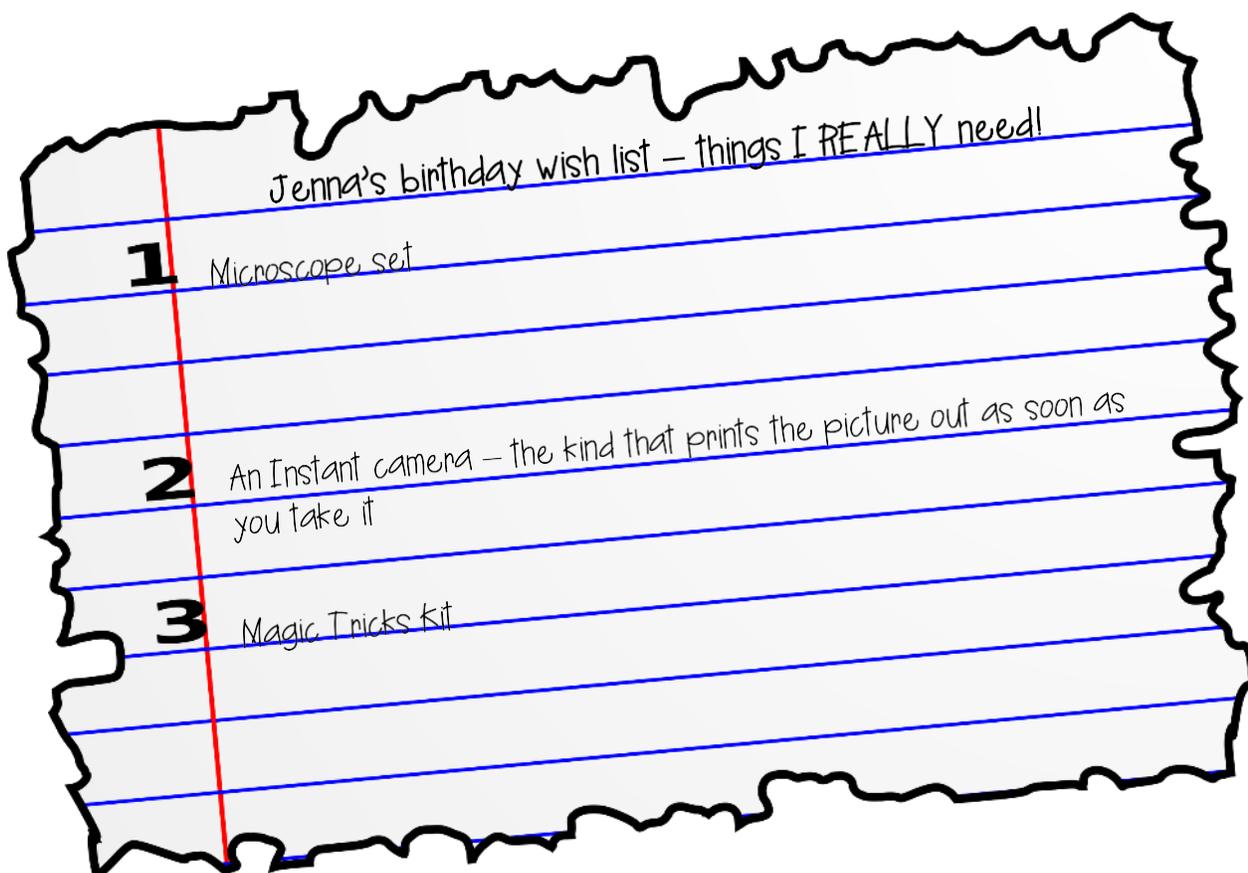


Birthday Wants

Seven year old Jenna turned the page on her wall calendar. “Finally,” she thought to herself, “the month of June, my birthday month, is here. Now I can start counting down the days. Only 15 more days until my birthday!” Her family has always made a big deal out of birthday celebrations and this year, as she’d be turning eight, her family was planning a special party for family and friends with a magic eight-ball theme. There would be lots of games and activities and her mom even got a magician to come and do a magic show. Jenna could hardly keep the excitement inside of her.

When she came downstairs that morning, her mom reminded Jenna that their family would be looking for some birthday gift ideas for Jenna. “Maybe you should take some time today to write out a list of some things you would like for your birthday to share.”

Jenna wasted no time getting out a pencil and paper and began writing out some of the things she’s been really wanting.



After she completed her list, Jenna brought the list to show her mom. As her mom read the list, she lifted her eyebrows. “Things I really need? Jenna, do you know the difference between a want and a need?”

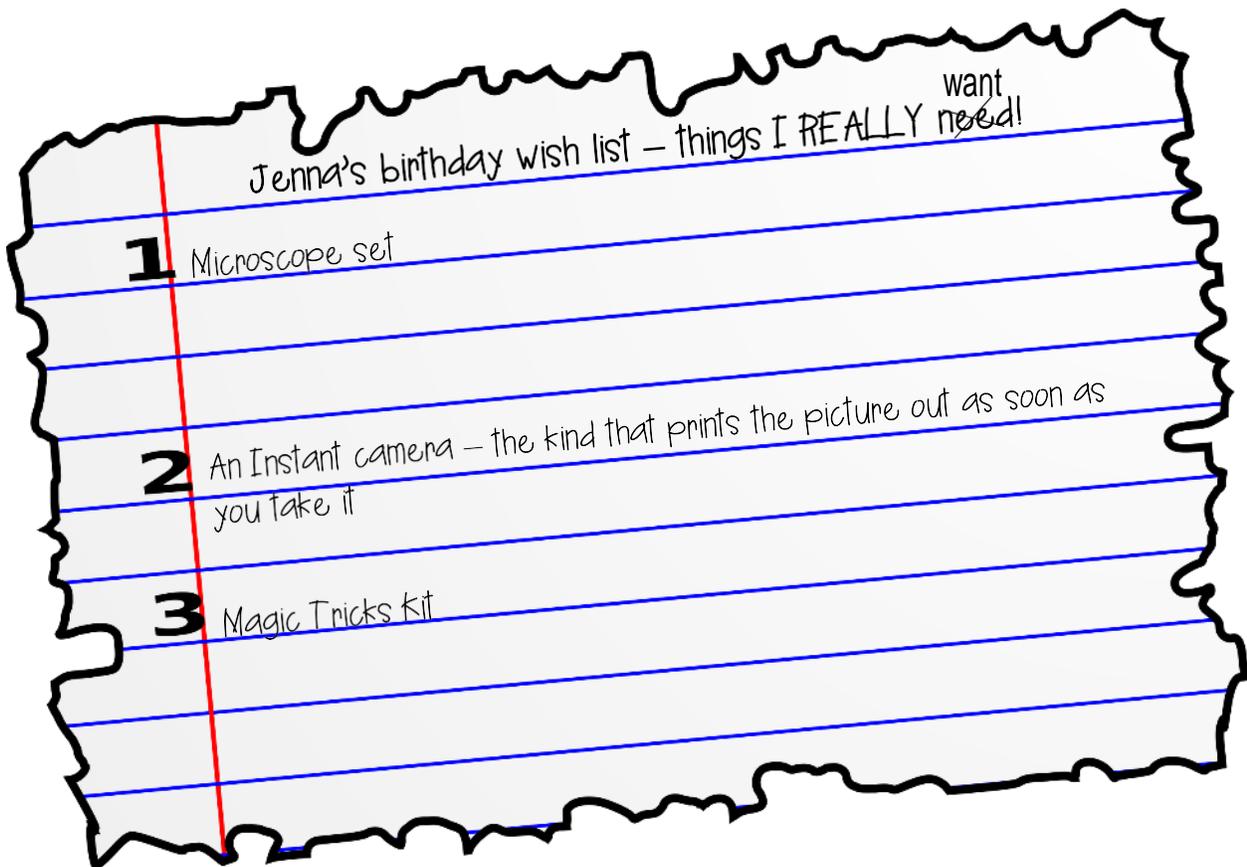
Jenna shrugged her shoulders. “Needs are things I have to have because they make me happy,” she answered.

“Well, not really, Jenna. Those are wants. Wants are the things we would like to have because they make life more enjoyable. Needs are things we have to have in order to survive, like food, water, clothing and shelter. Do you really need a microscope set to survive?”

“Well, I guess not, but it would make me really happy to be able to look at my bug collection under a microscope. I’ve been wanting one for a really long time,” said Jenna.

“Sometimes we have to wait to get the things we want until we save up enough money to get them. But that doesn’t make them a need. They are still wants unless we have to have them to live. While all people have the same basic needs, what makes us different is the way we meet our needs and wants. Because we’re all different, we all want different things. Your brother’s birthday wish list would likely look very different from yours.

Getting back to your list, since you could live without all of these things on your list, maybe a better title for your wish list is ‘things I really want.’”



“Thanks Mom, for teaching me about wants and needs. Now I understand that wants are things I would like but don’t have to have to live. They just make my life more fun. But needs are things I couldn’t survive without.”