Teacher's Key

Tipping Around the World: Who Pays, Who Does Not, and Why (Level B2)

Vocabulary Matching

1 prompts = **N**
2 etiquette = **A**
3 customary = **H**
4 gratuity = **L**
5 bewildering = **G**
6 supplement = **M**
7 shortfall = **I**
8 come across as = **E**
9 round up = **D**
10 mandatory = **O**
11 demeaning = **J**
12 outlaw = **K**
13 arbitrary = **B**
14 incentive = **C**
15 backlash = **F**

Fill in the Blank

1 prompts
2 etiquette
3 customary
4 gratuity
5 bewildering
6 supplement
7 shortfall
8 round up
9 mandatory
10 demeaning
11 outlaw
12 arbitrary
13 incentive
14 backlash

True or False

1 **True.** It prompts the customer to choose 18, 20, or 25 percent.

2 **False.** Only about one in three said so.

3 **True.** The reading says the figure has not changed since 1991.

4 **False.** A handful of states, including California and Washington, require the full minimum wage.

5 **True.** A tip there is a bonus, not a necessity.

6 **False.** The coperto is a cover charge, not a tip for the server.

7 **False.** Historians trace it to England.

8 **True.** The laws were largely ignored and later repealed.

9 **True.** The reading says they seem to raise tips more than you might expect.

10 **False.** About seven in ten opposed them.

Language Focus: Zero and First Conditionals

Example answer: Zero conditional: If a restaurant bill includes a service charge, most people do not leave an extra tip. First conditional: If you visit my country, you will see that people usually say thank you in person.

Comprehension Questions: Model Answers

1 In Chicago, a card reader prompts the diner to choose a tip of 18, 20, or 25 percent. In Tokyo, tipping is not expected, and handing over extra money would probably surprise the staff.

2 Most diners tip, but many people are unsure. Only about one in three said it was easy to know whether to tip, and about seven in ten said tipping is expected in more places than five years earlier. The rules seem bewildering to many people.

3 Many tipped workers can be paid a cash wage of only $2.13 an hour, so their earnings can depend heavily on customers. Tipping therefore works as part of the wage, and customers pay what the menu does not show.

4 The employer must cover the shortfall, so that the worker receives at least the federal minimum of $7.25 an hour.

5 Any two: service charges are often built into prices; good service is seen as part of the job; extra money may come across as awkward or even insulting.

6 A mandatory service charge is added by the restaurant, while a tip is the customer's choice. If the bill already includes a service charge, you may not need to add more, so reading the bill helps you avoid paying twice.

7 Many Americans thought tipping was demeaning to workers and wrong for a country of equals. Six states tried to outlaw it between 1909 and 1915, but the laws were largely ignored and had all been repealed by the 1920s.

8 The research suggests that tip size is only weakly related to how customers rate service, and small things such as a server crouching next to the table seem to raise tips. The writer adds that the findings come from restaurant studies and may not hold in every country or job.

9 Open answer. A strong answer says the opposition may mean that many customers want to know the full price in advance, and notes that the writer admits the survey did not ask why people opposed them.

10 Not Given. The reading mentions Japanese service charges and good service, but it gives no information about the wages of servers in Japan or a comparison with the United States.

11 No. The writer says the evidence suggests tipping rewards good service only partly, and quotes research that tip size is only weakly related to service ratings.

12 The scene gives a concrete, familiar moment that shows the difference between two customs. It makes the reader ask why the same action feels normal in one place and unusual in another, which prepares the question of the whole reading.

Notes on the Evidence

- US survey figures: Pew Research Center, 'Tipping Culture in America: Public Sees a Changed Landscape', 9 November 2023 (fieldwork 7 to 27 August 2023, 11,945 US adults, American Trends Panel). 92 percent of adults who eat at sit-down restaurants always or often tip (reading: about nine in ten); 34 percent say it is extremely or very easy to know whether to tip (about one in three); 72 percent say tipping is expected in more places than five years ago (about seven in ten); 72 percent oppose automatic charges; about four in ten oppose suggested tips on screens (24 percent favor). These are 2023 figures and may have changed. The sentence that requests now appear in cafes, on delivery apps, and on some self-service screens is a general observation supported by news reports and the Pew report's topic, and was not checked against a single figure.
- Wages: the federal tipped cash wage of $2.13 an hour and the $5.12 maximum tip credit against the $7.25 federal minimum, with the employer required to make up any shortfall, come from the US Department of Labor, Fact Sheet #15 (page opened). The $2.13 figure has not changed since 1991 (IWPR fact sheet, December 2024; a 2026 wage guide shows it unchanged). Seven states (Alaska, California, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Washington) require the full minimum wage for tipped workers, according to the IWPR fact sheet and a 2026 guide; the reading says only 'a handful' because the list can change. Check state law before teaching this as current.
- Other countries: Japan, Japan National Tourism Organization (page opened): tipping is not common, and a gift of cash is given in an envelope if at all. The 'part of the job' explanation (omotenashi) comes from a Japanese explainer site and is a common cultural interpretation, not a measured fact. Australia: hospitality workers are paid award rates and there is no tipped wage (ABC News, August 2024, and a commercial tipping guide); the Fair Work page fetched showed an older national minimum wage figure, so the reading gives no figure. Germany: rounding up, about 10 percent, and telling the server the total when paying come from a travel guide and the N26 guide; these are customs, not rules. Italy: the coperto is a cover charge that is not given to the server (N26 guide). France was left out because I could not confirm the legal detail about service charges from an official source; a Wikipedia list says menu prices there must include service, but I did not use it.
- History: Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, Econ Focus 2024 (page opened): tipping in England in the 1500s (payments called vails to servants in hosts' homes), coffeehouses in the 1700s, expansion in the US after the Civil War, six states (Arkansas, Iowa, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee, Washington) with laws between 1909 and 1915, all repealed by the 1920s. The 1916 writer is William R. Scott, The Itching Palm; the reading paraphrases his argument and does not quote him. The origin of the word tip is debated and was left out. The Richmond Fed is a secondary source; historians differ on details.
- Research: Michael Lynn (Cornell). The Cornell Chronicle profile (2000, page opened) says tip percentages are only weakly related to customers' ratings of service and that touching the customer and crouching next to the table raise tips. Later papers (for example Lynn and Sturman, 2010, 'Tipping and Service Quality: A Within-Subjects Analysis', and a Lynn paper titled 'Restaurant Tipping and Service Quality: A Tenuous Relationship') appeared in search results with titles consistent with this view, but I could not open them, so the reading relies on the Cornell profile. The reading therefore says 'weakly' and adds a caution that the work comes from restaurant studies. Corrections and discrepancies: there was no source draft. The Wikipedia tipping list gives a France service-charge figure (15 percent) that I could not confirm and did not use; the Australian minimum wage page returned a 2023 figure, so no wage figure for Australia appears in the reading.