

## **From World Peace to Thermal Socks, Holiday Wish Lists Run the Gamut**

World peace. Thermal socks. A '57 Chevy. A deer rifle. New teeth. "A nice battery operated clock to hang above the fireplace." More time with the kids. "Health – and a little bottle of whisky."

And what would you like for Christmas?

The answers are as richly varied as America itself. From the prosaic to the fanciful, from the modest to the fantastic, the American public's Christmas wish list runs the gamut of consumer goods, with a few hopes and dreams thrown in. Xboxes, iPods and plasma TV screens make the list, alongside peace, serenity and "a sack of \$20 bills."

Some answers in this ABC News poll are fun, some funny, others poignant and even distressing. "If you could have your choice," respondents were asked, "what one present would you most like to have for Christmas?"

Love of course makes the list, in all its forms: One respondent wished for "a mail-order bride," another, for "my husband back," yet another for "both kids home for dinner." "Love of family," said one. One man went in a different direction: "I'd like a divorce."

Some said they want only good health, for themselves or for ailing loved ones. Two people hoped for winter coats.

Some things never change: When Gallup asked the same question in a poll it conducted in 1958, the most-cited answer was a car, truck or automotive accessory – 14 percent of Americans said that was what they wanted for Christmas. Today, 47 years later, the same category still leads the list, at 16 percent. (Interestingly, cars are No. 1 among men, at 21 percent, but also among women, at 11 percent.)

On the other hand, computers are a top item now; consumer computing didn't exist in 1958. And fewer people now want clothes and shoes, or home appliances, than did back then.

But money is still money: Six percent of Americans say that's what they want for Christmas, as did five percent in 1958. There's a wide scope within that particular desire. One respondent kept it simple: "I would like to receive \$20." A few others aimed a tad higher, \$100, or \$100,000, or "a million dollars." One, thinking of the recent Mega Millions lottery, specified, "That \$315 million!" But they're all pikers next to the

ultimate dreamer: “A billion dollars,” wished one 23-year-old man. That’d last a few Christmases.

There’s a similar range in automotive dreams. “A good car, period,” would do it for one respondent. Others specified Ferraris, Porsches, BMWs, Mercedes, Cadillacs, Hummers, Corvettes and so forth, in some cases down to model and accessories. “A 2006 BMW M3 six-speed turbocharged black on black with black rims and chrome outline” would do nicely for one 21-year-old Northeasterner.

An older and perhaps more practical Southerner wanted a lift kit for his pickup; another is looking for “my second Harley”; yet another, not a new hog but a place to keep the old one: “A shed to put my motorcycle in.”

Others want to house themselves, not their toys. Several wished for a new home – “I would like to have a log home in the woods” - or at least a new kitchen, or at the very least “a new cupboard, installed.” All manner of household appliances show up – an electric blanket, an ice-cream maker, a George Foreman grill, a cordless vacuum cleaner, a sewing machine, a feather duster, a new cookie jar.

One woman, somewhat darkly, asked for not just any house, but: “My husband’s house.”

While some male respondents are quite specific automotively, some women are every bit their equal in the jewelry department. While many just want jewelry, one 47-year-old woman specified: “I want diamond earrings. I want big ones! Really big ones, honking big!” Another had thought it out even further, and a bit more demurely: “A blue diamond set in a platinum setting for my small pinkie finger on my left hand.” If you please.

Tools make the list – a lawn mower, a cordless drill, a circular saw. Toys make the list – fishing rods, snow shoes, golf clubs, even a Barbie. Some people want trips – to Hawaii, Florida, Las Vegas, Jamaica, Europe, Brazil, Arkansas, Greece, to a warmer climate, “to anywhere.” There are watches, books, glasses, horses, “a puppy,” a yoga ball, season tickets to the Saints, a Limp Bizkit CD, a piano, a guitar.

And there are intangibles. “Privacy” is what one 77-year-old man wants for Christmas. “Peace and serenity” would do it for another person. “Time with the family” sounds good, and a 74-year-old Westerner simply “would like for someone to stop by to say hello.”

One 19-year-old respondent couldn’t help himself from the corny line: all he wants for Christmas is “my two front teeth.” But the best answer of all came from a 45-year-old mother: “My son just came home from Iraq,” she said, “so I have everything I need.”

**METHODOLOGY** – This ABC News poll was conducted by telephone Nov. 16-20, 2005, among a random national sample of 1,003 adults. The results have a three-point error margin. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS of Horsham, Pa.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at  
<http://abcnews.go.com/US/PollVault/>.

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Full results follow (\*= less than 0.5 percent).

1-3 previously released.

4. If you could have your choice, what one present would you most like to have for Christmas?

	2005	1958*
Car, motorbike, truck, car accessories	16	14
Computer, laptop, printer, Blackberry	7	na
Clothes, shoes	6	12
Money, lottery, etc.	6	5
Jewelry, diamonds, pearls	5	na
Vacation, plane ticket	5	3
Home furnishings, home renovations	4	8
Health, vitamins, medicine	4	2
TV, plasma TV, TV projector, etc.	4	3
Home, apartment	3	6
Home appliances, kitchenware	3	13
Family and friends	2	na
Xbox, video game	2	na
Peace, love	2	1
Stereo, music, CDs, audio equipment	2	1
Camera, digital camera	1	1
Tools, workshop equipment	1	2
Personal grooming/hygiene (razor, make-up, make-over)	1	1
Debt, bills, mortgage paid off	1	1
Gun, rifle	1	1
iPod	1	na
Sporting equipment	1	na
Gift certificate, gift card	1	na
Book	1	na
Significant other (boyfriend/girlfriend, husband/wife)	1	na
Toys, dolls, games	1	na
Tivo, DVR, DVD	1	na
Accessories (purse, glasses, gloves, etc.)	1	na
Video camera, digital video camera	1	na
Musical instrument	1	na
Boat, yacht	1	na
Radio, satellite radio	0	1
Job, work	0	1
Other	5	12
Nothing	4	5
Don't know	7	5

\*1958 poll by Gallup.