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bal·loon  (bə- l ŋ)

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n.

1.

a. A flexible bag designed to be inflated with hot air or with a gas, such as helium, that is lighter than the surrounding air, causing it to rise and float in the atmosphere.

b. Such a bag with sufficient capacity to lift and transport a suspended gondola or other load.

c. Such a bag shaped like a figure or object when inflated; an inflatable.

2. A usually round or oblong inflatable rubber bag used as a toy or decoration.

3. *Medicine* An inflatable device that is inserted into a body cavity or structure and distended with air or gas for therapeutic purposes, such as angioplasty.

4.

a. See **speech bubble**.

b. See **thought bubble**.

5. A balloon payment.

v. **bal·looned**, **bal·loon·ing**, **bal·loons**

v.*intr.*

1. To ascend or ride in a balloon.

2. To expand or swell out like a balloon. See Synonyms at [bulge](#).

3. To increase or rise quickly: *expenses ballooning out of control*.

v.*tr.*

To cause to expand by or as if by inflating: *unforeseen expenditures that ballooned the deficit*.

adj.

Suggestive of a balloon, as in shape: *balloon curtains*.

[French *ballon*, from Italian dialectal *ballone*, augmentative of *balla*, ball, of Germanic origin; see **bhel**-² in the Appendix of Indo-European roots.]

bal·loon *ist n.*

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