Teacher's Key

Social and Cultural Components of Farting: Manners and Humor (Level B2)

Vocabulary Matching

1 breach = **N**
2 etiquette = **A**
3 taboo = **H**
4 embarrassment = **L**
5 norm = **G**
6 restrain = **M**
7 blame = **I**
8 discreet = **E**
9 fidgeting = **D**
10 ritual = **O**
11 invalidate = **J**
12 satire = **K**
13 ridicule = **B**
14 insult = **C**
15 tolerate = **F**

Fill in the Blank

1 breach
2 etiquette
3 taboo
4 embarrassment
5 norm
6 restrain
7 blame
8 discreet
9 fidgeting
10 ritual
11 invalidate
12 satire
13 ridiculed
14 tolerate

True or False

1 **False.** It says doctors describe it as normal and not dangerous.
2 **True.** The results fit a wider pattern, but the survey has limits.
3 **True.** It refers to someone who will not admit a fault.
4 **False.** It says people try to restrain the gas, leave the room, or joke.
5 **True.** The reading says it is unclear whether he was serious.
6 **True.** This shows the subject was part of manners.
7 **False.** The main concern is ritual purity for prayer.
8 **False.** It calls this interpretation speculative.
9 **True.** The artist of the original is not named in the reading.
10 **False.** It says the cases frame the act in different ways.

Language Focus: Modals of Speculation About the Past

Example answer: The artist **may have wanted** to make fun of foreigners. (**Might have wanted** is also possible.)

Comprehension Questions: Model Answers

1 Medically, passing gas is normal and not dangerous, though it can be painful; socially it usually counts as a breach of etiquette and talking about it is close to a taboo. The survey evidence is limited because a company commissioned it, so it is weak evidence, though it fits a wider pattern.

2 They restrain the gas, leave the room, hope for silence, joke, or shift the blame. The Korean proverb says the person who farted gets angry, and the Japanese one links farts and house fires: the person who caused a problem is often the loudest to complain.

3 They suggest that concern is old: Suetonius reports Claudius was said to have considered an edict, and Erasmus's handbook treated it as part of good manners. The reading hedges because Suetonius only says he was said to have thought of it, and Claudius may have been joking.

4 Because passing wind is held to invalidate wudu, the state of ritual purity needed for prayer, the concern is the validity of worship. Certainty matters: the hadith says a person should not leave prayer unless he hears a sound or smells an odor.

5 The Sumerian proverb is recorded on tablets from about 1900 BC but is a proverb of unclear meaning; the he-gassen scrolls may have been satire of foreigners but the artists are unknown; Le Pétomane was reported to control his muscles and may have drawn in air, not passed intestinal gas.

6 Fàngpì means to break wind and is also a rude way of saying nonsense, so a bodily function becomes an insult or a way to ridicule speech.

7 Because people may not report or record their real habits honestly. The CSIRO team let participants see only their own data to reduce socially influenced reporting, and the researchers suggest that the higher, often-repeated estimates may have rested on limited evidence.

8 The pattern: the same act is framed as manners, ritual purity, blame, or comedy in different cases, and people seem to tolerate it most easily where it is private or comic. It is limited because anecdotes do not prove a universal rule and systematic cross-cultural research appears to be scarce.

9 Open answer. Strongest: primary texts (Suetonius), the dated Waseda scroll, and the CSIRO study, which logged thousands of people in real time, for what they directly show. Weakest: commissioned surveys, popular interpretations of the scrolls as satire, and single proverbs or anecdotes used to support general claims about cultures.

10 Not Given. The reading presents several cases where control of flatulence is expected, but it does not claim that all cultures find it embarrassing.

11 No. The writer says popular writers suggest this interpretation but calls it speculative because the artists are unknown, so the writer does not think the evidence is firm.

12 To show that attitudes toward flatulence take different forms in different contexts (ritual, proverb, art), so the reader sees a limited pattern rather than a single rule.

Notes on the Evidence

- Revision (September 27, 2026). Corrections: the unnamed “US medical source” and its figure of about 14 times a day were replaced by named, conflicting figures (Cleveland Clinic 14 to 23; CSIRO 2026 study, average five), since the new study gives a much lower figure; the Paddy Power result was restated (19 percent chose farting in public as one of the most embarrassing situations, a ranking of hypothetical scenarios, not of their own past moments) and the company is named; the Japanese proverb now says what it is about (farts and house fires), since the old wording did not mention flatulence and paragraph 6 relied on that link; the final paragraph no longer lists humor as a reason for control or attributes blame to Korea and Japan as whole cultures, drops the unsupported word unavoidable, and ends on the next test instead of a summary; the claim that the 2017 US survey authors noted social desirability bias, checked only through a blog review, was replaced by the CSIRO study design. Vocabulary: conventions (near-synonym of etiquette and norm, which made matching and fill-in ambiguous) was replaced by fidgeting. The Yes/No/Not Given statement was reworded so that No is clearly correct. The fourth Language Focus quote and three model answers were updated. The resource on the odor of flatus (a technical abstract unrelated to the reading) was replaced by the CSIRO release. The frequency figures are dated here; newer studies may change them.
- Sources checked (September 2026). Suetonius, Life of Claudius 32 (Rolfe translation and two other translations: Claudius said to have thought of an edict allowing breaking wind quietly or noisily at table, after hearing of a man who ran a risk by restraining himself through modesty). Erasmus, De civilitate morum puerilium (1530), via a publisher's summary of a modern translation that quotes the passage about fidgeting on your seat giving the impression of farting. Islamic sources (Fatwa Centre, Darul Ifta Birmingham, Muftionline, al-Feqh): hadith in Bukhari on hadath and on not leaving prayer unless hearing a sound or smelling an odor; fatwas that certainty is required. Sumerian proverb: University of Wolverhampton study (2008, Dr Paul McDonald, commissioned by a TV channel), Language Log (translation from the Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature), Mental Floss. He-gassen: Wikipedia (Waseda scroll colophon: 1846 copy of a 1680 original by Hishikawa Moronobu; theme attested since the end of the Heian period) and popular articles for the satire interpretation. Le Pétomane: Wikipedia and several popular accounts (1857 to 1945; Moulin Rouge 1892; allegedly inhaled air). Proverbs: a Korean newspaper column explaining the Korean proverb; the JMdict entry (via Tangorin) for the Japanese proverb; a Mandarin dictionary entry for fàngpì. Surveys: Paddy Power Games survey via The Star and Yorkshire Evening Post (19 percent, 34 percent); a Gas-X poll reported by a radio site (68 percent of Americans most embarrassed passing gas in public; not used); Almario et al. 2017, Clinical Gastroenterology and Hepatology, survey of about 16,000 Americans (no longer used). Frequency: Cleveland Clinic health article (October 2022: 14 to 23 times a day) and its flatulence page (updated March 2025: as many as 25); Brindal et al., JAMA Network Open, May 2026 (CSIRO Chart Your Fart study, 6,416 Australian adults, data November 2024 to February 2025, mean 5.0 a day, median 3.8, about 80 percent between two and seven), read through news coverage and a gastroenterology blog, not the paper itself; CSIRO news release, November 2024. Most sources were read as excerpts or summaries.
- Evidence limits. Several items rest on secondary or popular sources: Erasmus (quoted through a publisher's summary), the Waseda details (Wikipedia), Le Pétomane (popular accounts and Wikipedia; the claim that Freud attended his show is not used), and the satire reading of the scrolls (popular articles quoting writers such as the Daily Mail). The Sumerian proverb is called the oldest recorded joke in a commissioned 2008 study; it is a proverb whose purpose is unclear, and translations vary (lap or embrace). The Islamic material comes from fatwa sites, not from primary hadith collections; scholars differ on details (schools disagree about what counts as certainty), and the reading gives only the broad rule. I did not research Buddhist, Hindu, Christian, or African views. No systematic cross-cultural survey of attitudes was found. An OpenLearn article claims that passing gas is rude in most social contexts across cultures, but I did not verify its sources, so the reading does not make that claim. The Gas-X and Paddy Power surveys are marketing surveys by commercial firms; only the latter is used, with a caveat.
- Language. Modals of speculation about the past (Language Focus) fit the hedged claims. The vocabulary is mostly formal (etiquette, breach, taboo, restrain, discreet, fidgeting, invalidate, ritual, satire, ridicule, tolerate). The reading uses the words fart and flatulence in a neutral, academic way. The Mandarin word fàngpì is discussed as a linguistic example. The lesson does not evaluate religious rules; it reports how a religious ruling frames the issue.
- Caution. Religious and cultural material is summarized briefly and may not represent all practices or views within a religion or culture. The Hindi and Arabic translations have not been checked by a native speaker; the Arabic gloss for taboo is a general phrase. Teachers may prefer to preview the material for classroom fit.