

 This poem is by Eric Finney.

# The Balloon Man

The balloon man stands  
In the town square.  
Winter and summer  
He's always there

With a bunch of balloons  
All sizes and shapes:  
Sausages and hearts,  
Rhinos and apes;

And every colour  
You've ever seen:  
Silver and violet,  
Orange and green.

He holds them  
Like a big bouquet  
As they tug and bounce  
And bump and sway.

One windy morning  
He wasn't there:  
His balloons had lifted him  
High in the air

And carried along  
By the wind's force,  
He waved down to the crowd -  
One-handed, of course.

Then he took from his pocket  
A pin made of gold,  
Began bursting balloons -  
Just a few - and behold:

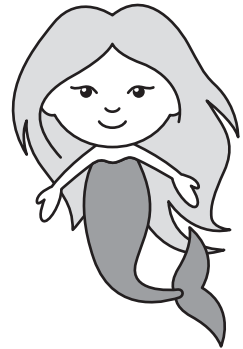
Down he came gently,  
Just floating on air,  
To the cheering of children  
In the town square.





This text is from *Mairi's Mermaid* by Michael Morpurgo.

# Mairi's Mermaid



Mairi has been trying all holiday to learn how to swim, but she just can't do it. Her brother Robbie says swimming is easy. You just have to pretend you're a mermaid. But that doesn't help Mairi. So she goes off to look for crabs in the rock pools...

Suddenly something pinched her toe. She thought it might be a crab and jumped up. It was nothing. Maybe she had imagined it. But just to be sure, she decided not to dangle her feet again. And then she heard a piping voice. It seemed at first to come from far away. She listened again. It came from deep down in the rock pool.

Mairi brushed aside the seaweed and there, glaring up at her, was a huge brown crab. In his great grasping claw was a fish, no bigger than her finger. But then she saw it wasn't an ordinary fish. It was a fish with arms and hands, a fish with a head like her own and a mouth that spoke. It was a little mermaid.

Mairi carried the little mermaid carefully over the rocks and down to the sea. Then she opened her hands, and let the mermaid go. But the mermaid wouldn't go. "No, no!" cried the little mermaid clutching her thumb. "Not here. The waves will smash me against the rocks. Take me out to that rock over there. Please! That's where we all live, in a big cave under that rock."

"But I can't swim," said Mairi. "I'll tell you what. I'll take you as far as I can walk, but I can't go out of my depth."

Mairi stepped into the sea and waded out until the sea water came as high as her knees...

as high as her waist...

as high as her neck...

Suddenly a great wave came rolling in and lifted her right off her feet, and when she came down there was no sandy bottom under her feet, no bottom at all.

Mairi kicked and splashed and the seawater came right into her mouth.

"It's all right," said the little mermaid. "You're swimming!"

And when Mairi kicked again, she did not sink. She was swimming!  
She was!

Name:	Class:	Date:
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# The Balloon Man

- 1 Look at the first verse. What does it tell you about the balloon man? Tick the **best** answer.

He has balloons of all shapes and sizes.

He is out no matter what the time of year.

He stands in a different place every day.

He doesn't enjoy holding his balloons.

	2b
1 mark	

- 2 *He holds them like a big bouquet.*

What is the poet comparing the bunch of balloons to?

\_\_\_\_\_

	2g
1 mark	

- 3 Look at this verse from the poem. **Find** and **copy two words** which describe how the balloons move.

<p>He holds them Like a big bouquet As they tug and bounce And bump and sway.</p>
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1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_

	2b
1 mark	

- 4 *One windy morning  
He wasn't there:*

What had happened to the balloon man?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

	2b
1 mark	

	/ 4
Total for this page	

- 5 Look at this verse from the poem. **Circle one word** which shows there were a lot of people watching the balloon man.

And carried along  
 By the wind's force,  
 He waved down to the crowd -  
 One-handed, of course.

2a  
1 mark

- 6 *He waved down to the crowd -  
 One-handed, of course.*

Why did the balloon man wave with only one hand?

\_\_\_\_\_

2d  
1 mark

- 7 Why did the balloon man burst some of his balloons?

\_\_\_\_\_

2d  
1 mark

- 8 Which of the following **best** describes how the balloon man comes back down? Tick **one**.

- quickly and with a bump   
 with a great deal of force   
 slowly and gradually   
 with a wave and a cheer

2d  
1 mark

- 9 **Tick** to show whether the following sentences about the poem are **true** or **false**. One has been done for you.

	True	False
It tells a story about the balloon man.		
It shows how the balloon man feels.		
It explains how to make a balloon man.		✓
It describes what the balloons are like.		

2b  
2 marks

/ 10  
Total for this test

Name:	Class:	Date:
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## Mairi's Mermaid

1 At the beginning, what does Mairi wish she could do? Tick **one**.

find a mermaid

learn to swim

look for crabs

go on holiday

	2b
1 mark	

2 Why did Mairi decide not to dangle her feet again?

\_\_\_\_\_

	2d
1 mark	

3 What had happened to the mermaid when Mairi first found her?

\_\_\_\_\_

	2b
1 mark	

4 Look at the paragraph beginning: *Mairi brushed aside the seaweed...*  
**Find** and **copy one word** which shows the crab was not very happy to see Mairi.

\_\_\_\_\_

	2a
1 mark	

5 Look at the third paragraph.  
*But then she saw it wasn't an ordinary fish.*

In what way was the mermaid **not** like an ordinary fish? Write **two** things.

1 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_

	2b
1 mark	

	/ 5
Total for this page	

6 Why did the mermaid hold on tight to Mairi's thumb? Tick **one**.

- She didn't want to go back to her cave.
- She was scared of the deep water.
- She was afraid of getting hurt on the rocks.
- She thought the crab would get her again.

2d  
1 mark

7 Look at these lines from the story. What do they show you? Tick **one**.

*as high as her knees...*  
*as high as her waist...*  
*as high as her neck...*

- that the little mermaid is growing bigger
- that Mairi is running in and out of the sea
- that Mairi is going deeper into the water
- that the little mermaid is out of her depth

2g  
1 mark

8 Which of the following sentences about how Mairi learned to swim is **true**? Tick **one**.

- She did what Robbie said and pretended to be a mermaid.
- She was forced to swim when the crab tried to pinch her toes.
- She swam almost by accident when a wave lifted her up.
- She waded into the sea and the mermaid showed her what to do.

2d  
1 mark

9 How do you think Mairi felt at the end of the story? Why? Explain your answer as fully as you can and use the whole story to help you.

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2d  
2 marks

/ 10  
Total for this test