

WHY ARE WE BAD AT GIVING?

Watch the [video](#) titled “Why Is Everyone So Bad At Giving Gifts?” by The Atlantic.

1 LET'S WARM UP

Task 1: Rank the gifts in the box from 1 to 8 based on what you would most want to be given as a present. Explain your reasoning.

a microwave	smartphone	socks	television
coffee machine	a board game	a spa day	headphones

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____



Task 2: Discuss the following questions as a class.

- a. Do you prefer to give or receive gifts?
- b. What do you enjoy most about giving and receiving gifts?
- c. Can you think of a memorable gift you've received? What made it special?
- d. Have you ever received a particularly bad or strange gift?
- e. In what situations do you find it challenging to choose the right gift for someone?

2 VIDEO VOCABULARY

Task 1: Match the video-based words from the box to their definitions.

belated **2** feasibility **1** desirability **5** sentimental **3** conundrum **4**

1. the practicality or likelihood of something being done or used.
2. when something comes or happens later than should have been the case; delayed.
3. to have emotional value, often based on personal feelings or memories.
4. a confusing and tricky problem.
5. this word describes the quality of being wanted or attractive.

Task 2: Complete the sentences using the words.

- a. Considering the **feasibility** of shipping fragile items, I opted for a gift card instead of the delicate crystal vase.
- b. I sent a **belated** birthday gift to my friend because the package got delayed in the mail.
- c. The **desirability** of the new smartphone made it a popular gift choice for birthdays.
- d. The old photo album was **sentimental** to her, as it reminded her of cherished moments with her family.
- e. Faced with the **conundrum** of choosing a gift, I opted for a versatile gift card to let them pick what they wanted.

Task 3: Discuss the following questions as a class.

1. Have you ever received a **belated** gift, and how did it make you feel?
2. When choosing a gift, do you consider the **feasibility** of it being easily accessible or practical for the recipient?
3. What factors influence the **desirability** of a gift for you? Is it more about practicality or personal preferences?
4. Can you give examples of common **sentimental** gifts that people give and receive?
5. Have you ever faced the **conundrum** of not knowing what gift to choose for someone? How did you ultimately decide?

3 THREE TIPS ON HOW TO GIVE BETTER GIFTS

Task 1: Complete the quote from the [video](#), using the words from the box.

selfish

grateful

feasibility

delirious

1. “Research has shown that givers are obsessed with the moment of unwrapping a gift even more than the gift itself. We envision the look of **delirious** happiness and the ecstatic exclamations. Ironically, givers are **selfish**. We want something from giving: those looks of delight. Those exclamations. This is why items like hyper-specific kitchen gadgets and fancy vintage clocks all seem like fantastic gifts. But it turns out, recipients often want things that are more practical—things they can actually use.
2. In one study, researchers asked givers and recipients to rate gifts along two metrics: Desirability, like a fancy but complicated coffee maker, and feasibility, like a coffee maker you can actually use without studying the instructions. They found that givers reliably chose the desirable gifts. But recipients preferred **feasibility**. So what’s the most practical gift you can give that people might actually be **grateful** for?”

Task 2: Answer the following questions as a class.

1. Have you ever experienced the excitement of giving a gift, and if so, can you recall a specific moment of unwrapping that stands out to you?
2. Do you agree with the idea that givers are selfish in wanting something in return, such as the looks of delight and exclamations, or do you see gift-giving differently?
3. Can you think of a time when you received a gift that was highly desirable but not very practical? How did you feel about it?
4. Reflecting on the study mentioned, do you find yourself more inclined to choose gifts based on desirability or feasibility? Why do you think that is?
5. Give examples of gifts you would define as desirable, and then others you would define as practical.



Task 3: Find synonyms for the words from the box in the quote.

dilemma

address

financial experts

3. "When in doubt give cash. When **economists** study gift giving, they're very concerned with one thing: waste. Let's hypothetically say that my grandmother buys me a sweater that I hate, and your grandmother also buys you a sweater that you hate. Before long, we're talking about billions of dollars in waste in the economy. Economists call it "deadweight loss," and they estimate that up to 30% of the value of all gifts is wasted. That means the company wasted time making the gift, the giver wasted time buying it, and the recipients wasted time returning it.
4. There's a way to **fix** this. There is a specific gift that is always worth the exact same to both the giver and the receiver. The good thing about cash is that the receiver can always make use of 100% of its value. The bad thing about cold, hard cash is that... it's cold. It doesn't say anything except, "Here's some money." So this is a **conundrum**. How do we design a gift-giving formula that's as efficient as cash and as sentimental as you want to be?"

Task 4: Answer the following questions as a class.

1. How do you react when you receive unwanted gifts?
2. What steps could you take to avoid receiving unwanted gifts?
3. What is "deadweight loss"?
4. How could unwanted gifts be viewed as a positive for the economy? How could unwanted gifts be viewed as a negative for the economy?
5. In what ways do societal expectations and traditions influence the choices people make when selecting gifts?
6. Do you believe that giving cash is "cold"? How could we strike a balance between the efficiency of cash and the sentimentality associated with personal gift-giving?
7. To what extent does the concept of "experience gifts" or shared activities address the issue of deadweight loss in gift-giving, and how might this approach compare to traditional material gifts in terms of both efficiency and sentimental value?
8. Discuss the environmental consequences of waste generated from unwanted gifts.



Task 5: There is one error in each paragraph. Can you identify and correct them?

"Just give people what they ask for. A good way to **get** what you want is to tell people what you want.

A 2011 study looked at Amazon wish lists to determine if people were more appreciative of gifts from a wish list versus gifts that were a total surprise. It turned **out** that when people got gifts that weren't on their list, they actually saw them as less thoughtful and less personal. Surprise is overrated; we're happier to get what we ask for.

We do everything we can to keep gifts a secret. We wrap them so they don't look like they came from a store, and we tear the price tags off, but we are spending money here. If you want to make your gift count, stop **obsessing** about the moment of unwrapping and surprise. Find out what the people that you love want and get it for them."

Task 6: Answer the following questions as a class.

1. What role does communication play in improving the efficiency of gift-giving? How can individuals communicate their preferences and desires effectively to reduce the likelihood of receiving unwanted gifts?
2. How can technology, such as online wish lists, be used to enhance the efficiency of gift-giving while still keeping the element of surprise and thoughtfulness?
3. Do you think the element of surprise is overrated when it comes to gift-giving, based on your own experiences?
4. How much effort do you put into keeping your gifts a secret, such as wrapping them in a way that disguises their origin and removing price tags?
5. In your opinion, is the joy of the moment of unwrapping a gift more important than receiving something you genuinely want?
6. Discuss the things you consider before buying a gift. For example, price, desirability, feasibility, if you are going to get anything in return, how close you are to the other person, etc.



4 DEBATE: GIFT GIVING

Task: Study the statements, then decide if you agree or disagree with them. Use the language in the table at the bottom of the page to help structure your answer.



John

Gift-giving reinforces societal norms, perpetuating materialistic values over genuine connections.



Oli

Overspending on gifts can contribute to financial strain, overshadowing the intended joy.



Beth

The tradition of gift-giving fuels a cycle of consumerism, harming the planet through overproduction and waste



Amy

Thoughtful gifts serve as tangible expressions of love, care, and understanding in human relationships.

Express an opinion It seems to me that... I feel that... I'm absolutely convinced that... In my opinion,... I believe / suppose / feel (that)...	Express disagreement I don't agree with you about... I can't accept your view that... I have a different opinion... I'm not sure if... I'm not convinced that...
Express pro's and con's There are two sides to this point... On the one hand...,on the other hand... An argument for / against is... Some people think that...,others say that... The advantages / disadvantages are...	Summarise So, in conclusion... To summarise.. Overall, it is clear that... As a result.. The bottom line is...

5 PICTURE ROUND

Task 1: Study the pictures below. What can you see?



1. _____



2. _____



3. _____



4. _____

Task 2: Discuss the pictures using the questions below:

- Give each picture a title based on what is happening.
- Do you prefer to buy gifts online or in physical stores?
- Do advertisements influence the gifts you buy?
- When buying gifts, discuss the pros and cons of going with a friend.
- Do you think it's easier to buy gifts for younger or older people?
- Would you rather give a gift that's handmade and personalised, or a gift that's trendy and popular?
- Would you rather receive a surprise gift that you know nothing about, or a gift that you specifically requested?
- Give a summary of the key things you have learned in today's class.

HOMework

Read the article then complete the writing exercise on the following page.

1 HOW TO GIVE BETTER GIFTS

Giving better gifts is an art that goes beyond the act of simply exchanging presents. It involves a lot of consideration and a genuine understanding of the recipient's preferences. Here are some tips to help you become a more adept gift-giver.

Firstly, take the time to observe and listen to the person you're buying for. Pay attention to their interests, hobbies, and the things that bring them joy. This simple act of attentiveness will guide you towards selecting a gift that resonates with them on a personal level.

Consider the practicality of the gift. While a flashy and extravagant present may seem appealing, it's essential to think about whether the recipient will find it useful in their daily life. Practical gifts, such as a cosy scarf or a quality water bottle, often have a longer-lasting impact.

Another key aspect is to consider the occasion. Different events call for different types of gifts. A birthday gift may differ from a graduation or a retirement present. Tailoring your gift to the specific occasion shows that you've put thought into your choice.

Don't underestimate the power of handmade or personalised gifts. Creating something with your own hands or adding a personal touch to a present can

make it more special and meaningful. It doesn't have to be elaborate – even a handwritten note expressing your thoughts can elevate a simple gift.

Consider cultural sensitivities. In a diverse world, it's crucial to be mindful of the cultural background of the person you're buying for. Some cultures may have specific preferences or taboos when it comes to gifts, so it's wise to do a bit of research to ensure your gift is culturally appropriate.

It is important to be mindful of your budget so you don't overspend. A nice, thoughtful gift doesn't have to break the bank. It's the effort and consideration that count the most. Set a realistic budget and explore options within that range to ensure you find a gift that is both meaningful and affordable.

In summary, giving better gifts involves thoughtful consideration, practicality, attention to the occasion, personalization, cultural sensitivity, and staying within a reasonable budget. By embracing these principles, you can enhance your gift-giving skills and create memorable experiences for your loved ones.



2 ARTICLE-BASED EXERCISES

Task 1: Define the words and phrases, then use them in your own example sentences.

1. consideration.
2. attentive.
3. tailoring your gift.
4. underestimate
5. elaborate.
6. taboos.
7. break the bank.
8. mindful.



Task 2: On a separate piece of paper, write detailed answers to the following questions.

- a. How can attentiveness and observation help you become a better gift-giver?
- b. Why is the practicality of a gift important, and how does it contribute to a longer-lasting impact?
- c. In what ways can tailoring a gift to a specific occasion demonstrate thoughtfulness and consideration?
- d. How do handmade or personalised gifts add a special and meaningful touch to the act of gift-giving?
- e. Why is it crucial to be mindful of cultural sensitivities when selecting a gift for someone from a diverse background?
- f. According to the article, what role does budget play in the process of giving better gifts?
- g. How can a well-thought-out and affordable gift be more meaningful than an extravagant one?
- h. What are the key principles mentioned in the article that can help enhance your gift-giving skills?
- i. Describe your own experiences of gift giving, describing times you gave good and bad gifts. Then, describe your own tactics that you use to ensure you find the perfect gift for a loved one.

