

B. Introducing the Unit

1. The teacher might bring a collection of his/her own favourite HHG, and describe the feelings, anxieties, pleasures, etc., felt when the gift was received and used (or watched someone ELSE receive the gift they wanted.)

2. In groups or pairs, students brainstorm a list of HHGs of the near or distant past.

After completing the list, students consider some of the following questions:

- Δ What qualities (unusual, exciting, prestigious, colourful, compelling, technological) or conditions (peer pressure, advertising, etc.) made them “must-have” gifts?
- Δ How might peer pressure contribute to children’s, and adults’ “must-have” feelings?
- Δ How can media messages (advertising strategies, product placement, tie-ins) encourage “must-have” feelings?
- Δ Might a *hand-made* gift qualify as an HHG? Why?
- Δ Might a *found* gift, such as a shell or a pine cone, qualify as an HHG? Why?
- Δ What are the “pleasure values” of various HHGs? (e.g., pleasures associated with receiving, owning, sharing with others compared to private use)
- Δ How are some HHGs made to appeal to a female user or to a male user?
- Δ How do design and promotion help to match gifts to the receiver’s personality?
- Δ Which gifts have multiple functions? ...single functions?
- Δ What does it feel like to receive something that others covet?

C. Research

Students will conduct interviews to discover more about the influences and desires that made the HHG “must-have” gifts. They should interview a classmate, and then at least one of parent/guardian/other adult or child about their favourite childhood HHGs.

Step 1. Collecting Data

Brainstorm the kinds of information needed to understand the “must-have” phenomenon, then brainstorm the questions necessary to obtain that information. Key discussion questions to guide question-building: *What do we need to know?* and *What questions will help interviewees give us that information?*

Designing appropriate and understandable questions can help to develop higher-order thinking skills. Students will also be more committed to finding answers to questions they have designed themselves. Ask students to predict answers to some of the questions.

Possible interview questions might include:

- Δ How did you first find out about the gift?
- Δ What made you crave that gift?
- Δ Who gave you the gift?
- Δ Describe your feelings when you received/didn’t receive the gift.
- Δ Describe your feelings and pleasures when you first used the gift.
- Δ How were your expectations about receiving the gift fulfilled or not fulfilled?
- Δ Did you share the gift with others? Why?
- Δ What did you do to ensure that you received the HHG?
- Δ How did your brother/sister/friend react to your receiving the HHG?
- Δ Did someone in the family disapprove of your receiving the HHG? Why?
- Δ Describe how your gift enhanced your life.

Step 2. Processing the Data

Create charts that will help students record and organize their responses. Charts might be arranged by question or age group. (see example below)

Questions	Child Response	Teen Response	Adult Response
Question 1			
Question 2			
Question 3			

Students might compare their results in small groups, then share with the entire class. Alternatively, they might note their results on charts posted around the room, then discuss the findings.

Students might consider how many of their predictions were accurate and try to account for some inaccurate predictions.

Consult the charts to identify patterns of frequent responses. Use the patterns to build statements that are true for many HHGs or for the reactions of particular age groups (e.g., toys sometimes appear larger on TV than in real life; teens prefer HHGs that they can take to school; and sharing a gift is as fun as receiving it).