

## Cheap Gifts, Not Students

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With the impending holidays, many students are looking to buy thoughtful gifts for family and friends without breaking the bank. Luckily, there are alternatives to giving every family member a Truman pencil this year.

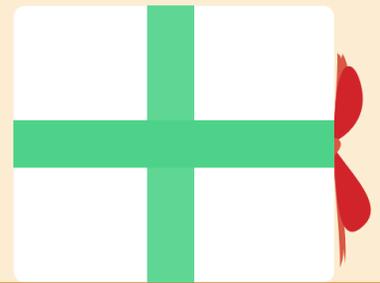


### Themed Baskets

Grab a basket, bucket, bowl or even a mug and fill it with little gifts to contribute to a theme. Add popcorn, a box of candy and a few \$5 flicks to make a movie basket. Some gel pens, a blank journal and a cute paperweight are good gifts for an aspiring writer. You can go any direction with this and spend as much — or as little — as you want. A few dollars can fill a basket with exciting gifts.

### Necessary and Needed Presents

This isn't the golden ticket of gifts, but it can at least say, "I know you." Give someone something they actually need — pots and pans, towels, flashlights, scissors, gloves or anything else people generally need more of. Although some people don't want socks for a gift, the right person will appreciate getting something they need and will be touched you noticed. They will use it often and think of you every time.



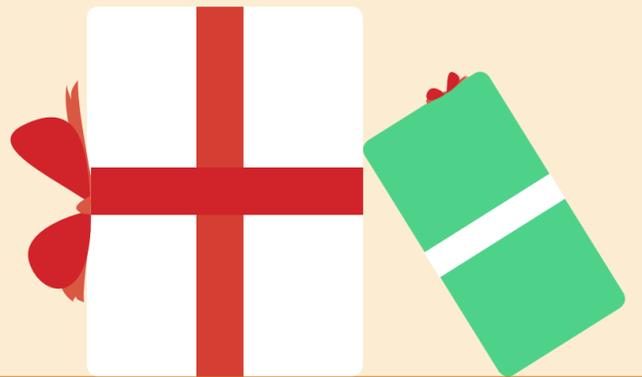
### Baked Goods

Nothing says "I put a lot of thought into this gift" like baked goods. Use your kitchen and pantry to make all different kinds of cookies, cakes, bars and candies. A nice card or note attached to the paper plate full of goodies can be all it takes to give a great gift. It can be even more meaningful if you make baked goods for your gluten-free neighbor or that cousin who can't eat eggs. It'll only cost you a few hours, the treats' ingredients and a stack of paper plates.



### Gift Cards

During this day and age, there are gift cards for almost every store and you can shove off the idea of impersonality by choosing a gift card to a store that the recipient always goes to. Maybe your mom is obsessed with Yankee Candles or your sister only buys clothes from Justice. Avoid giving someone a general gift card they might never use. Instead of giving them \$10 toward a meal at Applebee's, why not try something more practical? Wal-Mart, Bed Bath and Beyond, Home Depot and others can be much more useful.



### Personal Coupons

Coupons for a free car wash, a no-strings-attached use of your car or even just an opportunity to spend time with you can be good gifts for those short on funds. The more personalized they are to the recipients of the gift, the better. Just make sure you deliver what you've promised the gift's recipient.



### Personalized Gifts

Looking for something versatile? This is the section for you. All you'll need is something plain to decorate like a picture frame, door hanger, T-shirt or a plain coffee cup. Find stickers, sports team logos, glitter or colorful paint to make your item special. Embellishing a plain gift makes it more personalized and thoughtful, and can be a winner this holiday.

### Homemade Gifts



What is more thoughtful than something you slaved to make with your own hands? You can go several ways with this. Crochet or knit some much-needed winter accessories — hats, scarves or mittens for those advanced creators. Have some creative talents? Create, frame and perform a special song for a sibling, draw a portrait of a loved one for a grandparent. Cover a shoebox with colorful cutouts from magazines to make a keepsake for your mom, burn a DVD of home videos or pictures set to music for your dad or write a children's book for your niece or nephew. Use your own talents to create something out of nothing at a low cost.



All in all, give something you wouldn't mind getting, and try to individualize each gift you give.

Look in dollar stores, craft stores and thrift stores for cheap buys to make your gifts. Thrift stores can be especially good if you're looking to make something homemade or for some great jewelry. It might not be the newest Wii U game or an iPhone 6, but it'll mean just as much, if not more, to your loved one.