

Video Worksheet

Why Is Everyone So Bad at Giving Gifts?



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 out of this worksheet.

Write your answers and examples in a document, journal or a notebook, and review the words you're learning regularly.

STEP 1

Complete the 'Vocabulary Practice' 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. You'll find the answers for the exercises on page 10.

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.

There is a transcript for the video on page 8.



Vocabulary Practice

1. WORDS IN CONTEXT

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

egotistical

theoretically

fixated

do something with

valued at

1. The painting is **worth** thousands of dollars.
2. She's always asking for favors but never returns them, which seems **selfish**.
3. Can you please get me something I can **make use of**?
4. If you were to **hypothetically** change careers, what profession would you pursue?
5. She's **obsessed** with fitness and spends hours at the gym every day.

2. FILL IN THE BLANKS

Complete the sentences with the correct words.

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

obsessed

hypothetically

worth

selfish

make use of

1. Imagine, _____, that you could live anywhere in the world; where would it be?
2. His _____ behavior isolates him from others.
3. He's _____ with his new video game and plays it all the time.
4. She decided to _____ her free time by taking up a new hobby.
5. The property is _____ over a million dollars in today's market.



Vocabulary Practice

3. DEFINITIONS

Match the words or phrases to their definitions.

desirable

conundrum

delirious

overrated

1. _____: disappointing and not as good as people say
2. _____: a problem that doesn't have an easy answer
3. _____: wanted because it is considered good or attractive
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. A peaceful and quiet neighborhood is often considered **attractive** for families.

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. What's the most memorable holiday gift you've ever received? Why was it so special to you? Have you ever received a gift that made you feel truly understood and appreciated by the giver? What was it, and why did it have that impact?
2. 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?
3. Have you ever given a gift to someone that you thought they would love, but it turned out they didn't like it as much as you expected? How did that make you feel?
4. Do you prefer receiving practical gifts or more delightful, surprising ones? Can you give an example of each?



5. In the video, the speaker mentioned that givers often choose more desirable gifts, while recipients prefer more practical ones. Which type of gift do you usually lean towards when choosing for others?
6. How do you feel about giving or receiving cash as a gift? What are some pros and cons of giving money as a present?
7. Have you ever received a gift that you really didn't like or have no use for? What did you do with it?
8. Do you have any strategies for finding out what your friends or family members would like as a gift? How do you gather gift ideas?
9. How do you feel about creating wish lists or gift registries for special occasions? Do you think it makes gift-giving easier or less meaningful?
10. Have you ever surprised someone with a gift that they didn't expect at all? How did they react?
11. Is giving gifts a common practice in your culture? Is there a cultural tradition or custom in your country related to gift-giving during holidays or special occasions?
12. How do you handle gift-giving when you're on a tight budget? Are there creative ways you can make gifts more meaningful without spending a lot of money?
13. Can you think of a situation where you had to return a gift that you received or a gift that you gave to someone else? What happened?
14. How do you feel about handmade gifts or do-it-yourself presents? Have you ever made a gift for someone? How did they react?



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

Tips for Better Writing

USE A VARIETY OF SENTENCE STYLES

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

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



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. valued at 2. egotistical 3. do something with 4. theoretically 5. fixated

2. FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. Imagine, **hypothetically**, that you could live anywhere in the world; where would it be?
2. His **selfish** behavior isolates him from others.
3. He's **obsessed** with his new video game and plays it all the time.
4. She decided to **make use of** her free time by taking up a new hobby.
5. The property is **worth** over a million dollars in today's market.

3. DEFINITIONS

1. **overrated**: disappointing and not as good as people say
2. **conundrum**: a problem that doesn't have an easy answer
3. **desirable**: wanted because it is considered good or attractive
4. **delirious**: feeling confusion or an unstable state of mind

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

1. A peaceful and quiet neighborhood is often considered **attractive** for families.
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.