

Video Worksheet

# ***Why Is Everyone So Bad at Giving Gifts?***

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## **About the Video**

Are you bad at giving gifts? Or do you know someone who's bad at giving gifts? Well, unfortunately, many people are. This video from the Atlantic explores why we're all so bad at giving (and receiving) gifts, and what we can do to be better at it.



## ***Instructions***

### How to Use This Worksheet

**Follow the steps below to get the most benefit from this worksheet.**

We recommend writing your answers and examples in a journal or a notebook, and reviewing the words you're learning regularly.

#### **STEP 1**

**Complete the 'Vocabulary' section before watching the video.**

You will understand more of the video if you familiarize yourself with the vocabulary first. This will also help you retain what you're learning. We've provided the answers for the exercises on page 13.

#### **STEP 2**

**Watch the video the first time without subtitles or the transcript.**

If you always watch English videos with the subtitles, you'll never give your listening skills a chance to improve. It's okay if you don't understand everything at first. **You'll notice a big improvement in a few weeks if you practice regularly.**

#### **STEP 3**

**Watch it a second time with the transcript if needed.**

We have provided a transcript for the video on page 10.

If you're a teacher, feel free to use this worksheet in your classes. You'll find other [free worksheets](#) on our website. If you're a learner, you could work on the worksheet with your English teacher or language partner. You could also use it as a resource for self-study. If you're looking for a teacher, [book a free trial with one of our teachers here](#).

If you have any feedback or suggestions, [we'd love to hear from you!](#)



# Vocabulary

## 1. WORDS IN CONTEXT

Match the words or phrases in bold to their synonyms or meanings.

practicality    overdue    imagined    do something with    skills

1. She didn't look as happy as I had **envisioned** or hoped.
2. He's just not sure about the **feasibility** of this plan.
3. Can you please just get me something I can **make use of** ?
4. We want to send you our **belated** birthday wishes!
5. I really want to improve my technology **game**.

## 2. FILL IN THE BLANKS

Complete the sentences with the correct words.

*You might have to change verb forms (talk - talking or talked).*

belated    game    feasibility    envision    make use of

1. They need to determine the financial \_\_\_\_\_ of the project.
2. Her decorating \_\_\_\_\_ is really impressive.
3. I appreciated his apology, even if it was \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Great thinkers and creators often \_\_\_\_\_ intuition.
5. What kind of future do you \_\_\_\_\_ for yourself?



# Vocabulary

## 3. DEFINITIONS

Match the words or phrases to their definitions.

desirability    conundrum    delirious    overrated

1. \_\_\_\_\_: disappointing and not as good as people say
2. \_\_\_\_\_: a problem that doesn't have an easy answer
3. \_\_\_\_\_: being wanted or liked
4. \_\_\_\_\_: a feeling of confusion or an unstable state of mind

## 4. WHAT'S ANOTHER WAY TO SAY...?

Rewrite the sentences with one of the words above.

*You might have to make some changes to the sentences, or add/change a preposition.*

1. This car has both the efficiency you need and the **likeability** you want.

\_\_\_\_\_

2. I'm tired of spending money on **disappointing** kitchen appliances.

\_\_\_\_\_

3. He was **out of his mind** with joy when we offered him the job.

\_\_\_\_\_

4. We have a **big problem**: We don't know what to get you for the holidays.

\_\_\_\_\_



## Watch the Video

► [Click here to watch the video](#) (or search for 'Why Is Everyone So Bad at Giving Gifts?' on YouTube). **Watch it at least once without subtitles or the transcript.** Watch it a second time with the transcript if needed.

## Speaking Practice

### DISCUSSION

Discuss the following questions.

*Try to give as much detail as you can. Elaborate with examples or stories whenever possible.*

1. Why do you think that gift-giving is so difficult? Is giving gifts a common practice in your culture? Do you like to give your family members things they can **make use of**?
2. When you encounter a **conundrum**, do you prefer to work it out alone, or talk to somebody you trust to help you figure it out? Are you someone who just likes someone to listen, or do you ask for others to give you advice?
3. Some people enjoy giving gifts as a way to show others they care about them, while others find it **overrated**. Do you find it overrated? Are you a gift-giver, or do you have other ways to express your affection for others, such as spending time with them or doing acts of service?
4. Do you consider buying things for people a natural gift, or is it a skill you can improve? In your opinion, how can people improve their gift-giving **game**?
5. Can you remember one of the best gifts you received when you were a child? Do you think a gift has to make a child **delirious** with joy in order to be a good gift? Do you think adults or children are easier to shop for?
6. Do you think the **desirability** of products or services changes over time? Do you like to follow trends in appliances, clothing, books, or other things? In your opinion,



what makes something worth your money? How often have you bought something that you regretted buying?

7. Have you ever forgotten a friend or family member's birthday or special occasion? Were you able to make it up to them, and if so, how? Did you offer them a **belated** gift, message, or apology?
8. Many people are attracted to the **feasibility** of online shopping. Is that what attracts you? Do you think online shopping has the power to be addictive? How do you feel online shopping has changed the way we buy things?



## Reading Practice

Read this short passage adapted from the article: [The 5 Types of Gift Givers](#) published in *Psychology Today*.

### 1. The Genuine Giver

If you are lucky enough to have one or two of these folks in your life, it's time for rejoicing. The genuine giver has actually thought about you and what would give you pleasure. Our culture likes to believe that everyone is a genuine giver, maybe what really makes this kind of giving so special is that it's the exception, not the rule.

### 2. The Status Hound

This is the costly gift as self-enhancement—a show of money or power, or perhaps both. In this case, the gift has nothing to do with the recipient but everything to do with the giver. These are the gifts for which the exchange receipt was invented.

### 3. The Wolf in Sheep's Clothing

This is the giver who likes to be thought of as a wonderful gift-giver with perfectly wrapped gifts but his or her spirit is no more genuine than the Status Hound; in the end, Christmas is all about him or her. The Wolf is likely to send a check, rather than a present, and will “re-gift” items without thinking about whether the gift actually suits the recipient. The Wolf likes gift-giving to be even-stein—especially in terms of money spent—so beware of possible posturing or pouting if he or she is disappointed.

### 4. The Power Player

Perhaps the worst kind of giver—the one who really knows how to manipulate the symbolic nature of the gift—these people are the likeliest to hurt or disappoint us,



especially at the holidays. Because they understand how gifts can cause us pain, consciously or unconsciously, they choose gifts that do exactly that.

## 5. The Complainer

Yes, it's not just that you have to appreciate the gift the Complainer gives you; you have to listen endlessly to the travails and inconveniences he or she experienced this holiday season, especially during the acquisition of your gift. Luckily, the Complainer is easy to spot and more of a nuisance than anything else, and one of the reasons wine is part of holiday celebrations.

### AFTER READING

Answer the following questions.

1. What type of giver do you think you might be? Do you have qualities of more than one type?
2. Before reading this passage, what did you think was true about the psychology of gift-giving? Do you still think that way?
3. Have you ever received a gift with an exchange receipt? How did that make you feel about the gift? Have you ever been glad that a gift included an exchange receipt?
4. Have you ever gotten a gift from a Complainer or a Wolf in Sheep's Clothing? Did you like the gift? Would you have felt differently about the gift if it had come from a Genuine Giver?



## Writing Practice

### PRODUCTION

Choose 3 - 5 words you learned today, and use them to create one of the following:

1. 6 - 10 separate sentences
2. A paragraph
3. A short story
4. A poem or a song

### USE A VARIETY OF SENTENCE STYLES

Avoid using simple sentences. Instead, try to use a variety of sentence styles and lengths:

Type	Definition	Example
<b>Simple</b>	Consists of only one clause.	<i>"She likes traveling."</i>
<b>Compound</b>	Combines two independent clauses with: <i>and, but, yet, so, etc.</i>	<i>"She likes traveling, <b>and</b> she loves exploring new places."</i>
<b>Complex</b>	Combines one main clause and one dependent clause with: <i>if, even though, because, unless etc.</i>	<i>"<b>Even though</b> she likes traveling, she doesn't travel often."</i>

### USE TRANSITION WORDS AND CONJUNCTIONS

Elaborate with examples or stories whenever possible. You can use the following transition words, phrases and conjunctions to connect your ideas:

*For example,*

*For instance,*

*Let me explain.*

*Even though/if*

*I remember when ...*

*This reminds me of ...*

*Since ...*

*Unless ...*

*Until ...*

*If ..., then ...*

*Not only ..., but also ...*

*Besides ...*



## ***Transcript***

What's the worst holiday gift you've ever received?

For me, it's easy. My mom used to consider Chanukah a belated back-to-school holiday. We would get binders, pens, staplers. Once my mom wrapped this huge mystery present that my sister thought was a dollhouse. But it wasn't a dollhouse. It was a trash can.

Most of us are actually terrible at giving gifts. About \$70 billion worth of presents are returned every year in the U.S. So how do we get... less terrible?

Here are 3 ways to improve your gift-giving game around the holidays.

1. Stop trying to make your gift so damn delightful.

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 far more practical -- things they can actually use. 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?

When economists study gift giving, they're very concerned with one thing: waste.

Let's say hypothetically that my grandmother buys me a sweater that I hate, and your grandmother also buys you a sweater that you hate. (Sorry, grandmothers!) 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.

There's a way to fix this. There is a very specific gift that is always worth the exact same to both giver and receiver. The good thing about cash is that the receiver can always make use of 100 percent 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 is as efficient as cash and as sentimental as you want to be?

A good way to get what you want is--shocker!--to tell people what you want.

A 2011 study looked at Amazon wish lists to determine if people were more appreciative of gifts from the list versus gifts that were total surprises. It turned out that 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 top secret: We wrap them so they don't look like they came from a store. 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.

This is You Are Here, a show about the science of everyday life. I'm Derek Thompson.  
Thank you for watching.



## Answer Key

### 1. WORDS IN CONTEXT

1. imagined    2. practicality    3. do something with    4. overdue    5. skills

### 2. FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. They need to determine the financial **feasibility** of the project.
2. Her decorating **game** is really impressive.
3. I appreciated his apology, even if it was **belated**.
4. Great thinkers and creators often **make use of** intuition.
5. What kind of future do you **envision** for yourself?

### 3. DEFINITIONS

1. **overrated**: disappointing and not as good as people say
2. **conundrum**: a problem that doesn't have an easy answer
3. **desirability**: being wanted or liked
4. **delirious**: feeling confusion or an unstable state of mind

### 4. WHAT'S ANOTHER WAY TO SAY...?

1. This car has both the efficiency you need and the **desirability** you want.
2. I'm tired of spending money on **overrated** kitchen appliances.
3. He was **out of his mind** with joy when we offered him the job.
4. We have a **conundrum**: We don't know what to get you for the holidays.