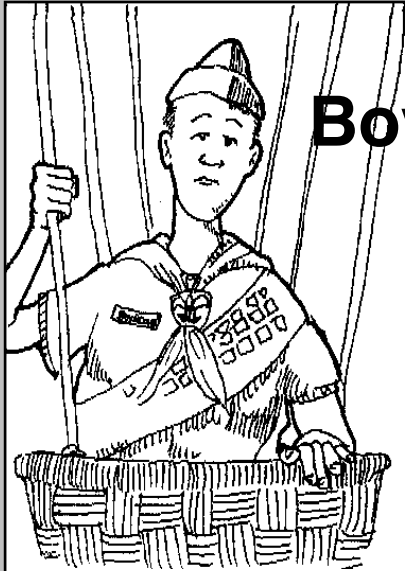


The Great Balloon Debate

(Characters 1-4)



The Boy scout

Age: 16
Single
One sister

Qualities

Honest, basic survival skills, a good student.
Likes fishing, sports and camping.



The Doctor

Age: 42
Married
Two kids

Qualities

Intelligent, quiet, a very good doctor.
Likes traveling, cooking and quilting.



The Priest

Age: 33
Single
Two brothers

Qualities

Hardworking, gentle, always ready to help.
Likes building things and using a computer.



The Nurse

Age: 28
Married
No kids

Qualities

Very popular and outgoing, optimistic.
Likes talking, shopping and gardening.

The Great Balloon Debate

(Characters 5-8)



The Volunteer

Age: 51
Married
Three kids

Qualities

Very friendly and generous. Likes to gossip. Enjoys baking and visiting elderly people.



The Builder

Age: 39
Married
Two sons

Qualities

Strong and can build almost anything. Likes fixing things and being with his family.



The Teacher

Age: 25
Engaged
Two sisters
One brother

Qualities

Clever, fun to be with, always helping others. Likes swimming and playing the piano.



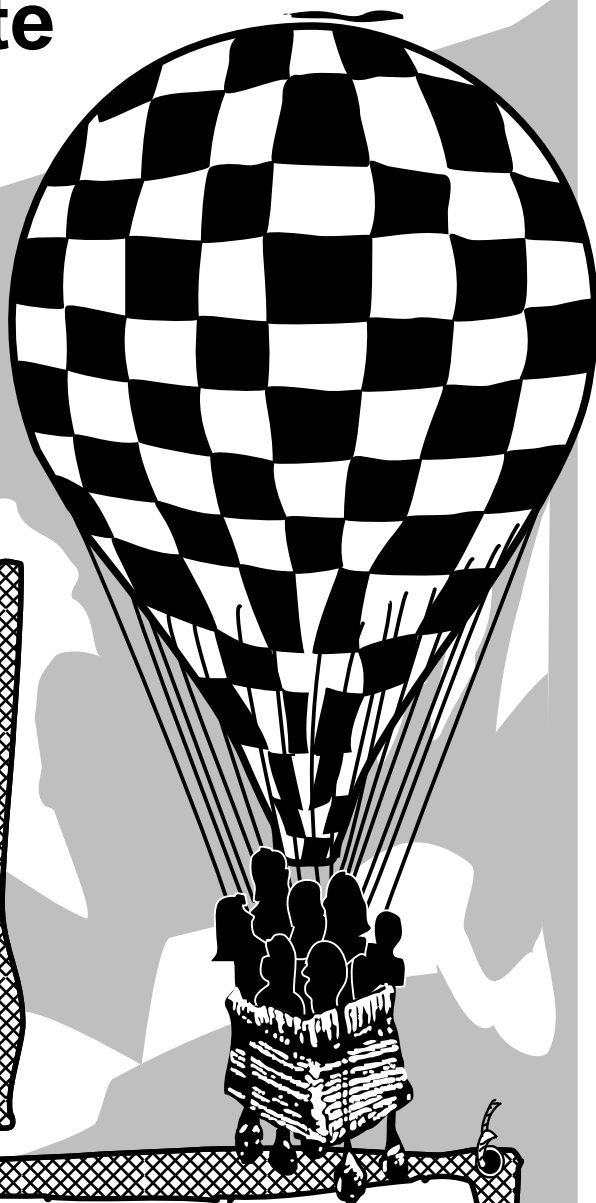
The Politician

Age: 52
Married
Three kids
(One is adopted)

Qualities

Natural leader, good communicator. Likes working and playing chess.

The Great Balloon Debate



First Meeting

	Yes	No
1. The Boy scout	X	X
2. The Doctor	X	X
3. The Priest	X	X
4. The Nurse	X	X
5. The Volunteer	X	X
6. The Builder	X	X
7. The Teacher	X	X
8. The Politician	X	X

Second Meeting

	Yes	No
1. The Boy scout	X	X
2. The Doctor	X	X
3. The Priest	X	X
4. The Nurse	X	X
5. The Volunteer	X	X
6. The Builder	X	X
7. The Teacher	X	X
8. The Politician	X	X

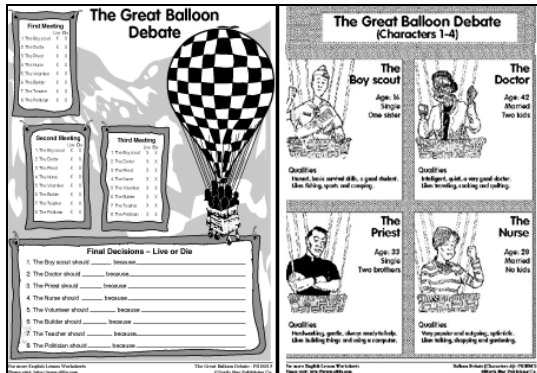
Third Meeting

	Yes	No
1. The Boy scout	X	X
2. The Doctor	X	X
3. The Priest	X	X
4. The Nurse	X	X
5. The Volunteer	X	X
6. The Builder	X	X
7. The Teacher	X	X
8. The Politician	X	X

Final Decisions – Yes or No

1. The Boy scout should _____ because _____
2. The Doctor should _____ because _____
3. The Priest should _____ because _____
4. The Nurse should _____ because _____
5. The Volunteer should _____ because _____
6. The Builder should _____ because _____
7. The Teacher should _____ because _____
8. The Politician should _____ because _____

The Great Balloon Debate



1. Student ability: **High Beginner ~ Advanced**
2. Approximate length of lesson: **45+**
3. Number of students necessary: **4+**
4. Preferred age/maturity: **HS, College, Adult**
5. Type of lesson: **Group Work Activity**

* * * * *

Language Target: Discussion, agreeing / disagreeing, convincing others, **fighting for survival*** –or– **selecting the best people****.

Setting Up: Prepare a set of Character Cards for each group of 8 students. (This can be done with groups of four or six students as well.)

Getting Started: In class, group the students and give each student one Character card and one Great Balloon Debate worksheet.

Scenario #1*: **The fight for survival** (Read or paraphrase this to the class)

At a remote island, a volcano suddenly started to erupt. There was no time for an escape and there were no means of transportation off the small island except for one hot air balloon.

All of the people in your group

managed to climb aboard the hot air balloon but it is dangerously heavy. If two (or three) people are thrown overboard, the balloon will have a better chance to make it to the safety of a distant island. If not, everyone will surely die.

Students may want more time to press their cases, but to control the time, remind them that the balloon is quickly descending, and there is no rescue in sight. Suicide is not permitted, everyone must fight for survival.

(Optional information: there are many hungry sharks swimming in the water below.)

The question is, who should stay in the balloon (**Yes**) or be pushed out (**No**).

Scenario #2:** **Selecting the best people** (Read or paraphrase this to the class)

Eight volunteers have given up their three week vacation to help with disaster relief in a small town which has suffered from severe flood damage. Only five (or six) of the eight volunteers will be allowed to participate.

Step 1: In groups of 8, each student is given one of the characters from the worksheet. They begin by introducing themselves (their assumed characters) to their group mates. Encourage students to elaborate about themselves if they like. They might even want to ask each other questions – great for discussion.

Step 2: Within the group, students pair off and discuss the other members. They plot against one (or two) of the others (**Scenario #1**) and give reasons why he or she should stay or be thrown out. (**Scenario #2**), students discuss which of the others they would / would not rather work with in the disaster-stricken town.

For each meeting, students should keep a record of their discussion on the **Great Balloon Debate** worksheet in the box titled **First Meeting**. This discussion is confidential.

After approximately three to five minutes, new pairs are formed and they again discuss which one(s) should be included or not. These results go in the box titled **Second Meeting**. Finally, new pairs are formed and following the discussion, results are written in the **Third Meeting** box.

Step 3: All students look at the bottom of the worksheet **Final Decisions – Yes or No**. They should take a little time to write in their individual answers.

Step 4: Final discussion. Before the results are announced, encourage the students to make an appeal to the others in the group as to why they should or should not be included. After all of the speeches, allow students a second or two to change their minds. Then, one by one, students read off their **Final Decisions**. The student with the most **Yes** votes is included.

Variation 1: After the final votes are cast, allow students to give another speech to their balloon mates, either in gratitude for being spared or in supplication, bribes or threats if they haven't been included.

Variation 2: (This variation will increase the total time of this activity by at least 20 minutes.)

After students have finished all three meetings, but **before** making the **Final**

Illustrated by Paul Nowak
Contributed by Doug Belford

Decision, explain that some additional information about each character has just come in on the radio. (Adjust this information according to the age and ability of the students):

- 1) The Boy scout has been put on probation for public indecency.
- 2) The Doctor has been accused of at least a dozen malpractice cases.
- 3) The Priest fathered a daughter several years ago but keeps this a secret.
- 4) The Nurse was arrested twice for drunk driving in the last three years.
- 5) The Volunteer is suspected of taking donation money from the elderly.
- 6) The Builder collects hand guns and believes everyone has the right to own them.
- 7) The Teacher divorced her first husband so that she could marry her boyfriend.
- 8) The Politician may have taken bribes from his brother's construction company.

Allow students to question each other and defend themselves about this "new" information.

Building Fluency: When all the groups have finished, each group explains which character(s) they included. As a class, discuss why the individuals were not included, i.e., the reasons behind the decisions.

Similar Lesson:

The Lifeboat

(Lesson Collection Set #5 – Lesson 09a)

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