

A festive holiday-themed background featuring a rustic wooden surface. In the upper left, a red and white striped candy cane is coiled. To its right, a blue gift box is partially visible, adorned with a pine cone. In the lower left, another blue gift box is wrapped with a pine branch and pine cones. On the right side, a white gift box is decorated with a red and green holly branch. At the bottom right, there is a red and white bell ornament and a white paper snowflake. The central text is overlaid on a white rectangular background.

HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

Office Gifts

Gift-giving in the office is fraught with worry. First things first, make sure to follow your company's guidelines about gift-giving on company time.

Some companies may have thresholds for how much people can spend or what types of gifts can be given.

You also want to make sure that you include everyone on your team and choose gifts that are inclusive of everyone. You don't have to give everyone the same thing, but you should make sure you put the same amount of thought and spend the same on everyone.

Here are some ideas for gift-giving at work.

FOOD

Almost everyone appreciates tasty treats. Christmas cookies and candies are a common sight around offices at holiday time, and some homemade goodies certainly won't come amiss. Put together a grab bag of sweet and savory treats so that they're sure to find something they'll enjoy. And remember, many people have food sensitivities or allergies. Try to make to accommodate everyone or plan for an alternate gift.

OFFICE SUPPLIES

A coffee mug filled with some of the most-sought-after supplies in your office space is



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a thoughtful gift. For some offices, it's colored sticky notes or highlighters, for others, it's special pens. Consider grabbing and portioning out a box of high-end pens. You can also find a variety of pencils with work-appropriate funny phrases on them. Other ideas: Whimsical tape dispensers, a collection of paper clips or

binder clips in fun shapes and phone charging cords.

GIFT CARDS

Make their daily coffee run a little more pleasant with a gift card to the local coffee shop. It doesn't have to be much, even \$5 or \$10 will be appreciated. Also consider cards for the office's favorite quick lunch

spot or to a store you know people in your office frequent. Put each gift card inside a holiday card, but beware of including any overtly religious sentiments, depending on your office culture.

IF YOU CAN'T GIFT

Some offices prefer to forbid holiday gifts altogether rather

than try to navigate the questions around them. If there's someone you work with that you're close to and would like to exchange gifts with, feel free, but remember to do it on your own time and away from the office. Don't be tempted to. Try and sneak the gift in. You may end up unwrapping more than just a great present.

Gifts for Families

Family are those closest to us but also are often the hardest people to buy holiday gifts for.

If you're having a tough time buying for everyone in your family, consider suggesting gift-giving plans like drawing names or gifts on a theme or within a certain budget. And consider these ideas for giving the best family gifts ever.

MUGGING FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Get them through a cold winter's night with a mug full of hot cocoa. Look for personalized or monogrammed coffee mugs emblazoned with either the first letter of everyone's name or the first letter of the family's last name. Complete the gift with bags of cocoa mix and gourmet marshmallows.

MOVIE NIGHT

Get a popcorn bowl and fill it up with movie theater-sized boxes of their favorite candy, popcorn seasonings and cards for rentals to a local movie service such as Netflix or Redbox. Looking to make a bigger impression? Include a streaming device so they can watch their favorites all year long.

GROWING MEMORIES

The long, cold nights of winter may not be when you think of flowers, but for families with a green thumb, a gardening kit

may be just the thing. Put together a gardening box with ceramic pots (bonus points: Paint them with everyone's name in acrylic paint, then seal it with a waterproof clear coat), tools and seeds so they can grow their own memories once the days warm up.

CRAFT NIGHT

Paste together some good times by creating a great family craft box. Put in paints, crayons, colored pencils, coloring books for all ages and maybe throw in some how-to books and supplies to help your favorite family find a

whole new hobby. Some things to consider: Modeling clay, loom weaving and paint-by-numbers kits.

FAMILY GAME NIGHT

Look for a sale on classic family games — think checkers or Scrabble — and make a

pile along with plenty of snacks to keep everyone fueled up for a whole night of family fun.

For extra oomph, include some coupons or gift cards to have dinner delivered as well. Mom and Dad will thank you for it.



Green Thumbs

Houseplants are having a moment. As the pandemic wore on, more and more people started bringing the outdoors in with houseplants.



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Give budding green thumbs awesome gifts by using this handy list.

WATERING TOOLS

It seems easy, watering your plants. But some houseplants are finicky about the way they're watered. Look for misters to make the plant mom or dad in your life's job a little easier. If they like to travel, look for chic plant watering systems that will deliver water over the course of a few days so they can take a trip and not worry about their babies at home.

GARDEN MARKERS

There are a variety of adorable garden markers on the market. You want to look for functional, too, though. Consider the materials and choose plastic over wood to prevent cracking and fading. Also make sure they're easy for your gardener to read, even from a distance.

CERAMIC POTS

New pots are always welcome in a gardener's house. Look for cute pots that fit their personal style and make sure they also fit the plants they like

to grow. Most plants like a pot with well-drained soil, so the pots you choose should have a drain hole or holes at the bottom. If they're growing herbs and veggies, you should choose pots with food-safe finishes.

LIGHTING

To make it through the long nights of winter, some plants need a little help staying green and growing. This is where grow lights can help. Grow lights include everything from a light bulb for an existing lamp to sophisticated systems with timers.

If you're unsure, talk to the experts at your local garden center about lights that can work for your gardener.

TOOLS

New tools are always welcome. Go beyond the ordinary trowels and look for things such as kneeling pads to help sore knees, aprons, gloves or even a new potting bench to help store and organize their gardening goods. Hit up your local gardening store and do some browsing to find the latest and greatest gadgets to up their gardening game.

Your Besties

They're with you every day, supporting you, defending you, telling you what you need to hear, loving you.

Friends are the family you choose, and this year, choose to give them the best gifts ever with these awesome ideas.

SNAIL MAIL SUPPLIES

Yes, like the USPS. With mailboxes and stamps and everything. Put together a kit with cards, envelopes, stamps and maybe even a nice pen or a pack of sealing wax. Give it to your bestie (and get one for you, too), and whenever you think of them, drop them a line the old-fashioned way. You'll both get the thrill of getting mail. It's the gift that keeps giving, all year long.

CUSTOM MAP PRINTS

Find a place that means the world to both of you — maybe it's your hometown, where you went to college or somewhere you both went on an amazing vacation — and have a custom map made. For bonus points, look for a local artisan that can make your map in whatever colors and textures your heart desires.

FANCY, DE-STRESSING TOILETRIES

Hit up the local farmers market or artisan market and find some delicious scented homemade soaps, bath



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bombs, lotions and other goods. The holidays are stressful, so this year, give your besties the gift of some relaxation. Bonus points: Offer to take the kids/pets/do the errands for an afternoon to also give them the gift of guilt-free time to relax.

KITCHEN GEAR

If your bestie loves to cook, look for personalized kitchen tools such as cutting boards and wooden spoons. Also a hit are pithy tea towels, aprons with or without monograms, fun utensils and cookbooks. Just make sure

you choose gifts appropriate to the skill level (or desired skill level) of your friend.

TECH ACCESSORIES

We all have that friend that's always swiping our charging cords. For this bestie, put together a tech

care kit with a fresh new case, a charger, a USB hub or brick, and maybe a compatible all-in-one charger for your phone, earbuds and watch. Also look for smart watch accessories, such as new bands and cases to match their every outfit and mood.

For the Bookworm

Sometimes, our best friends are books and sometimes, they're people with their nose in a book.

If your bestie loves to spend time with a good book, here are some great gifts that will tickle their fancy.

LIGHTING

Portable lighting makes all the difference to the dedicated reader. Look for portable book lights with clips to grip the book, LED lights for economical brightness, and, for advanced features, light temperatures to help with eye fatigue.

For readers who tend to stay up too late with their books, there are alarm clocks that slowly fade out the light and fade it back in to gently put you to sleep and wake you up.

LIBRARY THEMED GIFTS

You can get mugs, shirts and even socks with library check-out cards on them. Also look for bookmarks and other reading accessories, such as journals and notebooks, in the same theme to make a package. You can even find library- and book-scented candles. Most voracious readers have logged serious library time, and these gifts will remind them of one of their favorite places.

BESTSELLING BOOKS

Visit your local bookseller



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and, bearing in mind your bookworm's favorite reads, pick up some of the staff's recommendations.

You can also choose fiction or nonfiction bestsellers or, joy of joys, a gift card so they can shop whenever they want.

SOFT, SNUGGLY BLANKETS

Curling up with a good book on a cold winter's day is made all the more enjoyable with a soft, snuggly blanket. Look for blankets that are easy to maintain and go with your reading buddy's home decor. Bonus

points: Snag some comfy socks for maximum snuggliness.

OTHER ACCESSORIES

Bookmarks are always a good idea, and these days they come in cute clips, tiny plants and more. Also look for creative bookends to display their

favorite reads in any room. You can also get a variety of book-themed gifts, such as literary tote bags, postcards and even card games. Ask the booksellers in your town what they'd like to get for the holidays, and you'll be well set on gifts for your favorite bookworm.

For Pets and their Humans

Don't forget our feathered and four-legged friends this holiday season — and their humans.

If you want to impress a pet-loving person, turn up with a great gift for their animals. A great way to start is by making a trip to the local pet store and ask for some advice. Or you can start with these ideas.

GIFTS FOR PUPS

Treats. Lots of treats. Some local bakeries may make special pup cakes and cookies just for doggies, and a selection of those will make any pup happy. While you're at the pet store, look for other things like pet outfits, collars, harnesses and leashes. If your friend's dog is particularly fuzzy, pick up some grooming supplies like brushes, combs and shedding spray. Food and water dishes are another excellent idea, and you can find a variety of bowls in different materials and styles to suit every decor.

GIFTS FOR CATS

With the kitties, start with toys. Anything that sparks a cat's instinct to hunt is a great toy.

Keep an eye out for small balls and crinkly toys, feathers and wands they can chase, scratchers and, for the advanced cat owner, interactive cat toys. Laser pointers are another popular option.



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Cat furniture is a great gift, like scratching poles or loungers, but make sure their person has plenty of room for it.

GIFTS FOR BIRDS

Another pet that loves a toy is a bird. Look for toys that are appropriate to the type of bird

your friend has; you may want to look for toys that help keep their birds' beaks and claws properly maintained. Other ideas are dried fruits and seeds appropriate for your favorite bird's diet, nesting boxes, perches and cage accessories.

FINS, FUR AND MORE

You're going to see some common refrains for these uncommon pets. Treats and toys are great ideas no matter what pet you're buying for. Just make sure with the experts at the pet store that the ones you've picked out

are appropriate for the pet you're buying for. Many pet stores also offer things like outfits, even for our scaly friends, and grooming tools for all kinds of pets. Ask the experts in the store to help you put together a show-stopping gift.

Best Gifts For: Kids

When we celebrate the holidays, in many ways, we're celebrating children.

It's the time of year when toys and other gifts for children go on sale, and it can get overwhelming to buy for the kids in your life. Fortunately, we've got these outside-the-box ideas to help you win the gift-giving crown.

CASH

Yeah, it feels impersonal, but if you've got a teenager or an older child, cold, card cash is what they'll want the most. For bonus points, give it as a savings bond or in the form of a savings account that's already stocked for them. Alternatives are gift cards to their favorite restaurant or store, especially if they have a hobby you're unfamiliar with. You can also stock their favorite app store for them to spend on the latest games or music.

EXPERIENCES

Set yourself apart from the usual gifting crowd by giving the kids in your life experiences instead of material things. Take them for a day at the beach or an outing to the museum. The point is to get them outside of their comfort zone or to tick off a goal on their list. Maybe it's a trip to their favorite sporting event or a trip to let them get hands-on with one of their interests. Talk to their parents about things the child's really wanted to do



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that you can deliver and then make a day of it with just you two together.

ACCESSORIES

Talk to their parents and see what they're getting for their children this year, then see if

it's possible if you can buy the accessories. For instance, if the child is getting a guitar under the tree, offer to purchase a guitar strap, extra strings and picks. If they're getting a phone, pony up for a case and charger. You get the point. Not

only will these get you gold star from the kid, but their parents will appreciate the help, too.

CLASSES

Kids today have lots of extracurricular activities, and, chances are, there's a class or

two the kids in your life have been wanting to try. Pony up for extra martial arts classes, swimming lessons or even a foreign language or music tutor. Find out what the kid's really been wanting to learn and give the gift to knowledge.