

Alternative Gifts

1 Before you read Work with a partner.

- What is the best Christmas present you have ever received?
- Have you ever received a strange or unusual Christmas present?



2 Vocabulary Match the word with the correct meaning.

horde (n)
 eager (adj)
 commercial (adj)
 cite (v)
 recipient (n)
 clutter (n)

for profit
 someone who receives something
 junk
 crowd
 to state reasons; to give as evidence
 keen

3 Reading Read the following text, and fill in the spaces using a word from the box below.

The custom of giving and receiving presents is, for many people, one of the most important aspects of Christmas. This festive tradition started in the Middle Ages, with presents of food, drink and household goods being most common. Gift exchanges usually took place between those with working or legal relationships, rather than friends and family members. This custom of exchanging 'thank-you' gifts has evolved into the tradition that we know today.

The Christmas shopping period is the busiest time of year for many ¹..... In the US, the Christmas shopping season begins the day after Thanksgiving, dubbed 'Black Friday'. Many people find the Christmas shopping period to be very stressful, and are choosing to shop online in order to avoid the hordes of eager shoppers on high streets worldwide.

It is often said that Christmas is becoming more commercial. Citing environmental and moral concerns, an ²..... large group of people is choosing to opt out of traditional gift-giving and give alternative gifts instead.

One alternative gift that is growing in ³..... is the 'experience day'. A voucher is given to the recipient, allowing him or her to participate in an unusual experience of the giver's choosing. Examples include driving a sports car, taking a trip in a hot-air balloon and flying a helicopter. Instead of giving material goods, these people are choosing to give memories.

Alternative gifts that help others are also available. Many charities are now offering gifts that consist of a certificate for the recipient stating that a certain item or sum of money has been donated in their name. Popular causes include communities in ⁴..... countries, and animal charities. The money that would have been spent on a gift goes to a good cause instead.

Some people love these new alternative gifts, saying that they don't want to receive useless clutter each year. Others would prefer to receive traditional gifts to be opened and enjoyed. One thing, though, is for sure; with Christmas gifts, the giving is as much fun as the receiving.

1
5
10
15
20

Choose From: • popularity • retailers • developing • increasingly

4 Comprehension Questions Answer the questions below.

1. When does the Christmas shopping period begin in the US?
2. Why are some people choosing to avoid traditional gift-giving?
3. What are some popular causes for alternative charity gifts?

5 Collocation Check #1 Match the two halves of these collocations.

- | | |
|-------------|------------------|
| 1. shop | (someone's) name |
| 2. opt | goods |
| 3. material | online |
| 4. in | of money |
| 5. a sum | out of something |

6 Collocation Check #2 Rewrite these sentences using collocations from exercise five.

1. My friend decided not to take part in the survey.
2. Please complete it as though it were from me.
3. The kidnappers demanded a large amount of cash.
4. I like buying things on the Internet.
5. John doesn't need possessions to be happy.

7 Discussion Work in small groups.**Questions based on the collocations:**

- Do you like shopping online? Why or why not?
- Is there anything that you wouldn't buy online?
- Are material goods important to you? What kinds?
- Do people in your country carry large sums of cash, or do they prefer plastic?

Questions based on the topic:

- Do you like Christmas shopping? Why or why not?
- How much do you usually spend on Christmas presents?
- What is the most expensive Christmas present you have ever bought?
- What kind of "experience day" would you like to receive? What would you do?
- What is your favorite charity?
- Would you like to receive a charity donation gift? Why or why not?
- Have you ever received a gift that you didn't like? What did you do?
- Do you prefer giving or receiving gifts?
- Apart from gifts, what else do you like about Christmas?

Alternative Gifts: Teaching Notes

Target Structure:	Theme Lesson: Reading, Vocabulary and Discussion
Vocabulary:	General
Level:	Upper-Intermediate & Advanced
Time:	1 hour, depending on discussion
Preparation:	None

Suggested Teaching Method

This worksheet builds vocabulary and collocation skills, with reading and discussion practice.

The questions at the end are particularly conducive to extended conversation, so make sure you leave lots of time.

① Give one worksheet to each student. Students should discuss the opening questions in pairs, or small groups. Don't spend too long on this section - the main discussion questions come at the end of the worksheet.

② Students can work alone on this exercise, and check their answers in pairs. If necessary, tell the students to find the vocabulary in the text, to allow them to guess from context.

③ Direct the students to the missing words under the text. This is the task for the reading. The students should read the article at brisk pace, filling in the spaces with the words in the box.

After reading the text, they can check their answers to the task with a partner.

④ Follow the directions on the worksheet. Students can work in pairs, reading and answering the questions.

⑤ Explain the idea of collocations. Explain that these collocations all come from the text. Students should not refer to the text while completing this exercise. When finished, students can check their answers by scanning for the collocations in the article.

Go through the answers with the group, and check understanding. If necessary give further examples. Avoid using examples which are too similar to the sentences in exercise six.

⑥ Students can work in pairs. To make this more challenging, the answers to exercise five can be covered.

Explain that the collocations may need some slight grammatical changes.

⑦ Leave plenty of time for class discussion. To maximize student talking time, it's best to put students in pairs, or small groups. Students should read all the questions first, before beginning the discussion.

Encourage eye contact and follow-up questions.

While the students are speaking, monitor the conversations, but try not to interrupt. When the discussion comes to a close, ask a few of the questions yourself, and go through any points of English you made a note of while monitoring.

Answer Key (Other answers may be possible.)

- 2**
- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. horde (n) | crowd |
| 2. eager (adj) | keen |
| 3. commercial (adj) | for profit |
| 4. cite (v) | to state reasons; to give as evidence |
| 5. recipient (n) | someone who receives something |
| 6. clutter (n) | junk |
- 3**
1. retailers
 2. increasingly
 3. popularity
 4. developing
- 4**
1. It begins on 'Black Friday' – the day after Thanksgiving.
 2. Because of environmental and moral concerns.
 3. Popular causes include donating money to communities in developing countries, and giving money to animal charities.
- 5**
- | | |
|-------------|------------------|
| 1. shop | online |
| 2. opt | out of something |
| 3. material | goods |
| 4. in | (someone's) name |
| 5. a sum | of money |
- 6**
1. My friend decided to opt out of the survey.
 2. Please complete it in my name.
 3. The kidnappers demanded a large sum of money.
 4. I like shopping online.
 5. John doesn't need material goods to be happy.

How are we doing?

Have you taught this lesson? We'd be pleased to hear some feedback on our worksheets.

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