

# HOW TO DETERMINE THE CONTENTS OF A WRAPPED GIFT

## WITHOUT OPENING THE PRESENT

### 1 Observe the position of the gift.

If the box is on top of a stack of gifts or hidden on a high shelf, it is probably not fragile. If it seems to have been carefully stored, use caution when handling.

### 2 Note the gift's surroundings.

Draw a quick diagram or take a digital or instant-developing photo that shows the location of the gift relative to other presents or objects around it. You will need to return the gift to exactly the same location and position later.

### 3 Examine the wrapping paper.

The name of the store may be printed on the paper, or it may be sealed using a sticker from the store. Both will give clues to its contents.

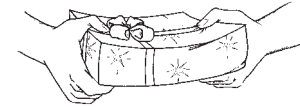
### 4 Smell the box.

Chocolates, baked goods, bath products, and leather goods have distinctive aromas, as do many other items.

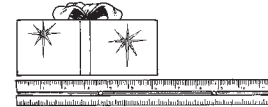
*Much can be determined about a gift without unwrapping it.*



*Smell.*



*Squeeze.*



*Measure.*



*Weigh.*

### 5 Squeeze the package.

Clothing boxes are generally light and will give slightly when squeezed. Electronics and other fragile items are usually packed in molded foam inserts that fit snugly inside thin outer boxes. Power tools are often packaged in rigid, thick cardboard boxes with large staples in the end flaps; you might be able to feel the staples through wrapping paper.

## 6 Measure the package.

Clothing boxes are generally longer than they are wide, and less than six inches high. Compact disc jewel cases are  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches wide,  $4\frac{3}{4}$  inches long, and less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch high. If the package has the first two dimensions but is higher (thicker), it is probably several discs or a double- or triple-disc set. DVD boxes are  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches wide, about  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches long, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch high. Books may be any form of rectangle but are relatively heavy for their size. Underwear and socks will often be wrapped but not boxed; the packages will be flexible, and the plastic may make a quiet, crinkling sound.

## 7 Shake the package gently.

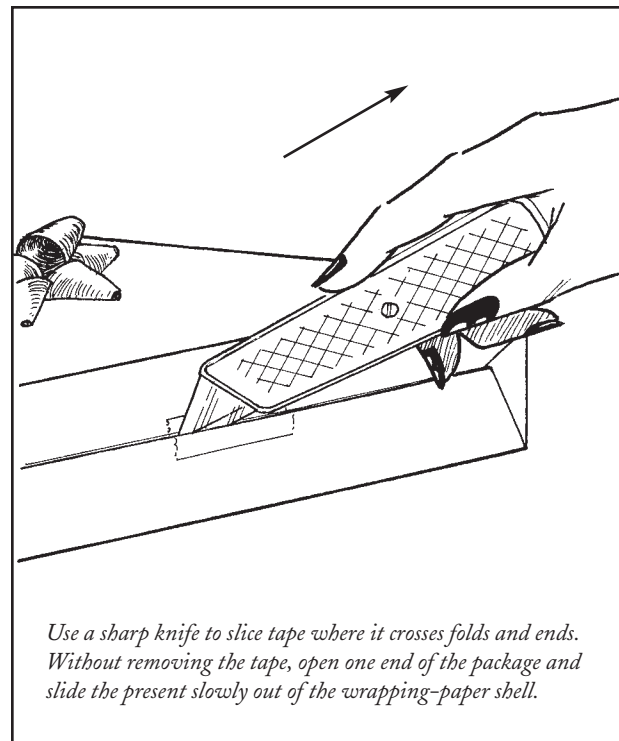
If you hear slight rustling, the item is likely clothes covered in tissue paper. If the box is big, heavy, and clinks slightly, it may contain an appliance.

## 8 Weigh the package.

If you have a hunch about the item and the store it came from, go online and compare the weight of the box to the listed shipping weight of the suspected gift.

## HOW TO REWRAP A GIFT

You will need the original wrapping paper, still taped but with the tape slit where it crosses edges; a roll of clear tape (or that which matches the tape on the gifts); glue; a ruler; and, in emergencies, a roll of wrapping paper that matches as closely as possible the pattern of the original wrapping paper.



*Use a sharp knife to slice tape where it crosses folds and ends. Without removing the tape, open one end of the package and slide the present slowly out of the wrapping-paper shell.*

## 1 Do not remove the tape.

Leave tape on the wrapping paper. Pulling it off will cause the paper to tear.

## 2 Slide the box back into the paper.

Your rewrapping job will be easier if only the sides of the paper have been opened. If the paper is completely unfolded, place the box on the paper. Make sure the edges of the box align with the folds in the paper.

**3 Follow the original wrapper's sequence.**

Most wrappers will fold the paper around the gift first, then fold and seal the box at both ends. Follow the existing pattern of folds on the paper as you would in refolding a map. Use the ruler to re-crease the paper.

**4 Glue or tape the paper.**

If the opening was done properly, line up the old tape pieces and place glue under the flaps. This will give the tape a seamless appearance and avoid excess taping, which might be spotted. Hold the flaps of paper in place for several minutes until the glue sets. Wipe off any visible glue while it is still wet. If the opening was sloppy or the tape edges cannot be properly aligned, place a new, slightly larger piece over the old one.

**5 Retie bows.**

If the bows were hand-tied, retie them. If they were store-bought, make certain they are still stuck to the paper. If not, glue them on.

**6 Reposition the gift.**

Put the gift back in its original position. Refer to your diagram or photo (see “How to Determine the Contents of a Wrapped Gift,” step 2, page 110).

**7 Act surprised.**

When you are given the present and open it legitimately, express delight. If the present you receive is not the one you opened and rewrapped, do not show surprise: The giver may have switched name tags (see “How to Thwart Gift Snoopers,” page 107).

**WORST-CASE  
SCENARIO®**