

## Talk Time Topic: Giving and Receiving Gifts

### Let's get started...

There are customs in every culture about how to give and receive gifts. Tell your group about a time when you received a gift that made you uncomfortable. What did you do?

### Background:

The importance of gift giving is different in every culture. Some cultures think that gift giving is very important and others cultures do not think that it is important at all. The United States is in the middle - the social customs about gift giving are more relaxed. However, there are still some social customs that people can follow so that they don't find themselves in an embarrassing situation. We will talk about the social customs of giving and receiving gifts in class today.



**In pairs for 5 minutes, ask and answer these questions:**

Think about a gift you received that was "perfect". Why was it perfect?

Think of a time you were embarrassed by a gift or didn't like it. What did you say or do?

If you had to give a gift to the President, what things would you consider before you picked it out. What type of gift would you give? What would you NOT give?

**Share your partner's answers with the group.**

### Discussion Questions:

Let's talk about the things that we should consider in good gift giving in the U.S.

- Is the status and title of the person receiving the gift important to consider?
- How about your relationship to the person receiving the gift? Is this important?
- How about the type and cost of the gift? Is this important?
- How about how one gives or "presents" the gift? Is this important.

If you consider some of these things before you give a gift, you'll probably be more comfortable with the gift you've chosen. Remember, there are also some customs about receiving a gift.

How is gift giving different in your country? How is it the same?

Do you think there are more social rules to follow? Tell the group about an experience you had giving a gift.

Do people give gifts more often or less often in your country than in the U.S.? On what occasions do people give gifts?

What countries do you think give the most gifts? What countries give the fewest gifts in your opinion?

Does it matter how you wrap a gift? Give an example of something that is appropriate.

Do you think you should give a gift in return when you receive a gift?

Do you think you are culturally sensitive about gift giving? How do you know?

Do you write thank you letters after you receive a gift? Do you think it is necessary? If not, how do you show your appreciation?

Some people keep lists of the gifts they have given. Do you do this? Have you ever given the same gift to the same person two years in a row?

In the U.S., many companies offer free gifts to shoppers. Have you ever received a "free gift" in the mail? What do you think about this custom?

What would you give as a wedding gift in your country? What would you give in the U.S.?

What does the phrase "it's the thought that counts" mean? What does it teach us about being sensitive?

What is the biggest gift-giving day in your country? What kind of gifts do people usually give on that day?

What do you think is the biggest gift-giving day in the U.S.? What kind of gifts do you think people usually give on that day?

### **New words and Idioms:**

The giver, the receiver, the sender, sensitivity, culturally sensitive, appropriate, thoughtful, simple, tasteful, to show appreciation, thank-you notes, exchange, re-gift, a personal gift, birthday gift, engagement gift, wedding gift, traditional gift, tasteful gift, personal note, best wishes, congratulations, "free gift", "it's the thought that counts", etc.