

Preface to “Hot Holiday Gift” (Grades 3–12)

There is terrific energy generated around children’s gifts, particularly during the holiday season in December. Advertisers begin planning soon after the summer toy conventions. Parents and children discuss wish lists. Parents often hunt the special requests relentlessly. The gift-opening is an important part of the ritual.

Hot Holiday Gift is a fully developed unit that helps students and teachers understand the holiday gift-giving phenomenon: why gift-giving exists, why there are must-have gifts, and the roles these gifts play in people’s lives.

The unit invites students to demonstrate a large number of literacy and media expectations, including ethnographic research, writing, and gift design.

Background

The writing team wanted to produce a guide that would take advantage of all the media messages and energy that promote holiday gift giving during November and December. The team brainstormed to create a unit that might work with a wide range of students, and wanted to include opportunities for student ethnographic research.

The guide contains opportunities to develop a wide range of literacy skills that include media literacy.