



Teacher's page

Fun lesson plans from Learn Hot English

The diplomatic art of giving gifts!

Level: Upper Intermediate (B2) to Advanced (C1)

Audio: Yes

In this fun lesson, your students will discuss the topic of gifts and gift giving. This practical class will get your students using lots of useful language and all the essential skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing. Here are some ideas for doing it in class. Good luck!

1 Warm-up

Gift quotes – scroll down for the student pages

Individually, students read over the quotes on the Resource Page (see below). Then, they discuss them in pairs. Finally, bring the class back together and ask students what they think of the quotes, which ones they like, which ones they agree with, etc.

Then, you could play a game. Read out a quote or write one on the board with gaps. Students have to remember the missing words. For example:

Teacher: "A friend is a gift you give _____."

Student: Yourself!

Etc.

2 Lesson activities

Go through the activities for the lesson on the sheet: the Pre-reading, Reading I and Reading II activities. You could do this lesson as a *listening* activity. In order to do this, tell your students to turn over the sheet so they can't see the text as they do the exercises.

Remember, for the first listening you should play the recording once without stopping so students get the gist of it.

For the second listening, if your students' listening level is low, stop the recording after each paragraph and check their understanding.

After finishing that, and if you've done this as a listening activity (not a reading), let your students read the text as you play the recording again. This is good for developing their listening skills as they can see the connection between the written and spoken language.



3 Follow-up activities

Retell it!

Assign a paragraph (or paragraphs) to each student. Students have a minute or two to try to remember the text. When they're ready, students try to recount the information, using as much of the language as possible. This works well in pairs, with you monitoring the language.

The perfect gift

First, as a class, brainstorm the names of as many presidents, royals, prime ministers, etc. as you can and write these on the board. Then, students choose one person from this list and decide which gift would be perfect for them and why. When they're ready, students take turns reading out their gift ideas and reasons (without saying who they're referring to). Other students have to guess who the gift is for.

E-mail

In pairs or individually, students write an e-mail to a president, royal, prime minister, etc. thanking him or her for the gift they gave. They should say why they like the gift so much, what it means to them, what they've done with it, where they're going to keep it, etc. Tell your students to make the e-mail as funny, serious or silly as they like. When they're ready, students exchange e-mails and read them over to see if they can find any errors or mistakes.

Dialogue

In pairs, students write a dialogue between a president, royal, prime minister, etc. and the person they're visiting. During the dialogue, they should exchange gifts, explaining clearly what the gift is, why it's so special, why you're giving it, what to do with it, etc. Tell your students to make the dialogue as funny, silly or serious as they like. When they're ready, ask for volunteers to act out their dialogues (using notes, not reading it out word-for-word). Other students listen and vote on the best ones. Students could also film the dialogues on a smartphone then show it to the class.

Discussion: gifts & presents

Students discuss these questions in pairs.

- When was the last time you gave someone a gift? Who was it? What was the gift? How did the other person react?
- When was the last time you received a gift? Who gave it to you? What was it? How did you react? What did you do with it?
- Have you ever received something you really didn't want? What did you do with it?
- Have you ever given your present to someone else? Why did you give it away? Who did you give it to? What was the gift? Did anyone ever find out?
- Have you ever donated or thrown a gift away? Why? What was it? Who had given it to you?
- Have you ever been blown away by a gift that someone gave you? What was it? Who gave it to you? Why was it so amazing?
- Has anyone ever asked you about a gift they gave you and where it was?
- When was the last time you had to pretend to be happy with a gift you actually hated? What was it? Why didn't you like it? Who had given it to you? What happened to it in the end?





Student's page

The diplomatic art of giving gifts!

Level: Upper Intermediate (B2) to Advanced (C1)

1 Gift quotes

Read over the quotes. Then, discuss them with a partner and answer these questions: *What do you think of the quotes? Which ones do you like? Why? Which ones do you agree with? Etc.*

Gift quotes

- “A friend is a gift you give yourself.” Robert Louis Stevenson
- “Love the giver more than the gift.” Brigham Young
- “The manner of giving is worth more than the gift.” Pierre Corneille
- “Your gift is not what you do but what you are.” Sunday Adelaja
- “The greatest gift is a portion of thyself.” Ralph Waldo Emerson
- “Your personal truth is your gift to the world.” Jennifer Elisabeth
- “Every problem is a gift – without problems we would not grow.” Anthony Robbins
- “Breath is the finest gift of nature. Be grateful for this wonderful gift.” Amit Ray
- “The older I get, the better I understand that every day is a gift.” Joel Osteen
- “The greatest gift you can give another is the purity of your attention.” Richard Moss
- “We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.” Winston Churchill
- “My father gave me the greatest gift anyone could give another person, he believed in me.” Jim Valvano
- “Being gifted doesn't mean you've been given something. It means, you have something to give.”
- “There are souls in this world who have the gift of finding joy everywhere, and leaving it behind them when they go.” Frederick William Faber



- “If I were given the opportunity to present a gift to the next generation, it would be the ability for each individual to learn to laugh at himself.” Charles M. Schulz
- “Every gift which is given, even though it be small, is in reality great, if it is given with affection.” Pindar
- “The excellence of a gift lies in its appropriateness rather than in its value.” Charles Dudley Warner
- “The greatest gift that you can give yourself is a little bit of your own attention.” Anthony J. D’Angelo
- “You give but little when you give of your possessions. It is when you give of yourself that you truly give.” Kahlil Gibran
- “The greatest gift is our own eyes, sense of smell, and abilities to deduce.” Patricia Cornwell
- “The gift of learning to meditate is the greatest gift you can give yourself in this lifetime.” Sogyal Rinpoche



Objective To improve your reading and listening skills.

Think about it What presents do you give when you go to visit someone or stay with them? What are some of the best presents you've ever received? What's the most expensive present you've ever given someone? Who was it for?

Exams This reading and listening activity will help prepare you for English exams such as FCE, IELTS and TOEFL.

© TRACK 21: ENGLISHMAN & US MAN



IS THAT IT?

THE DIPLOMATIC ART OF GIVING GIFTS!

When was the last time you gave someone a present? In the world of **diplomacy**, it's common to offer **gifts** to visiting kings, queens, presidents and prime ministers; or to bring presents for representatives of a **host country**. The gifts range from the ordinary to the **absurd**. Here are a few examples.

The royal family receives a lot of gifts, some of which are really unusual. A list from 2013 included a state **coach** made out of chocolate, a portrait of the Queen burnt into tree bark, a plastic stand-up angel, a garden gnome and a book titled *Your Arms Remind Me of Pork Luncheon Meat*.

Sometimes, the royals are given **live** animals. In 1764, King George III was presented with a cheetah while in India; and in 1827, King George IV was given a giraffe by the **pasha** of Egypt. The present-day Queen has received two black beavers from Canada, and was once given an elephant and a crocodile during a visit to Gambia.

President Obama seems to be popular, **judging by** the number of gifts he receives. Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper once gave Mr Obama a ball signed by the 2011 Toronto Raptors professional basketball team, as well as a golden-framed, 19th-century antique map of North America. Queen Elizabeth II presented the president with a leather-bound volume entitled *A Selection of Papers*

From the Royal Archives 1834-1897, and a **brooch** with **gold leaves** to First Lady Michelle Obama. Prince Charles once gave the Obamas a 15-piece **china tea set**.

Nicolas Sarkozy (the ex president of France) is an extremely generous gift-giver. In 2011, he gave the Obamas presents worth more than \$40,000. The list of goodies included a large black Hermès golf accessory bag, two Baccarat **crystal** table lamps on silver **pedestals**, a **monogrammed** black leather Louis Vuitton business bag, and a glass sculpture of Alexander the Great's horse.

Others aren't quite so imaginative. On a visit to China, David Cameron gave the Chinese Premier Li Keqiang a collection of books, a pair of gloves and a tennis racket signed by Andy Murray, among other things. In return, Cameron received a painting of a horse, and a model of a Chinese bullet train. And Cameron gave Russian leader Vladimir Putin a framed photo of the pair of them watching the judo at the London Olympics. Cameron got a bottle of Armenian cognac in return. One of the most thoughtful gifts ever was the one given by ex Prime Minister Gordon Brown to Barack Obama. He proudly presented the president with a **pen holder** made from the **timbers** of the Victorian **anti-slavery ship**, HMS Gannet.

Unfortunately for Brown, the presents he received weren't quite as impressive: two models of the presidential

helicopter (Marine One) for his sons, and a box set of 25 DVDs of classic American films. It later **transpired** that the DVDs were **incompatible** with British DVD players, so he couldn't watch them.

Poor old Gordon! ☹️

VIDEO

YouTube

Watch President Obama give a present to the Pope. Search YouTube for "President Obama presents gift to Pope Francis".

GLOSSARY

diplomacy *n*
the activity of managing relations between different countries

a gift *n*
a present; something nice that you give to someone

a host country *n*
a country that has received a special visitor such as a president of another country, etc.

absurd *adj*
ridiculous, stupid, silly

a coach *n*
a vehicle with wheels that is pulled by horses

live *adj*
a "live" animal is alive (not dead)

a Pasha *n*
an important official in the Ottoman Empire (an empire that ruled from what is now modern-day Turkey from 1300 until 1920, more or less)

judging by *exp*
we often use "judging by" to introduce the reasons why we think something is true

a brooch *n*
a small piece of jewellery with a pin at the back so you can put it on a jacket, etc.

gold leaves *n*
gold in the form of very thin sheets, often used to decorate objects

china *n*
a hard white substance made from clay. It's used to make cups, bowls, plates, etc.

a tea set *n*
a set of cups, dishes, etc. used to serve tea

crystal *n*
a transparent rock that's used to make jewellery

a pedestal *n*
the base for a statue, etc.

monogrammed *adj*
if an object is "monogrammed", it has the first letters of a person's name on it

a pen holder *n*
an object used for holding a pen

a timber *n*
wood that is used for building houses, ships, etc.

an anti-slavery ship *n*
a ship that was used to stop ships transporting slaves

to transpire *vb*
when it "transpires" that something is true, people discover that it is actually true

incompatible *adj*
if A is "incompatible" with B, A and B are very different and they can't be used together

Answers on page 44

1 Pre-reading

Look at the list of gifts below. Which three would you like to receive? Why?

a elephant a basketball ball

a antique map a cheetah

a golf accessory bag

a giraffe a brooch beavers

a tennis racket signed by Andy Murray

a box set of 25 DVDs

a painting of a horse

a bottle of Armenian cognac

2 Reading I

Read or listen to the article once. Which gift is the most absurd? Which one is the best? Why?

3 Reading II

Read the article again. Then, write gifts from the Pre-reading activity next to each person.

1. Queen Elizabeth II
2. King George III
3. King George IV
4. David Cameron
5. President Obama
6. First Lady Michelle Obama
7. Chinese Premier Li Keqiang
8. Ex-Prime Minister Gordon Brown