



HOLIDAY COUNTDOWN

WHAT TO BUY

TEENAGERS ON YOUR LIST



▲ **Purses and accessories:** Lots of options here, but try the Lulu Guinness collection, including the Lulu Mega Tote. Available at JC Penney. \$22 to \$65.

Shopping for today's young, hip, and budding adult who is wise beyond his or her years — aka the teenager — can be a trying experience. What's hot, what's not, and what offers them the perfect balance of independence, creativity, style, and sophistication, seasoned with a dash (ahem) of rebellion? Good question. We have no sure-fire answers and wish you luck in accommodating the idiosyncratic tastes of such worldly creatures. But, just for yucks, here are a few ideas that might hit the sweet spot.

— By Tom Henry, Blade Staff Writer



▶ **Headphones:** Remember those scratchy old Sony Walkman headphones in your gym bag? Those are sooooo 2010, dude. Today's ear muffs are a total escape of a listening experience, many with noise-canceling to block out external distractions and other features that provide a crisp and fuller sound. Beats by Dre is one of the hottest models, but teens also are drawn to products made by Skullcandy, Turtle Beach, Urbanears, and — of course — Sony, Panasonic, and other time-tested names. Beats by Dre is available at Best Buy, Target, RadioShack, Macy's. \$119.95 to \$299.99; some other brands are less expensive.



▲ **Beanies and stocking caps:** No need to get fleeced on any deals with this gift. Whether your teen prefers wool or synthetic, there are lots of stretchy options in terms of color and design, from sports teams to Looney Tunes characters. Available at Sears, Target, Meijer, Dick's Sporting Goods, or through many popular mail-order catalogs. \$5 to \$25.



▲ **Video games:** Two of the hottest are Call of Duty: Black Ops II and Halo 4. Available at GameStop. \$59.99.

▶ **Gear Me Up, Scotty:** Hmm...Let's see...Browns/Lions. UM/OSU. Tigers/Tribe. UT/BGSU. Red Wings (even with the NHL on hiatus). The sky's the limit on what T-shirts, sweatshirts, hats, golf balls, wristbands, and underwear you'll find imprinted with your teen's favorite logo. Available at Meijer and The Andersons, the latter of which often has some high school gear in stock. Can start at \$10, depending on product.



▲ **Rock Me, Baby:** Rock your teen all night long (or, ideally, have him or her rock you) with a real musical instrument, not some toy or instrument wannabe. Get something they can grow into. Fender Stratocasters and Reverend Sensei are two gig-quality, beautiful axes in the \$800 range. Expect to pay that much or more for one of the ultimate in acoustics, Martin & Co. guitars. But there are many less expensive options. Don't forget the amplifier if the guitar requires one. Available at Durdell's Music. Guitar prices generally start about \$200, while amps can be had for as little as \$100.



▲ **Affordable tablets** — These are too numerous to list. They run the gamut from electronic book readers to high-powered computers that have merged the best qualities of modern cell phones and laptops. The buzz includes but is not limited to the Kindle Fire and iPad mini. Available through amazon.com or at Best Buy. \$159.00 to \$659.99, depending how sharp you want the resolution, how big you want the screen, and how many gigabytes you're going after for memory (HD version of Kindle Fire starts at \$199.00).



▲ **Ankle boots:** The truly adventurous will leap at the opportunity to buy shoes or boots for the young ladies in their lives because a) everyone knows females aren't fussy about footwear and b) we can't think of anything more preposterous to say. One thing we have learned from informed sources, though, is that ankle boots — especially Wet Seal's Western Ankle Boot and Rocket Dog's Brown Lace Ups — are popular among grown-up girls in college, which can only mean they're even more popular (or soon will be) among the teens who emulate them. Try your major department stores, but don't be surprised if you wind up shopping from mail-order catalogs that specialize in shoes, such as zappos.com. Note there is a wide range of styles and prices. Available at Macy's, Sears, and JC Penney. \$49 to \$595

▶ **Ticket stub diary:** A convenient way to organize, preserve, and display cherished ticket stubs from sporting events, concerts, movies, and the like. Available at Barnes & Noble. \$14.95



▲ **DVDs and Blu-Ray discs:** Marvel's The Avengers and The Dark Knight Rises lead the pack of this season's most enticing movies for the teen-aged viewer. Available at Target, \$19.99 to \$35.99.

Prices subject to change