

Bookfolio for **The Twenty-One Balloons**

Author: [William Pene Du Bois](#)

Illustrator: William Pene Dubois

First Publication Date: 1947

Publisher: Viking

ISBN: 0670734411

Recommended for: [Grades 4-6](#)

Classification: Fiction

Genre: [Fantasy](#)

Story Summary: Professor William Waterman Sherman is a retired teacher of mathematics. He sets out in a hot-air balloon that he designed to take him away from the doldrums of his life to the freedom and solitude that goes with flying above land and sea. With the whims of the wind as his only master, he embarks on an unprecedented adventure that culminates in his record-making flight "around the world" in forty days. In his account of this adventure before the Western American Exploratory Club, he tells of the twenty families -- artists and inventors -- who greeted him on the island of Krakatoa, when a sea gull literally cut his trip short. He explains they made him a permanent resident of their lavish community supported by a diamond mine which, if known and spread over the rest of the world, would render the diamonds no more valuable than the pebbles on the beach. The community had set up a unique form of government, the Gourmet Government. To fill their days with activities, they developed fantastic and imaginative inventions and built magnificent structures. Despite what appears to be the ideal country, the twenty families are prepared to abandon Krakatoa with their most important invention, the same giant balloon life raft with which Professor Sherman had been found in the opening scene. The devastating explosion of Krakatoa, a real event in 1883, lends credibility to an otherwise incredible story.

Read-aloud Recommendation: Chapter IV, "The Unwelcomed Visitor," pages 47-59

**The skills for each activity are identified by the following abbreviations:
R=Reading, W=Writing, S=Speaking, L=Listening, D=Drawing**

The Twenty-One Balloons - Independent Activities	Skills
1. Dear Professor Sherman (Writing a letter)	S , W
2. A Unique Room (Making a model)	D
3. Design a Balloon (Making a model)	D , R
4. Ring of Fire (Writing a report)	R , S , W
5. Communicate with Symbols (Creating symbols)	D
6. Current Events (Making a poster)	D , R , S
The Twenty-One Balloons - Group Activities	Skills
1. Second Adventure (Planning another adventure)	W
2. The Quest Theme (Discussing plot structure)	L , S
3. Around the World (Making a map)	D , S
4. Up, Up, and Away! (Making a bulletin board display)	D , R , W
5. Choose a Winner (Discussing Newbery Medal winners)	R , S
6. "Let's Talk About..." (Discussing the story)	L , S

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