

Hot-Air Enchantment

The International Balloon Fiesta is a captivating, annual affair held in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The event is held in October. The fiesta attracts hundreds of participants and thousands of spectators, dazzling them with its early morning mass ascensions, daily races, and spectacular evening festivities.

How do the magnificent balloons that fill the sky at the Fiesta move about? Hot-air balloons rise because the air inside the bag is warmer and lighter than the air outside. Heat for the hot-air balloon comes from a burner that uses a gas called propane. This is a safe and inexpensive gas. The burner provides the flame which in turn heats the bag. Many balloons today are filled with helium, which is lighter than air. The bag is the brightly-colored balloon part of the hot-air balloon. The bag of the hot air balloon is made of nylon or polyester. The size of the bag depends upon how much weight the hot air balloon is carrying. The basket is another part of a hot-air balloon. It hangs from strong tapes that are sewn into the bag. The basket is made of wicker or aluminum. Ballooning is a popular sport for some but is a job to others. Balloons can be used for carrying scientific instruments high into the atmosphere. These instruments collect information about the weather and air pollution.

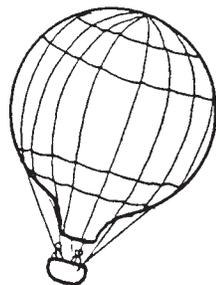
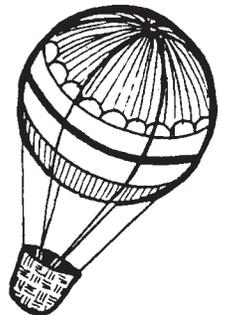
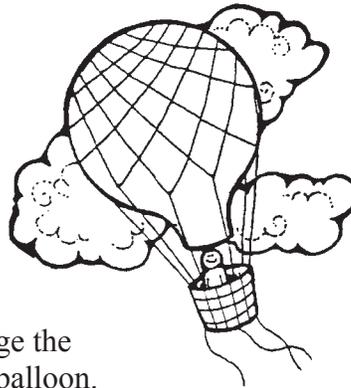
Activity 1: Make Your Own Hot-Air Balloon

Essentials

- pattern on page 194
- scissors
- glue
- hair dryer
- tissue paper

Directions

Trace the pattern onto tissue paper. Enlarge the pattern first if you wish to make a larger balloon. Lift the rectangular shapes up by folding them along the dashed lines. To form the box shape of the balloon, fold the tabs in and glue them to the appropriate sides. Allow glue to dry. Holding the open end of the balloon down, inflate it with the heat from a hair dryer. Watch your balloon rise!



Activity 2: Rising To the Occasion

Essentials

- balloons
- felt-tip marker

Directions

Choose a personal or academic goal you would like to achieve this year. Inflate a balloon and write your name and the goal you have selected on a balloon. Attach the balloon to a wall or bulletin board displaying other students' balloons. When you have reached your goal, pop the balloon, indicating that you have been successful!

Hot-Air Enchantment *(cont.)*

Follow the directions on page 193 to make e your own hot-air balloon.

