

Top 12 Tips for Gift Giving in English Cultures

QUIZ ANSWERS:

While there are always individual variations, here are some guidelines regarding which gifts are generally considered appropriate or inappropriate in English cultures and why.

1. FALSE. In some cultures giving gifts to your boss or supervisor is expected. In English cultures, giving gifts to your boss is generally considered inappropriate and often interpreted as evidence of an attempt to ingratiate yourself.
2. TRUE. In some cultures, the gift of a knife is interpreted as a wish to sever the relationship. In English cultures, expensive kitchen tools, including knives, are considered appropriate gifts, particularly for a person who loves to cook.
3. TRUE. Wine is considered an appropriate gift in English cultures, particularly at a dinner party or for those with whom you have a more formal relationship. The exception would be if the recipient does not drink alcohol.
4. FALSE. In English cultures, a fancy bra would be an inappropriate gift for anyone other than a partner or a close relative.
5. FALSE. In English cultures, clothing worn on the torso is generally considered an appropriate gift only for those with whom you have a very close relationship. What you consider beautiful may not be what the teacher considers beautiful.
6. FALSE. The implication of this gift is that it is the mother or wife's job to do all the vacuuming. While this may indeed be the case in some families, a vacuum is generally thought to be an appliance for the household. Most wives and mothers in English cultures prefer gifts that are more personal.
7. TRUE. In many cultures, white flowers are associated with mourning. There is no such association in English cultures. Flowers of any colour would likely be appreciated.
8. TRUE. In some cultures, a clock is considered a reminder of death. English cultures have no such association and a beautiful clock is an appropriate gift for anyone, especially if you know the person's taste and that he or she needs a clock.
9. FALSE. In many cultures, if a gift is cute, it is considered appropriate for a grown woman. In English cultures, however, children's toys are not generally considered appropriate for grown women, unless there is a special significance related to an inside joke or a personal characteristic of the recipient.
10. TRUE. In English cultures, belts or items not worn on the torso, such as scarves, gloves, watches, and socks are considered appropriate gifts for all men. The exception to this would be if the recipient is Hindu or vegan, in which case leather is inappropriate but a belt of another material would be fine.
11. TRUE. In English cultures, money in an envelope is generally not considered an appropriate gift, but gift cards are. This difference may have something to do with the fact that a gift card has to be purchased, requiring some effort on the part of the gift giver, whereas cash does not. If the gift card is from the recipient's favourite store, then that shows some thought went into the gift as well, which is appreciated.
12. TRUE. In some cultures, umbrellas are thought to bring or signify misfortune. They have no such association in English cultures and are considered appropriate gifts.