OK, campers, rise and shine and don't forget your booties.

"Rise and shine" is a common way to wake people early in the morning. "Booties" are protective shoes to keep you dry.

Blizzard.

A violent storm with lots of snow.

The big question on everyone's lip is whether Punxsutawney Phil will see his shadow!

The name of the Groundhog that will predict the whether.

Express or cappuccino?

Two types of coffee that are popular in the US.

We may catch a break.

"We may get some good luck."

Blizzard, precipitation, cold front.

Terms used to describe the whether (A storm, rain, and cold air).

Do you want to talk about the whether, or just make chit chat?

"Chit chat" is unimportant talk done to pass the time.

Checking out today?

"To check out" is the verb used when leaving a hotel.

Ned Rhyerson! Case Western High!

Here, the name of the high school where Phil and Ned, the insurance salesman, went to school (When the name of the school is said, you don't need the word "school" after "high").

Remember?! Not a chance!

A common way to say "There is no possibility at all."

Got the shingles really bad! Bing!

"Shingles" is a painful viral disease. "Bing" is a totally ridiculous way to say something like "exactly, got you!" (Short for "bingo!").

I dated your sister until you said "no."

"To date" is to go out with someone, usually with romantic intentions.

I charged it like a bull.

One way to say "I attacked it forcefully. "

I got friends who live by the actuarial tables.

These are mathematical charts used by insurance companies in order to predict the risk of death, disease, etc.

It's one big crap-shoot anyhow.

A "crap-shoot" is a good word to describe the idea of risk, when you want to imply that life is arbitrary (Some people get lucky and some don't). "Anyhow" is Ned's ridiculous way of pronouncing "anyhow."

I got the ticket for you.

A silly cliché for "I know what you need."

A giant leech got me.

Literally, "a blood-sucking worm" (i.e....a parasite).

Some have been partying all night long.

Note that in the last 20 years, "to party" has become a legitimate verb, though it's still used mostly by teenagers.

Yeah, they're hicks.

An important slang word to describe uneducated people (usually implying from the country or a small town).

You tossed and turned.

What a person does in bed who is not sleeping well.

This tiny hamlet in Western Pennsylvania.

A "hamlet" is a small village (In the 60s, a word associated more with small towns in Vietnam than in the United States).

Punxsutawney Phil can predict it every Spring.

"That groundhog predicts it right every year."

They do the same old shtick every year.

A great Yiddish (Jewish) word meaning a method or way of doing something, often referring to a comedy routine or a writing style.

This is one time where TV fails to capture the excitement of a large squirrel predicting the whether.

A very clever line that captures Phil's cynicism.

Prima Donna!

A good word for a temperamental, spoiled or egocentric person.

Nobody honks the horn but me, OK pal?

As verbs go, "honk" is to "horn" what "flush" is to "toilet."

"Pal" is a colloquial word for friend, but depending on the context, it can be cynical and express irritation.

What blizzard? Just a couple of flakes.

A reference to "snow flakes."

What about the satellite?

Any object that circles another one, usually from space.

In this case, a reference to the man-made "weather satellite."

Celebrity.

A well-known or famous person.

Can I have one more with booze in it?

A common slang word for liquor.

Looking foxy tonight, man!

"Foxy" is a somewhat dated word for sexy, or pretty.

"Man" is often used for emotional emphasis, particularly in the common greeting "hey, man!"

Is your troupe selling cookies?

A "troupe" is a group of people, often of actors. Here, may be referring to Girl Scouts, who are known to raise money by selling cookies.

I'll go back to my room and read Hustler.

A well-known pornographic magazine.

***Phil wakes up the day after Groundhog Day...
to discover that it's Groundhog Day again.***

What is this, Miami beach?

A famous beach in Florida known for warm whether.

Chapped lips.

Cracked and dry lips, often a result of cold or windy weather.

Don't mess with me, Pork Chop.

"To mess with" someone is a colloquial way of saying to annoy them, or give them problems.

Do you ever have deja vu, Mrs. Lancaster?

A critical term in this movie: A French word, widely used in English, for the sensation that you have already been through, or experienced something before (literally, "already seen").

Cobbler's Knob.

The place in town where the Groundhog festival will happen.

I sure as heck remember you!

Added to express emotion, but a pretty conservative version of the more common "sure as hell."

Sharp as a tack, today.

A silly expression meaning alert and in good mental shape.

I got the feeling you ain't got any insurance.

Very ungrammatical way to say, in this case, "haven't."

Watch out for that first step. It's a doozy.

A not uncommon expression meaning "it's extraordinary," or in the case of a step or puddle, "it's dangerous."

Waiting for the forecast.

In this case, referring to the weather prediction.

Yeah sport, I know there's a blizzard

A nickname someone may use, but it's rare.

Needle-nose head.

A very stupid insult (never used).

The sticky buns are just heaven.

"Sticky buns" are a type of sweet breakfast pastry.

If something is "just heaven," it's especially good or wonderful.

I am wracking my brain.

"To wrack one's brain" is to think extremely hard.

Why would you make up something like this?

In this case, "to make up" something is to lie about it.

You're a producer. Come up with something.

A common colloquial way to say create,
or in this case, to think of an answer.

A blizzard was going to hit Altuna.

A small city in Pennsylvania

Phil looks for answers to see why he is going crazy.

No spots, tumors or aneurysms.

A "tumor" is usually a cancerous growth, and an "aneurysm"
is a collapsed blood vessel, often found in the brain.

CAT scan or M.R.I.

Two medical devices used to explore the human brain.

It wasn't veterinary psychology.

Adjective referring to animals, as opposed to humans.

Piña Colada.

A popular drink made with pineapple, coconut and liquor.

We made love like sea otters.

Very cute marine animals, often called "sea lions."

Is the glass half empty or half full?

To see a glass as "half full" is to be an optimist
while to see it as "half empty" is to be a pessimist
(A common metaphor used for many situations in life).

That sums it up for me.

"To sum up" something is to summarize it's most important points.

Friends don't let friends drive drunk.

A common expression (and a good idea).

I'm betting he's going to swerve first.

"To swerve" is a dramatic verb meaning to
turn suddenly, often while driving.

Let me handle this.

"Let me take care of this."

I like to see a man of advanced years throw caution to the wind.

A poetic way to say "take a major risk."

Cholesterol.

An American obsession: The substance in blood, resulting from a diet high in meat and fats, that causes heart attacks.

Love handles.

A great term for the extra fat that many people have around their hips.

I don't even have to floss.

"To floss" is to clean between teeth with dental floss (waxed string).

Vile dust from which he sprang---Sir Walter Scott.

"Vile" is a strong word for filthy, disgusting or morally despicable. Sir Walter Scott is a famous British poet.

Egocentric is your defining characteristic.

A good way to refer to one's most important quality or feature.

Doggy bag.

What you ask for in a restaurant if you want to take home leftover food (A totally appropriate thing to request!).

This town is starting to grow on me.

If something "grows on" a person, this means that they have started to like it.

Bon Appetit.

A common way to say "enjoy your food" before a meal (A French expression meaning literally "good appetite").

Phil learns the advantages of knowing the future before it happens.

"Nancy Taylor."

Name of the woman Phil pretends to have known from school.

Lincoln High School.

The school where Nancy went and Phil claims he went.

I even asked you to the prom.

An American tradition: A formal school dance at the end of the school year, and a very important social event.

I was short and I sprouted.

"To sprout" is to grow a lot quickly (it usually refers to plants).

Gosh, I should've known.

A colloquial way to begin a sentence which expresses emotion or surprise (A somewhat conservative or dated word).

Wish me luck!

A useful and common expression used before you go off to try and do something difficult.

What is this? Some kind of **one night stand**?

A common expression meaning a sexual relationship that only lasts for one night.

Nancy. Rita. Whatever.

A funny and widely used word which you would say when you're not exactly sure of the accuracy or truth of what you just said.

A gust of wind

"A gust" is a sudden burst.

Stand there with a not so bright look on your face.

"Bright" is a good word for intelligent.

Can I have a roll of quarters?

Coins are given out by banks in \$20.00 "rolls."

Call me Bronco.

A nickname associated with the American West (A "bronco" is a semi-wild horse).

Two adults, I guess

Movie tickets are sold as "adult" or "Children" (The former are more expensive).

Is this for real?

A great way to express cynicism while essentially asking "Is it really happening, or am I dreaming this?"

Phil gets to know Rita like never before, but still miscalculates on how to move forward.

What is your perfect guy? :: He's kind, sensitive and intelligent.

This is a person who would make a perfect boyfriend or husband.

He'll change poopy diapers.

"Poop" is the way a young child may say excrement (or more commonly, shit), and thus "poopy" is apparently an adjective meaning "excrement-filled," but as the movie implies, this is never used. "Diapers" are underwear for babies.

The van still won't start.

A type of covered truck with side doors and paneling.

Jim Beam and a sweet vermouth on the rocks with a twist.

Jim Beam is a brand name for hard liquor and vermouth is a type of liquor. Drinks served "on the rocks" are served with ice and "with a twist" probably means served with lemon or lime.

What should we drink to?

It is common to drink "to something," in order to celebrate or honor it.

Small town people are more real.

Perhaps a way to say people from small towns are friendlier.

Yuck! White chocolate.

A childlike way of saying "that's gross." Still a cool word for adults.

I like to go with the flow.

"To go with the flow" is to do what is easiest, or perhaps what makes people happy.

So bold of you to choose 19th century French poetry.

"Bold" is a good little adjective meaning courageous.

You weren't in broadcasting?

Refers to television and radio.

Hey, an assassin!

A murderer (usually one who kills political leaders).

He longs to kiss your lips.

Here, lyrics in a song. "To long to do" something is a poetic way of saying "wants to very much."

I'm not easily amazed.

A common and useful adjective meaning impressed, or astonished.

It's lovely.

British English for pretty or beautiful.

Beaudelaire.

Famous French poet and writer.

I got ice cream on the window sill.

The horizontal base, or ledge, of the window.

Let's not spoil it.

Note that you can spoil food, as well as an entire day or event!

The whole day has been one big set up!

As a noun, a "set up" is a well thought out plan to put somebody in a compromised or vulnerable situation (i.e...here, a set up to seduce Rita into having sex with Phil).

No white chocolate, no fudge.

A type of delicious chocolate candy ("yummy").

I want to have lots of kids. Adopt. Foster kids.

Children that are temporarily placed with a family before they are given back to their real parents or permanent adopting parents.

Here's a real humdinger over here.

A funny word for something that is remarkable or extraordinary.

Growing tired of the same old day, Phil decides that the groundhog itself is the source of his problems.

This is pitiful.

"Pitiful" is a sad word meaning pathetic, or worthy of pity.

1000 people freezing their butts off to worship a rat.

A funny line: "To freeze one's butt off" is a crude and colloquial way to say freezing. "To worship" is to honor like a god.

What **hype!**

"Hype" is a common word for excessive publicity (often implying manipulation).

Blah blah blah.

A sarcastic way to imply that whatever else needs to be said is not important enough to explain in detail.

He's out of his gourd.

A colloquial way to say "he's crazy." A "gourd" is the shell of some plants, but it is rarely used. ("He's out of his mind" is more common).

Get the word out! Someone kidnapped Punxsutawney Phil!

"Tell everyone!"

Pervert!

One who is considered a sexual deviate or sick person.

He must have just **snapped.**

"To snap" is a colloquial verb meaning to go crazy, or lose one's mind ("To snap" literally means to break suddenly, with a cracking sound).

Not bad for a **quadruped.**

The technical term for an animal who walks on four legs.

What **the hell** is he doing?

A slightly crude but very common colloquial term that adds emotion or anger to "Wh questions."

We mustn't keep **our public** waiting.

One way to say "our fans" (Note the contracted form of "must not," which most people tend to avoid).

<i>Phil tries to convince Rita of the dilemma he faces.</i>
--

It's show time!

A way to suggest you are about to provide people with a lot of good entertainment.

Oh, nuts

A less crude way to say "oh, shit."

I'm a god, not *the* god.

Put here to show Phil's excellent demonstration of the difference between the two English articles, "a" and "the."

You folks ready to order?

A slightly old-fashioned word for "people" (and sometimes, "parents").

I've been stabbed, electrocuted, buried.

"To stab" someone is a violent verb meaning to push a knife into them.

This is 12 years of Catholic School talking.

A clever way to say "I'm heavily influenced by Catholic School."

They're getting married, but she's having second thoughts.

If someone has "second thoughts," it means that they may change their mind. Often used when people get married or buy a house.

Maybe he's not omnipotent.

A key word meaning "all-powerful" (often used to describe God).

Eerie, Pennsylvania.

City on Lake Eerie.

Channel 9, Pittsburgh.

The TV station where Phil works.

A large wooden deck with a house boat.

A boat that's used as a home, often with bedrooms, kitchen, etc.

You're a sucker for French poetry and rhinestones.

If someone is "a sucker for" something, this usually means that they love it very much.

Maybe I should stay as an objective witness.

A witness without any interest in the matter. One who is neutral.

Is this what you do with eternity?

An important word referring to space or time without limits (A philosophically complex concept, like "the edge of the universe").

You'll treat me like a jerk, again.

A useful word for idiot, fool, moron, etc. (depending on the context).

Maybe it's not a curse.

A "curse" is the bad luck or evil that comes from an appeal by a witch.

Gosh, you're an upbeat lady.

"Upbeat" is a good word for optimistic or happy (Used here sarcastically).

You rat!

A pretty strong insult.

"Only god can make a tree."

A pretty poetic statement.

I swear I'd love you for the rest of my life.

"To swear" means both to promise as well as to use obscene language. Some words are just very versatile!

Pastry? Take your pick.

One way to say "choose which one you'd like."

He's the head groundhog honcho.

"The head honcho" is usually the person in charge of an organization.

Chiao!

A very European (Italian) way to say good-bye.

How she look?

Note that in rapid speech, the auxiliary verb "does" can be dropped.

Ice sculpting.

Sculpture made by carving ice before it melts.

Phil continues to learn the advantages of knowing the future.

My father was a piano mover.

A very funny line in the movie.

Can you **call in** sick?

"To call in sick" is to tell your employer that you're too sick to work.

He just **passed away**. It was just his time.

"To pass away" is a common euphemism meaning to die.

Can I see his chart?

Here, referring to "medical chart" (heart, blood pressure, etc.)

Basking in their hearths and hearts.

"To bask in" something is to take great pleasure in it.

"A hearth" is a poetic word for home, or possibly fireplace.

Man, you touched me.

Note that you can "touch someone" physically, or here, emotionally.

***In a final lesson, Phil teaches us that no matter
who we are, we can learn to live as better people...***

Can I take a rain check? I got some errands.

A "rain check" is a very useful expression for a promise that an offer will still be accepted in the future. "Errands" are specific tasks that need to be done, usually outside the house, such as food shopping, getting the car fixed, or picking up tickets.

You little brat, you never thanked me.

"Brat" is a good word for a spoiled or unpleasant child.

It's nothing, I had the tire and the jack.

The tool used to lift a car in order to change a flat tire.

There's a heck of a lot more to it than that.

Colloquial way to add emotion or emphasis
("a hell of a lot more" is more common).

I'm versatile.

"Versatile" is an important word that means capable of doing many things, or having many functions.

The fastest jack in Jefferson County

In this case, the fastest tire changer.

They've been hitting on me.

"To hit on someone" is a slangy way to say try and seduce, in order to pursue a romantic or sexual relationship.

I owe you one, buddy.

"I owe you a favor for what you did" (A buddy" is friend).

Hang on to him, he's a real find.

Here, meaning a great potential boyfriend or partner.

What did you do? Same old same old.

A somewhat dated expression meaning "the same old thing."

All I did was fan the flames of her passion.

A poetic way to say "I made her very passionate."

Dr. Conners? :: It's kind of an honorary title.

"Doctor" is usually reserved for medical doctors and those who earn a Ph.D., but some universities will occasionally give "an honorary Ph.D." to those who have contributed much to the community.

Eligible bachelors, and you ladies bid on them.

"Eligible" means qualified, and in this case, the reference is to desirable single men. "To bid" is to make a financial offer, usually done during an auction.

I got 10 bucks that says your mine.

A very common word for "dollars."

What do I bid for this guy?

At an auction, the way to say "how much will you spend for this guy?"

Whole life, term, optional, health, dismemberment.

Various terms used by insurance salesmen.

I got that.

Note that one of the most common uses of the verb "to get" is to understand (And in this case, to understand a joke).

You paid top dollar for me.

One way to say "a high price."

I said "stay" so you stayed? I can't make a collie stay!

A beautiful type of dog.

Let's live here and we'll rent to start.

One way of saying "We'll first rent a place to live in to see if we like it here, and if we do, then we'll buy a house"

Groundhog Day

Some Potential Questions for ESL Class Discussion

1. What does this movie tell us about the nature of change?
2. How did Phil change as a person by knowing what was always going to happen?
3. Do you ever have strong feelings of deja vu? Are they pleasant? Scary?
4. If you could know the future, would you want to? Are you sure?!
5. What did you like and not like about this movie?