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# HOT-AIR HENRY

Author: Mary Calhoun

Illustrator: Erick Ingraham

Publisher: William Morrow & Co.

## THEME:

Rising above the clouds in hot-air balloons, airplanes, helicopters and space-ships can provide a whole new perspective on the world.

## PROGRAM SUMMARY:

A sassy Siamese cat stows away on a hot-air balloon and ends up taking a fur-raising flight around the countryside. On a visit to a hot-air ballooning event in South Carolina, LeVar experiences a colorful and memorable trip in a hot-air balloon. He then provides viewers with a comical look into the past at some flying machines that never made it off the ground and a tour of the National Space Camp in Huntsville, Alabama, where children find out what it takes to become an astronaut.

## TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION:

Ask students what they know about hot-air balloons. Have they ever seen one? Has anyone been to a ballooning event? Has anyone ever ridden in a hot-air balloon?

Discuss with the class why Henry wanted to fly and whether they think he would like to go flying again or not. Why do *people* enjoy flying?

The end of the story says that Henry was a “wise old flying cat.” Ask students if they agree with that statement and why.

Ask students what they think would be the most adventurous part of taking a hot-air balloon ride.

After watching the program, discuss with students some things they might need to know in order to travel in outer space.

## CURRICULUM EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

After the students have watched the program and have a better idea of how hot-air balloons work, have them construct a Venn diagram comparing a helicopter with a hot-air balloon.

Have students paint watercolor pictures of hot-air balloons in whatever designs, patterns, and colors they wish. Cut them out and mount them on a background of sky with land below.

Brainstorm a list of things that can fly. Have students sort the items into different categories (e.g., animals, mechanically powered, human powered, etc.).

Brainstorm words that describe a cat. Encourage students to think about behaviors of cats in addition to the way they look and feel. Write the words on an enlarged cutout of a cat and display the chart in the classroom so that students may add to it and use the words in stories and poems they write. As a class, decide which words describe Henry, and have students write his name next to those words.

Henry is a Siamese cat. With the help of the school library media specialist, have students locate information about breeds of cats. In particular, have them find out what characteristics make Siamese cats different from other cats. If any students have a Siamese cat for a pet, they might wish to share their expertise.

Flying in a hot-air balloon would provide someone with a “bird’s-eye view” of what is below. Have students imagine that they are in a balloon and discuss this concept. Use photographs, art prints, or picture book illustrations (some of the pictures in *Hot-Air Henry* will help) that show scenes from above. Have them choose a place with which they are very familiar, such as the classroom, their bedroom at home, their own backyard, the school playground, etc., and sketch a bird’s-eye view of that place.

Mary Calhoun and Erick Ingraham have collaborated on four other books featuring Henry: *Cross-Country Cat*, *High-Wire Henry*, *Henry the Sailor Cat*, and *Blue-Ribbon Henry*. Read some of these further adventures to the students. As a class, brainstorm additional adventures that they would like to see in a book about Henry. Have the students each draw a picture of Henry on one of *their* adventures and write the story to match their drawing.

## RELATED THEMES:

space flight  
birds  
flight

## RELATED READING RAINBOW PROGRAMS:

Program #64 — Bored—Nothing To Do!  
Program #52 — Duncan And Dolores  
Program #31 — Space Case

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Mary Calhoun knew she wanted to be an author even as a young child growing up in Iowa. She began her career as a writer by working as a newspaper reporter, but it was her interest in storytelling that led her to a career in

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children's literature. She is the author of fiction and nonfiction for middle grade and adolescent readers, in addition to writing picture books. With many books to her credit, she is still an avid storyteller. Mary Calhoun and her husband make their home in Clark, Colorado.

**ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR:**

A native of Philadelphia, Erick Ingraham's talent for drawing was encouraged by his parents and teachers in early childhood. He has a degree in fine arts and painting, and early in his career, illustrated primarily science and technical books. Now, as an illustrator of children's books, he strives for "visual reinforcement of the personality of the character" and hopes that readers will want to return to his books again and again. Erick Ingraham lives with his family in Peterborough, New Hampshire.

**BOOKS REVIEWED BY CHILDREN:**

EASY-TO-MAKE SPACESHIPS THAT REALLY FLY  
by Mary & Dewey Blocksma, illus. by Marisabina Russo (Prentice-Hall)

THE BIG BALLOON RACE  
by Eleanor Coerr, illus. by Carolyn Croll (HarperCollins)

JUST US WOMEN  
by Jeanette Caines, illus. by Pat Cummings (HarperCollins)

**SUPPLEMENTARY BOOKLIST:**

THE GREAT VALENTINE'S DAY BALLOON RACE  
by Adrienne Adams (Scribners)

THE U.S. SPACE CAMP BOOK OF ASTRONAUTS  
by Anne Baird (Morrow)

FLYING IN A HOT AIR BALLOON  
by Cheryl Walsh Bellville (Carolrhoda)

HOT AIR BALLOONING  
by Christie Costanzo (Capstone Press)

NATHAN'S BALLOON ADVENTURE  
by Lulu Delacre (Scholastic)

THE GRUMPALUMP  
by Sarah Hayes, illus. by Barbara Firth (Clarion)

LOOK UP, LOOK DOWN  
by Tana Hoban (Greenwillow)

FIRE AND SILK: FLYING IN A HOT-AIR BALLOON  
by Neil Johnson (Joy Street/Little, Brown)

A RAINBOW BALLOON  
by Ann Lenssen (Cobblehill/Dutton)

BALLOON RIDE  
by Evelyn Clark Mott (Walker)

BALLOON TRIP: A SKETCHBOOK  
by Huck Scarry (Prentice-Hall)

THREE IN A BALLOON  
by Sarah Wilson (Scholastic)

