

Andy Geppert

THE BALLOON BLOW UP!



TEACHERS RESOURCES

Andy Geppert

THE BALLOON BLOW UP!

Teachers Resources by Robyn Sheahan-Bright

Introduction	3
Themes & Curriculum Topics	3
<i>Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS)</i>	
<i>Science</i>	
<i>English Language and Literacy</i>	
<i>Visual Literacy</i>	
<i>Creative Arts</i>	
<i>Learning Technologies</i>	
<i>Mathematics</i>	
Further Topics for Discussion & Research	6
Conclusion	6
Author's/Illustrator's Notes	6
About the Author/Illustrator	6
Worksheets	7
Bibliography	11
About the Author of the Notes	12

INTRODUCTION

*Would you like a balloon?
Yes please, Elly. Can you make it big?
How big?*

Even small questions are big when you're a kid. In this charming picture book, a little girl must decide how big she wants her yellow balloon to be. As big as a fishbowl or even bigger, like the moon? She has to decide quickly because it looks like the balloon has its own ideas.

Andy Geppert's sense of humour makes for an hilarious reading experience with this highly engaging and touching text.

THEMES & CURRICULUM TOPICS

HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES (HASS)

Several learning concepts explored in this book are relevant to the following Curriculum Area:
<<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/humanities-and-social-sciences/hass/>>

DECISION MAKING

Discussion Point: As children grow, they develop the capacity to make decisions and choices. This book takes a whimsical look at this subject by exploring a child's indecision about how large she wants her yellow balloon to be. Such decisions are often difficult for a small child confronted with myriad choices. Discuss with students the choices they have made recently and what made them choose a particular option.

BIG AND LITTLE AS A CONCEPT

Discussion Point: The narrator contrasts big and little things. There is a list of words describing large things. What other words do you know which describe something which is very large? Or very small?

FEARS AND DANGERS

Discussion Point: The balloon demands that the child owner sign a 'contract', protecting the balloon from potential misuse or danger. Draw up a contract containing rules forbidding someone to expose *you* to the things you fear the most.

SCIENCE

This is relevant to the following Curriculum Area:
<<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/science/>>

Activity: Balloons can be used in a variety of science experiments. Conduct some with your students. [See **Bibliography**.]

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

This is relevant to the following Curriculum Area:
<<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/english/>>
The text of this book might be studied in relation to the following aspects.

Activity: The book contains lists of ‘spiky, cutty and bitey things’ which threaten a balloon. What other ‘spiky, cutty or bitey things’ might a balloon be frightened of? Make your own list of such things.

Discussion Point: Andy Geppert’s books are always very humorous. What did you find most amusing in this text?

Activity: This whimsical and charming work contains elements which are not immediately obvious. Is the elephant a toy or an imaginary friend? Is the panda a toy or a costume? Invite students’ thoughts and test their comprehension by asking them questions about the written and visual text. [See also **Author/Illustrator’s Notes** below.]

Activity: Read other picture books which feature balloons. [See **Bibliography**.]

Activity: Write poems expressing feelings about balloons. [See **Worksheet 2**.]

VISUAL LITERACY

This is relevant to the following Curriculum Area:
<<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/the-arts/visual-arts/>>

The visual text of a book combines with the written text to tell the story using the various parts of the book’s design and illustrations, as explored below:

Activity: The **cover** depicts the child with the elephant holding the yellow balloon. Bunting stretches across the page above her, suggesting some sort of celebration. Design your own cover for this book.

Activity: The **endpapers** feature the child holding the balloon. Invite students to draw, paint or collage an image of the child holding balloons. [See also **Worksheet 1** below.] Create a classroom mural using all the images.

Activity: The **medium or style** employed is sketching and digital illustration. ‘My technique is one that blends hand sketching with a soft watercolour feel.’
‘Interview with illustrator Andy Geppert’, *Sweets Workshop*,
<<http://sweetsworkshop.blogspot.com/2011/01/interview-with-illustrator-andy-geppert.html>>
The **colours** used in this book are largely muted greys and browns foregrounding the use of yellow as a prominent motif. Invite students to examine the artwork and then to create an image in a similar style.

CREATIVE ARTS

There are many creative activities suggested by this text:

1. Create a **Classroom Display** – a balloon arch over the display of the images that students have drawn of the child holding a yellow balloon. See: 'Making a Basic Balloon Arch', *wikiHow*, <<https://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Balloon-Arch>>
2. Create a **Balloon Elephant Card** using a deflated balloon. See instructions here: '25 Balloon Crafts for Kids Who Love Balloons', *Cool Kids Crafts*, <<https://coolkidscrafts.com/balloon-crafts/>>
3. Create an **Elephant Mask**. [See **Worksheet 4**.]
4. Have students use balloons to create different types of art, such as balloon animals or balloon sculptures. Or dip the balloons in paint to create unique patterns (see <https://www.instructables.com/Balloon-Painting/>).
5. In the book, the child is wearing a yellow furry suit, an elephant is blowing up the balloon for the child, there is a panda toy or costume draped over a stool, the cupboard seems to contain another elephant costume, and the child imagines being an astronaut at one point. Take inspiration from this theme of a variety of costumes and have fun choosing costumes from a **dress-up box**.
6. Promote the book to your classmates by either creating a **Poster** or a **Book Trailer**. [See **Bibliography**.]

LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES

This text may be used in the following Curriculum Area:

<<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/technologies/>>

Activity: Research the author/illustrator's work online.

MATHEMATICS

Several themes are relevant to the following Curriculum Area:

<<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/mathematics/>>

Activity: Have fun counting things in this text. [See **Worksheet 3** below for mathematics activities.]

Activity: Inflate several balloons as a class and write a different number on each of them. Each student is to pick a balloon, and then everyone should get into different pairs, or groups of three, to solve sums by adding up the numbers on their balloons.

FURTHER TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

- Research the work of Andy Geppert. Compare this to his other books.
- Students might research this book in comparison to reading other picture books such as those listed in the **Bibliography**.
- Investigate any other topic not covered in these notes which you consider is suggested by this text.

CONCLUSION

This is a joyously amusing picture book text about making choices and about playing, imagining and learning. Andy Geppert's humorous text and illustrations entertain as they playfully explore the small decisions which can trouble a child and how they might resolve them.

AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR'S NOTES

The Balloon Blow Up explores the ups and downs of making bigger-than-big decisions. An adventurous girl with a wild imagination and her soft toy elephant, Elly, can't decide how big to blow up their balloon. Until an exhausted, shrivelled little balloon takes control, issuing the pair with an official balloon owner's contract. The contract teaches kids everything they need to know about becoming a brilliant balloon owner.

There are hairy mammoths, ninjas with swords, narwhals and a lot of unexpected fun for children aged 2 to 5.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

Andy Geppert is an award-winning art director turned award-winning picture book artist and author. As a one-of-a-kind storyteller, Andy takes his readers on a journey to discover some unique and beautiful characters while also discovering themselves. His stories captivate with delicately crafted illustrations which depict themes that are emotionally relevant and profoundly important to his readers' young lives. *Little Big Tree* has been awarded the prestigious Crichton Award for new illustrators. His follow-up picture book *Meep* was selected as a Notable Book by the Children's Book Council of Australia. Andy currently works and resides in Brisbane, Australia.

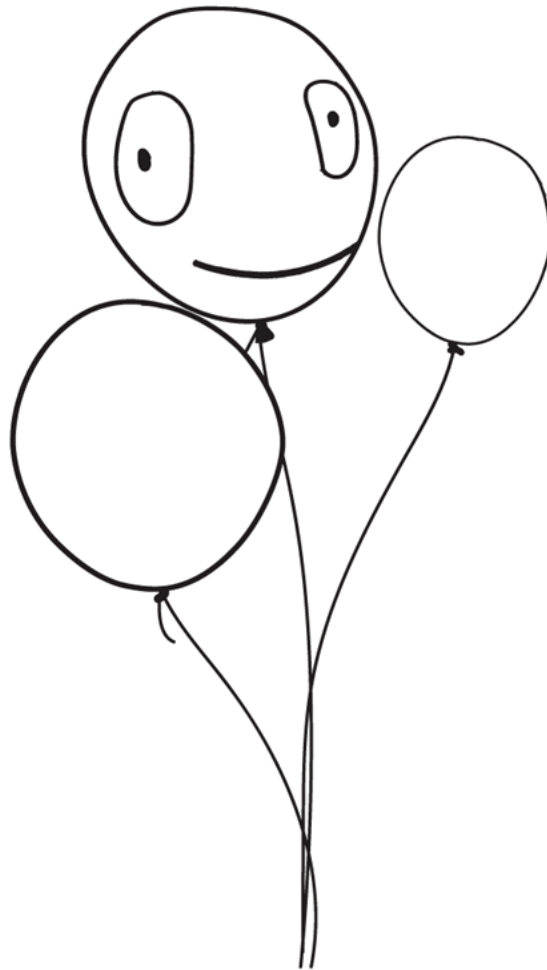
See his website: <https://www.andygeppert.com>

See also: 'Featured Artist: Andy Geppert', *The Finders Keepers*,
<<http://www.thefinderskeepers.com/blog/2010/06/featured-artist-andy-geppert/>>
'Interview with illustrator Andy Geppert', Sweets Workshop,
<<http://sweetsworkshop.blogspot.com/2011/01/interview-with-illustrator-andy-geppert.html>>

WORKSHEETS

WORKSHEET 1. COLOURING IN

Draw a child so they're holding this bunch of balloons, add a landscape, then colour in the image.



WORKSHEET 2. POEMS

A) ACROSTIC POEM

Use the letters in the word BALLOON to write an acrostic poem.

B	
A	
L	
L	
O	
O	
N	

B) HAIKU POEM

A haiku poem contains three lines. The first and last lines have five syllables and the middle line has seven syllables. Write your own haiku about a balloon or your favourite toy.

WORKSHEET 3. MATHS

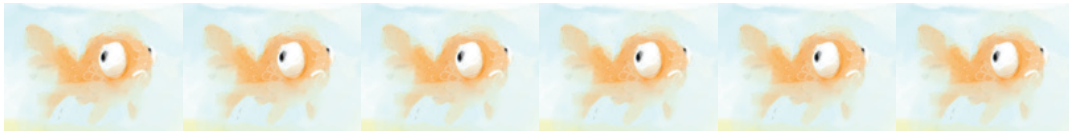
1. How many elephants would you have if you multiplied those below by three?



2. How many balloons would be left if you divided the balloons below by two?



3. How many goldfish are left if you subtracted two from those below?



4. How many pandas would you have if you added sixteen to those below?



5. How many toasters would be left if you divided the below by three?



6. How many cats can you see below?



7. How many cats would be left if you subtracted three from those above?

8. How many crocodiles would you have if you multiplied those below by ten?



9. Take twenty-five from the answer to 8. above and how many crocodiles would you have?

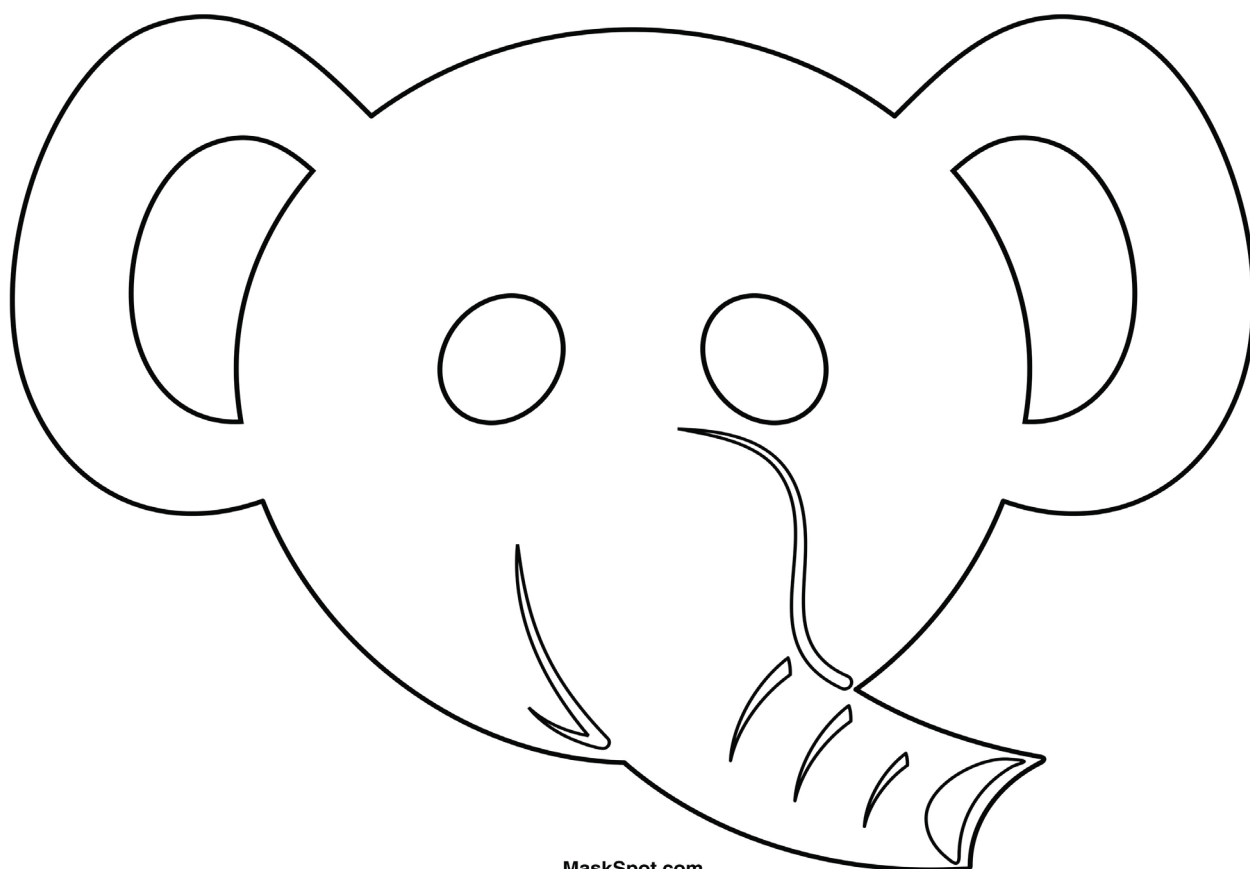
10. How many pug dogs would be left if you divided those below by four?



ANSWERS: 1. Twenty-four 2. Three 3. Four 4. Twenty-two 5. Two 6. Seven 7. Four 8. Sixty 9. Thirty-five 10. Two

WORKSHEET 4. ELEPHANT MASK

Colour the below mask, then glue it to craft paper and cut it out. Attach hat elastic to the sides so you can then wear it.



From: 'Elephant Mask' *Mask Spot*
<<https://maskspot.com/download/elephant-mask/>>

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PICTURE BOOKS

- Bedia, Elizabeth Gilbert, *Balloons for Papa: A Story of Hope and Empathy*, Ill. by Erika Meza, HarperCollins, 2021.
- Bernstein, Ariel, *I Have a Balloon*, Ill. by Scott Magoon, Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2017.
- Bunting, Eve *My Red Balloon*, Ill. by Kay Life, Astra Young Readers, 2005.
- Curtis, Jamie Lee, *Where Do Balloons Go? An Uplifting Mystery*, Ill. by Laura Cornell, HarperCollins, 2000.
- Daywalt, Drew, *The Day the Crayons Quit*, Ill. Jeffers, Oliver, HarperCollins Publishers, 2013.
- Freeman, Don, *Corduroy*, Penguin Group USA, 1968.
- Inkpen, Mick, *Kipper: The Blue Balloon (30 Years Anniversary Edition)*, Hodder Children's Books, 2019.
- Jeffers, Oliver, *A Little Stuck*, HarperCollins Publishers, 2016.
- Krosoczka, Jarrett J., *It's Tough to Lose Your Balloon*, Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2015.
- Lamorisse, Albert, *The Red Balloon*, Doubleday Books for Young Readers, 1967.
- Margulies, Julianna and Paul *Three Magic Balloons*, Ill. by Grant Shaffer, Random House Books for Young Readers, 2016.
- Na, Il Sung, *Bird, Balloon, Bear*, Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2017.
- Papageorge, Tiffany, *My Yellow Balloon*, Ill. by Erwin Madrid, Minoan Moon Publishing House, 2014.
- Raschka, Chris, *The Purple Balloon*, Schwartz & Wade, 2007.
- Sakai, Komako, *Emily's Balloon*, Chronicle Books, 2015.
- Sanders, Rob, *Ball & Balloon*, Ill. by Helen Yoon, Margaret McElderry Books, 2019.
- Santat, Dan, *After the Fall*, Lothian Children's Books, 2017.
- Spires, Ashley, *The Most Magnificent Thing*, Kids Can Press, 2014.
- Stead, Philip C., *Sebastian and the Balloon*, Roaring Brook Press, 2014.
- Sweet, Melissa, *Balloons Over Broadway: The True Story of the Puppeteer of Macy's Parade*, Clarion Books, 2011.
- Voss, Jonathan D., *The Wishing Balloons*, Ill. by Henry Holt and Co, 2022.
- Ward, Lindsay, *Please Bring Balloons*, Dial Books, 2013.

NON-FICTION

- Giovinco, Gerry, *The Big Book of Balloon Art: More Than 100 Fun Sculptures*, Dover Publications, 2019.

WEBSITES - TEACHING RESOURCES

'Elephant Mask', *Mask Spot*,
<<https://maskspot.com/download/elephant-mask/>>

'Haiku', *KidZone.ws*,
<<https://www.kidzone.ws/poetry/haiku.htm>>

'How To Make a Book Trailer', *Tristan Bancks*,
<<https://www.tristanbancks.com/2016/03/how-to-make-book-trailer.html>>

'Making a Basic Balloon Arch', *wikiHow*,
<<https://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Balloon-Arch>>

'20 Balloon Experiments to Make Your Lessons Really Pop', *We Are Teachers*,
<<https://www.weareteachers.com/balloon-experiments/>>

'25 Balloon Crafts for kids Who Love Balloons', *Cool Kids Crafts*,
<<https://coolkidscrafts.com/balloon-crafts/>>

ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THE NOTES

Dr Robyn Sheahan-Bright AM operates justified text writing and publishing consultancy services, and is widely published on children's literature, publishing history and Australian fiction. In 2011 she was the recipient of the CBCA (Qld Branch) Dame Annabelle Rankin Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in Queensland, in 2012 the CBCA Nan Chauncy Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in Australia, and in 2014, the QWC's Johnno Award. In 2021, she was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia.

