

Jim's Birthday Present

This introductory activity can be used to start students thinking about companies they might consider including in their Stock Market Game portfolios. Read this story to your students, emphasizing the underlined words. Ask students to write down names of the products or services that would make sense in the sentence. For example, the answer to "Sneaker Name" might include Nike, Under Armour, or Vans (owned by VF Corporation).

Jim rushes out of P.E. and throws his _____ **SNEAKER NAME** in his locker and grabs his jacket, moving swiftly through the hall towards the front doors of the school. Outside, he sees Mom's _____ **VEHICLE BRAND NAME** parked across the street. It is an exciting day for him because it's his birthday today and Saturday will be filled with a feast from _____ **RESTAURANT NAME**, movies from _____ **STORE OR STREAMING SERVICE NAME** and an unlimited supply of _____ **DRINK NAME** with twelve of his closest friends. No interruptions, no homework, and no bed time!

His grandmother is supposed to arrive on Sunday on _____ **AIRLINE NAME** and staying at the local _____ **HOTEL NAME**, but she's planning on taking Jim shopping for his birthday, so he can choose something he really wants. He's hoping his mom has told Granny that his _____ **SUNGLASSES NAME** are broken.

As he gets in the car, Mom tells Jim that she has to stop at _____ **SUPERMARKET NAME** to pick up some groceries for supper. She tosses him a _____ **SNACK NAME** to tide him over until they get home. Jim accidentally sits on his little sister's _____ **TOY NAME**. She left it on the back seat when they went to the _____ **STORE NAME** last night.

"Mom, did you talk to Dad about my _____ **CELL PHONE NAME**?" Jim asked excitedly, spraying bits of his snack on the back of her headrest.



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"Jim, I told you we would look at the sales and deals being advertised in Sunday's paper and online to see what is available at stores or online," Mom impatiently replied. "You know they can cost a lot of money," she added.

"I know, but everybody has one but me," Jim explained, hoping to sound pathetic.

"We'll see," Mom muttered under her breath. "Oh, by the way, this came for you today."

Mom flipped Jim an envelope. "It's from Aunt Susan." Jim ripped open the envelope, expecting money to fall out, then read the note from Aunt Susan. "Big deal, I don't get it. What's shares of stock? She says I'm a shareholder in a corporation. What's a corporation? And what's it got to do with me," Jim exclaimed.

Ask students to share some of the products and services they wrote down. Discuss whether these are brand names or companies. "Can you buy 100 shares of Tropicana Orange Juice? No, but you can buy 100 shares of the company that makes it, PepsiCo." Note: Almost all products have the corporation name/address on the wrapper or carton.

Initiate a discussion about companies and stocks. What is a company? What is a stock and why do some companies have stockholders? Why do people invest in the stock market?



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