

"Groundhog Day" has a unique structure. In the film, one day--Groundhog Day--repeats over and over, but only the story's antagonist, Phil, is able to notice and change his actions each day. Every event repeats and every other character repeats its actions, unless influenced by Phil. The day becomes predictable, to Phil and to the film's audience, allowing Phil to repeat his day until it's perfect, and making the audience look forward to each change Phil creates.

This film is much more predictable than a film with a traditional linear narrative. In "Groundhog Day," Phil is the only variable. In traditional films, there are many variables, probably even some that an audience could never predict. "Groundhog Day" engages its audience in a game of sorts: What's going to happen next? The audience knows that every event must be within certain boundaries, so it's possible to begin guessing how each day will turn out. And however wonderfully or miserably each day turns out, the audience is sure that Phil will wake up on January 2 again, so there's a sense of safety. Because Phil always wakes up on Groundhog Day, his character is allowed to do absurd things that would kill or ruin the life of a character in a traditional linear narrative. The film's structural restrictions actually allow for creative freedom.