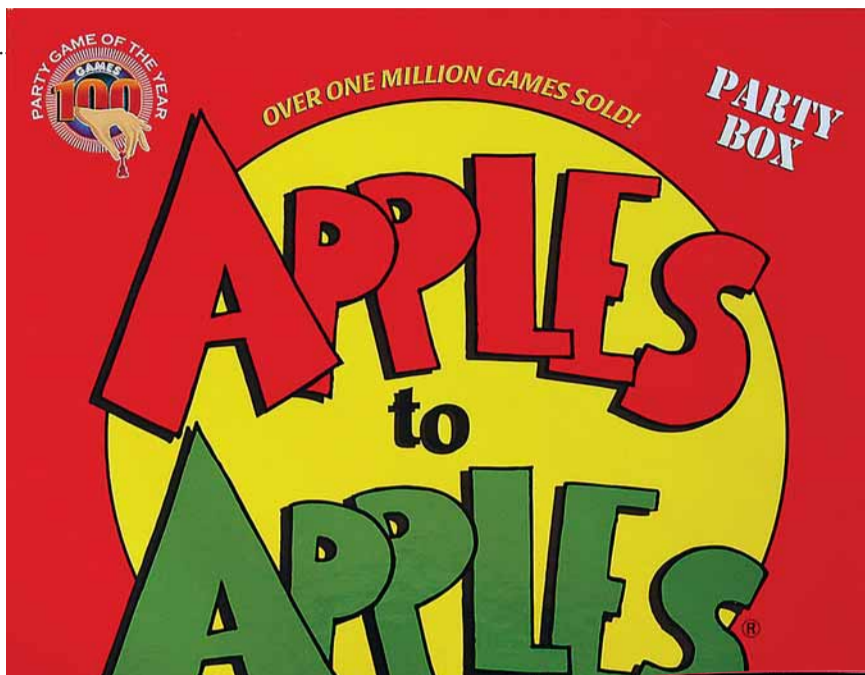


GIFTS TO ENHANCE CAMPUS LIFE



► Here's an old-school option that will work well if you know your audience: games. Not computer games, but old-fashioned board games that have caught on with younger people such as **Apples to Apples** (\$25), **Taboo** (\$30), **Catch Phrase** (\$30), or even **Scrabble** (\$25) or **Risk** (\$30). We're not kidding, they play them. And no dorm room or apartment should be without a deck of cards (\$2.35) or two around for everything from euchre to poker. No gambling, please. Available at Kmart and most big-box stores.



► If you've ever been around a college-age person, you know there's something they're constantly breaking, losing, or burning out: **ear buds** (\$6-\$15) for their iPods. They can't have enough of them and they make perfect stocking stuffers that will be appreciated some cold February night when there's a long trek across campus on the horizon and the old buds are shot. You can find them at Best Buy, and most other big-box stores.



► Let's assume for a minute that your college student is living in an apartment. It's stipulated that you're already worried about whether she's eating enough and whether her food choices are healthy. Or perhaps it's a young man who's on your mind and you know he's overdoing the cheap, easy fast-food and cold pizza. We suggest a **crockpot and a gift card to a favorite grocery, such as Kroger, The Andersons, Churchill's, or Giant Eagle**. The crockpot says, "I love you, so eat better." The gift card says, "I really do love you and there's no excuse to not go buy some decent food and learn some rudimentary cooking techniques. Start now." Crockpots are available at many stores, including Costco Warehouse. You can find small ones for as little as \$10 and larger ones for up to \$50, depending on where you go.

► Just to prove your point, how about a couple of cookbooks? We all have to learn to cook sometime (well, most of us) and early adulthood is usually when we're forced by financial constraints and necessity to learn to whip up something more than boxed macaroni and cheese. We suggest heading to Barnes and Noble and poring over the endless offerings, with an eye on cooking for the beginner. Of course, get a book with crockpot recipes, and perhaps find a copy of **Radically Simple** (Rodale, \$35), a new one by Rozanne Gold that features 325 recipes, all written in 140 words or less.

► Here's another idea that's so practical it's absurd: a big old **domestic care package**. Find a fairly large box and stuff it with paper towels, toilet paper (the good, double-thick stuff too), cleaning supplies, shampoo, razors, shaving cream, soap, and anything else you can think of that's necessary for keeping an apartment, dorm room, or person relatively tidy. It's a proven fact that young adults aren't necessarily messy by choice; they just can't be bothered to go out and spend their limited money on something as pedestrian as toilet bowl cleaner. Take your pick on where you shop for this stuff, because you can find it at Rite Aid, Walgreens, Big Lots, Family Dollar, and any number of other stores and grocers. The cost depends on what you decide to include in the care package.



► College students spend virtually half their waking hours plugged into a computer, most likely a laptop. It's where they do all their work and a big chunk of their socializing while serving as an entertainment center. That means the hard drive is packed with important papers and research, photos, and music. But is all this backed up as protection against the inevitable computer crash or virus? We doubt it. So how about getting a **big flash drive or two** — something as muscular as 8 gigabytes — for portability and security? It's not sexy, but it will be appreciated. Available at OfficeMax (which recently had some great deals on drives for about \$17), Radio Shack, and other stores such as Target.

► Next up is a rite-of-passage purchase for anyone heading into adulthood: a **coffee maker**. Like it or not, college students keep strange hours and pull all-nighters. They can drink all those strange, unhealthy energy concoctions or get their caffeine the old-fashioned way: through a pot of strong java. Most of the big department stores such as Dillard's or Kohl's sell an array of coffee makers and you can find them at Meijer or Walmart as well. The simple version is about \$25 or you can buy fancy programmable ones for up to \$130.

► Now that we've established domestic balance, let's consider the social aspects of young adulthood. Given that this is a period of tight budgets, the idea of going out to a good restaurant and enjoying a nice meal is as foreign as a good night's sleep. So treat your college student to a really nice meal. We're talking about splurging here and finding a good restaurant in town — in this case, Toledo — and buying them a **gift card** for at least \$50 so he or she can take a friend or date and really splurge. Any of the Mancy's restaurants would be appreciated, but so would Tony Packo's, the Beirut, or the Maumee Bay Brewing Company.



Gift ideas: Rod Lockwood