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Malawi to punish breaking wind in public

http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1102/110203-breaking_wind.html

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2nd February, 2011

THE ARTICLE

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1102/110203-breaking_wind.html

The government of Malawi is planning to introduce a new law to try and stop people breaking wind in public. The proposed legislation would punish repeat offenders who choose to release their foul-smelling bodily gases in public places. The Local Courts Bill will soon be presented to parliament for approval. It intends to prosecute those “who foul the air” in an effort to “mould responsible and disciplined citizens”. The bill states: “Any person who voluntarily [impairs] the atmosphere in any place so as to make it noxious to the health of persons in general, dwelling or carrying on business in the neighbourhood or passing along a public way, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.”

The bill has created a lot of anger among Malawians, who feel the country has more serious problems than trying to criminalize a natural bodily function. They also say it is causing embarrassment to the country internationally, with foreign media reporting on “Malawi’s farting law”. People are also worried about how fairly the law will be administered on the streets. Taxi driver Chikosi Nyondo said: “How on Earth will the police know who passed gas? I’m sure there’ll be people arrested for false farting.” The Afrik-News website quoted another angry Malawian who said: “Everyone does that, even if it’s in public or it has an accompanying sound, making it criminal is a joke of democracy.”

WARM-UPS

1. BREAKING WIND: Walk around the class and talk to other students about breaking wind. Change partners often. Sit with your first partner(s) and share your findings.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

Malawi / new laws / breaking wind / foul smells / parliament / noxious / misdemeanor / anger / criminalize / foreign media / taxi driver / fairly / arrested / joke / democracy

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. NOT IN PUBLIC: Do we need laws against these? Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners and share what you wrote. Change and share again.

NOT in public	Yes/No	Possible punishments
Breaking wind		
Eating		
Passionate kissing		
Drinking alcohol		
Inappropriate dress		
Shouting		

4. CRIMINALIZED: Students A **strongly** believe breaking wind in public should be criminalized; Students B **strongly** believe it shouldn't. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

5. BODILY SMELLS: Which are worse? Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the worst at the top. Change partners and share your rankings again.

- breaking wind
- body odour (sweaty armpits)
- cheesy feet
- belching
- bad breath
- garlic breath
- stale cigarette smell
- cheap perfume / cologne

6. LAW: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'law'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1102/110203-breaking_wind.html

1. TRUE / FALSE: Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a. It is now illegal in Malawi to break wind in public. | T / F |
| b. Malawi's parliament passed the bill by a huge majority. | T / F |
| c. The new law intends to get people to be better citizens. | T / F |
| d. The bill says breaking wind is just a misdemeanor. | T / F |
| e. Most Malawians think the new law is a great idea. | T / F |
| f. Malawians believe the law makes their country look bad. | T / F |
| g. A taxi driver said it's easy for police to decide who broke wind. | T / F |
| h. Another Malawian said the law was a joke and not fit for a democracy. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article.

- | | |
|------------------|---------------|
| 1. breaking wind | a. shape |
| 2. proposed | b. applied |
| 3. foul | c. suggested |
| 4. mould | d. wrongdoing |
| 5. misdemeanor | e. shame |
| 6. natural | f. farting |
| 7. causing | g. mentioned |
| 8. embarrassment | h. disgusting |
| 9. administered | i. normal |
| 10. quoted | j. creating |

3. PHRASE MATCH: (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| 1. Malawi is planning to introduce | a. natural bodily function |
| 2. punish repeat | b. the air |
| 3. foul-smelling bodily | c. offenders |
| 4. It intends to prosecute those who foul | d. sound |
| 5. be guilty of | e. be administered |
| 6. trying to criminalize a | f. a misdemeanor |
| 7. causing embarrassment | g. a new law |
| 8. how fairly the law will | h. who passed gas? |
| 9. How on Earth will the police know | i. gases |
| 10. it has an accompanying | j. to the country |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1102/110203-breaking_wind.html

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

The government of Malawi is (1) _____ to introduce a new law to try and stop people breaking wind in public. The (2) _____ legislation would punish repeat offenders who choose to release their foul-smelling bodily gases in public (3) _____. The Local Courts Bill will soon be presented to parliament for approval. It (4) _____ to prosecute those "who foul the air" in an (5) _____ to "mould responsible and disciplined citizens". The bill (6) _____: "Any person who voluntarily [impairs] the atmosphere in any place so as to make it noxious to the (7) _____ of persons in general, dwelling or carrying on business in the neighbourhood or passing along a public way, shall be (8) _____ of a misdemeanor."

health
intends
proposed
guilty
effort
planning
states
places

The bill has (9) _____ a lot of anger among Malawians, who (10) _____ the country has more serious problems than trying to criminalize a natural (11) _____ function. They also say it is causing embarrassment to the country internationally, with foreign (12) _____ reporting on "Malawi's farting law". People are also worried about how (13) _____ the law will be administered on the streets. Taxi driver Chikosi Nyondo said: "How on (14) _____ will the police know who passed gas? I'm sure there'll be people arrested for false farting." The Afrik-News website (15) _____ another angry Malawian who said: "Everyone does that, even if it's in public or it has an accompanying sound, making it criminal is a (16) _____ of democracy."

Earth
bodily
joke
created
fairly
feel
quoted
media

LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1102/110203-breaking_wind.html

The government of Malawi is planning to introduce _____ stop people breaking wind in public. The proposed legislation would punish repeat offenders _____ their foul-smelling bodily gases in public places. The Local Courts Bill will soon be presented to parliament for approval. It intends to prosecute those “_____” in an effort to “mould responsible and disciplined citizens”. The bill states: “Any person who voluntarily [impairs] the atmosphere _____ to make it noxious _____ in general, dwelling or carrying on business in the neighbourhood or passing _____, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.”

_____ lot of anger among Malawians, who feel the country has more serious problems than _____ a natural bodily function. They also say it is causing embarrassment to the country internationally, with _____ on “Malawi’s farting law”. People are also worried about how fairly the law will be administered on the streets. Taxi driver Chikosi Nyondo said: “_____ the police know who passed gas? I’m sure there’ll be people arrested for false farting.” The Afrik-News website _____ Malawian who said: “Everyone does that, even if it’s in public or it has an accompanying sound, making it criminal is _____.”

AFTER READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1102/110203-breaking_wind.html

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'break' and 'wind'.

break	wind
--------------	-------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• planning• repeat• foul• presented• atmosphere• guilty	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• among• embarrassment• fairly• Earth• arrested• joke
--	--

STUDENT BREAKING WIND SURVEY

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1102/110203-breaking_wind.html

Write five GOOD questions about breaking wind in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper. When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

BREAKING WIND DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the term 'break wind'?
- c) What do you think of Malawi's proposed new law against breaking wind?
- d) Is there a problem in your country regarding breaking wind in public places?
- e) How bad do you think it is to break wind in public?
- f) Are there certain people you really do not want to break wind?
- g) When is the worst time to break wind?
- h) What punishment might Malawi's courts give to repeat offenders?
- i) Do you think this law could make people better citizens?
- j) What would people in your country think if your government suggested a similar bill?

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BREAKING WIND DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Do you think Malawians are right to feel angry?
- c) Do you think Malawians are right to feel their politicians are causing embarrassment to their country?
- d) How can a country criminalize a natural bodily function?
- e) Is Chikosi Nyondo right? Would this law be very difficult to police
- f) Do you think people would call the police if someone broke wind next to them?
- g) What do you think of the term "break wind"?
- h) Do you have an embarrassing breaking wind story?
- i) Does this proposed law make a "joke of democracy"?
- j) What questions would you like to ask the author of this bill?

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LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

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The government of Malawi is planning to introduce a new law to try and stop people breaking wind in public. The (1) _____ legislation would punish (2) _____ offenders who choose to release their foul-smelling bodily gases in public places. The Local Courts Bill will soon be presented to parliament (3) _____ approval. It intends to prosecute those “who foul the air” in an effort to “mould responsible and disciplined citizens”. The bill states: “Any person who (4) _____ [impairs] the atmosphere in any place so as to make it noxious (5) _____ the health of persons in general, dwelling or carrying on business in the neighbourhood or passing along a public way, shall be guilty (6) _____ a misdemeanor.”

The bill has created a lot of anger (7) _____ Malawians, who feel the country has more serious problems than trying to criminalize a natural (8) _____ function. They also say it is causing embarrassment to the country internationally, with foreign media reporting on “Malawi’s farting law”. People are also worried about (9) _____ fairly the law will (10) _____ administered on the streets. Taxi driver Chikosi Nyondo said: “How on Earth will the police know who passed gas? I’m sure there’ll be people arrested for false farting.” The Afrik-News website (11) _____ another angry Malawian who said: “Everyone (12) _____ that, even if it’s in public or it has an accompanying sound, making it criminal is a joke of democracy.”

Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- | | | | | |
|-----|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| 1. | (a) proposed | (b) proposal | (c) proposition | (d) proposing |
| 2. | (a) repeatedly | (b) repeats | (c) repeat | (d) repeater |
| 3. | (a) by | (b) at | (c) on | (d) for |
| 4. | (a) volunteered | (b) voluntarily | (c) volunteers | (d) voluntary |
| 5. | (a) by | (b) at | (c) on | (d) to |
| 6. | (a) at | (b) by | (c) of | (d) to |
| 7. | (a) all | (b) among | (c) whole | (d) through |
| 8. | (a) bodily | (b) bodies | (c) boding | (d) bodied |
| 9. | (a) how | (b) what | (c) why | (d) which |
| 10. | (a) do | (b) be | (c) have | (d) see |
| 11. | (a) quotes | (b) quotation | (c) quoting | (d) quoted |
| 12. | (a) breaks | (b) does | (c) winds | (d) is |

HOMework

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find out more about breaking wind. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. ODD LAWS: Make a poster about odd or unusual laws in your country. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. BREAKING WIND: Write a magazine article about Malawi's proposed law to criminalize breaking wind in public. Include imaginary interviews with people who are for and against it.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

5. LETTER: Write a letter to the person who is proposing this law. Ask him three questions about it. Give him three of your opinions on it. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F b. F c. T d. T e. F f. T g. F h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|------------------|---------------|
| 1. breaking wind | a. farting |
| 2. proposed | b. suggested |
| 3. foul | c. disgusting |
| 4. mould | d. shape |
| 5. misdemeanor | e. wrongdoing |
| 6. natural | f. normal |
| 7. causing | g. creating |
| 8. embarrassment | h. shame |
| 9. administered | i. applied |
| 10. quoted | j. mentioned |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| 1. Malawi is planning to introduce | a. a new law |
| 2. punish repeat | b. offenders |
| 3. foul-smelling bodily | c. gases |
| 4. It intends to prosecute those who foul | d. the air |
| 5. be guilty of | e. a misdemeanor |
| 6. trying to criminalize a | f. natural bodily function |
| 7. causing embarrassment | g. to the country |
| 8. how fairly the law will | h. be administered |
| 9. How on Earth will the police know | i. who passed gas? |
| 10. it has an accompanying | j. sound |

GAP FILL:

Malawi to punish breaking wind in public

The government of Malawi is (1) **planning** to introduce a new law to try and stop people breaking wind in public. The (2) **proposed** legislation would punish repeat offenders who choose to release their foul-smelling bodily gases in public (3) **places**. The Local Courts Bill will soon be presented to parliament for approval. It (4) **intends** to prosecute those "who foul the air" in an (5) **effort** to "mould responsible and disciplined citizens". The bill (6) **states**: "Any person who voluntarily [impairs] the atmosphere in any place so as to make it noxious to the (7) **health** of persons in general, dwelling or carrying on business in the neighbourhood or passing along a public way, shall be (8) **guilty** of a misdemeanor."

The bill has (9) **created** a lot of anger among Malawians, who (10) **feel** the country has more serious problems than trying to criminalize a natural (11) **bodily** function. They also say it is causing embarrassment to the country internationally, with foreign (12) **media** reporting on "Malawi's farting law". People are also worried about how (13) **fairly** the law will be administered on the streets. Taxi driver Chikosi Nyondo said: "How on (14) **Earth** will the police know who passed gas? I'm sure there'll be people arrested for false farting." The Afrik-News website (15) **quoted** another angry Malawian who said: "Everyone does that, even if it's in public or it has an accompanying sound, making it criminal is a (16) **joke** of democracy."

LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - a 2 - c 3 - d 4 - b 5 - d 6 - c 7 - b 8 - a 9 - a 10 - c 11 - d 12 - b