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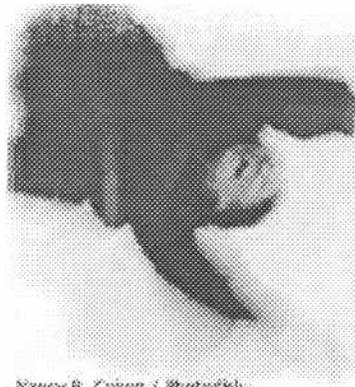


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Great gifts for millennium grads

« A guide to smart, fun tools to help put your graduate on the right path

Nancy R. Cohen / PhotoDisk

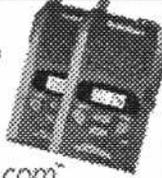
By Teri Goldberg
SPECIAL TO MSNBC

May 23 — The first year 2000 graduates are about to step into the real world — and what a wired world it is. Whether they're headed into Ivy towers or a satisfying work week, there are some neat tools out there to get them on the right path. The picks below will even let them have some fun along the way.

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Ten-language talking translator
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freezer" to having "a little black dress in the closet."

Each chapter of her book starts off with a verbal mnemonic to help readers remember a specific technique. Sticking with the no-fuss theme, the chapter on appetizers starts with this rhyme: "Your appetizers can be great even if they're not planned. Just forage through the kitchen for things you have on hand." Recipes for a variety of spreads follow — all to top off toast rounds made from that loaf of bread you've stored in the freezer. Anderson also guarantees that a thin slice of a red onion makes the difference between a good hors d'oeuvre and a spectacular one.

Where are you going?

Before sending their kids off to higher education or daily grind of the working world, some parents spring for an international adventure for their young grad. If that's the case at your house, a few travel-related tools could come in handy. With National Geographic's seven-language translator (\$49.95), you can enter an expression or phrase, and the translation appears in one of the following languages: English, German, Spanish, French, Italian, Dutch or Swedish. Manufactured by Franklin, the pocket-size device contains 210,000 words and 4,200 phrases and the display holds up to three lines of text. The electronic translator also offers anxious parents the comfort of knowing that the recent graduate will always be able to locate the nearest hostel, find the closest bathroom and track down a pay phone to call home — collect, of course. Buying one electronic gadget is also a lot cheaper than buying seven dictionaries or phrase books, and it's a lot lighter, too.



Some graduates may choose to sojourn to a non-European country such as China, Japan, Indonesia or Thailand. If so, Aim High Inc., a company based in Wheaton, Ill., stocks electronic translators in 50 languages, from Arabic to Serbo-Croatian to Vietnamese. Richard Chen, the store's founder and owner admits that the multi-language translator contains fewer vocabulary words than the single-language translators. But for the

international traveler, they'll do just fine, he says. Prices range from \$39.95 for a seven-language translator to \$147.95 for a translator that stores 10 languages.

Go with less

For travelers or parents on tighter budgets, check out Walkabout Travel Gear. Based in Moab, Utah, the travel gear company stocks some very simple devices that will help your graduate negotiate foreign territory for a lot less "dinero" or "moula." For only \$4.50, the Kwikpoint International Translator, a three-paneled, two-sided brochure requires no technical and barely any intellectual ability. Just point to one of the more than 400 illustrations on the heavy-coated plastic and "you're there," as the saying goes. Objects and situations pictured range from food to shelter to shopping. The company claims that Kwikpoint is "issued to all U.S. Marines abroad, and used by the International Monetary Fund, and many international companies."



Despite their excellent training, some graduates may need some help with exchange rates. For the mathematically challenged, you can pick up a currency converter for only \$14 that works as a calculator as well. The 3 1/2-by-2-inch device converts currency and has a memory bank that keeps track of trip expenditures. An even cheaper option is a credit-card calculator. The solar-powered calculator weighs less the converter and never runs out of batteries. Batteries also tend to be expensive overseas.

See the world

The Internet can take the computer-savvy graduate anywhere these days, but it's still a good idea to have a handle on the physical world. Even in the emerging electronic global village, a plain old ordinary globe still makes a great graduation gift. Located in Santa Monica, Calif., [The California Map and Travel Center](#) has the best selection online. It's one of the few sites that still sells a basic teaching globe as well as antique decorative types. Named appropriately, the Explorer (\$32) is a traditional schoolroom globe mounted on a metal base. More expensive globes tend to have sepia-tone oceans and rest on wooden bases. The Terrasphere, priced at \$105, was inspired by an Italian cartographer Vincenzo Coronelli and offers a view of the world through the eyes of 17th-century navigators. Online shops at National Geographic and Discovery also sell globes, but have a limited selection.

Read about the world

Some graduates still prefer reading the written word on parchment rather than on their computer screen. For these old-school grads, consider buying a magazine subscription. In the grand scheme of gift-giving, magazine subscriptions are relatively inexpensive and offer a lot of versatility. No matter what interests the graduate, there's got to be a magazine on the newsstand devoted to them. Anyone interested in Mary Beth's Bean Bag World or Wakeboarding?

[Enews.com](#) stocks more than 900 magazines and all subscriptions come with a free 90-day trial period. So, if the business major decides that he or she wants to start reading Gourmet instead of Business Week, just call customer service.

If you're stumped as to what to get, [enews.com](#) has a good selection of gift ideas in categories by price. In the "under \$10" gift guide, you can order a subscription to American Homestyle & Gardening (\$9.97), a smart choice for the horticulture or botany major. In the under-\$25 category, All About Beer rates more than 100 beers each month, and probably has a more universal appeal among young grads.

To all new grads, cheers, hats off to a job well done!

Teri Goldberg is MSNBC.com's shopping writer.

How to shop smart online

Afraid of shopping online for fear of damaged goods or other problems? Check out MSNBC shopping writer Teri Goldberg's answers to frequently asked questions on everything from secure sites to smooth returns.

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