

## **Faux Pas Recognition Test (Child Version)**

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### **Citation for use of this test:**

Baron-Cohen, S., O’Riordan, M., Jones, R., Stone, V.E. & Plaisted, K. (1999). A new test of social sensitivity: Detection of faux pas in normal children and children with Asperger syndrome. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 29, 407-418.

### **Instructions for scoring the test are on page 9.**

### **Administering the faux pas task:**

There are 10 faux pas Stories and 10 control stories which do not contain a faux pas (see pages 2-8 below). In the original study, the 10 stories faux pas stories were randomly interleaved with the 10 control stories.

The experimenter introduces the child to the set of stories by saying “Now I’m going to play you some stories. I want you to listen very carefully because afterwards I am going to ask you some questions to see what you think of them. Are you ready?”

After each faux pas story four questions are asked to assess the child’s understanding.

The first question assesses if the child detected whether a faux pas was present:

*Faux Pas Detection Question:* “In the story did someone say something that they should not have said?”

The second question ensures that the child identified the correct utterance as the faux pas:

*Identification Question:* “What did they say that they should not have said?”

The third question ensures that the child understands the story and is paying attention, so that failure of a faux pas question is not be due to verbal comprehension problems or distraction:

*Comprehension Question:* This question is different for each story (see below).

The final question checks that the child understands that the faux pas was a consequence of the speaker’s false belief rather than being an action with malicious intent:

*False Belief Question:* “Did they know/remember that ....”

**N.B.** If the child answers question one incorrectly then question two is not asked (i.e., if the child says that no-one said something they shouldn’t have said, then they are not asked what should not have been said).

### **Faux Pas Stories**

*Following each story, ask the four questions (these are shown after each story below).*

**N.B.** *If the child answers the first question (the faux pas detection question) wrongly, then the second question (the identification question) is not asked.*

1. All of the class took part in a story competition. Emma really wanted to win. Whilst she was away from school, the results of the competition were announced: Alice was the winner. The next day, Alice saw Emma and said “I’m sorry about your story”. “What do you mean?” said Emma. “Oh nothing,” said Alice.

*Faux Pas Detection Question: In the story did someone say something that they should not have said?*

If “no”, proceed to the comprehension question.

*Identification Question: What did they say that they should not have said?”*

*Comprehension Question: Who won the story competition?*

*False Belief Question: Did Alice realize that Emma hadn’t heard the results of the competition?*

2. Robert had just started at a new school. He said to his new friend, Andrew, “My Mum is a dinner lady at this school” . Then Claire came over and said, “I hate dinner ladies. They’re horrible”. “Do you want to come and play rounders?” Andrew asked Claire. “No” she replied “I’m not feeling very well.”

*Faux Pas Detection Question: In the story did someone say something that they should not have said?*

If “no”, proceed to the comprehension question.

*Identification Question: What did they say that they should not have said?”*

*Comprehension Question: What job does Robert’s Mum do?*

*False Belief Question: Did Clare know that Robert’s Mum was a dinner lady?*

3. Mike was in one of the cubicles in the toilets at school. Joe and Peter were at the sinks nearby. Joe said “You know that new boy in the class, his name is Mike. Doesn’t he look really weird!” Mike then came out of the cubicles. Peter said “Oh hello Mike, are you going to play football now?”.

*Faux Pas Detection Question: In the story did someone say something that they should not have said?*

If “no”, proceed to the comprehension question.

*Identification Question: What did they say that they should not have said?”*

*Comprehension Question: Where were Joe and Peter when they were talking?*

*False Belief Question: Did Joe know that Mike was in the cubicles?*

4. Kim helped her Mum make an apple pie for her uncle when he came to visit. She carried it out of the kitchen. “I made it just for you”, said Kim. “Mmm”, replied Uncle Tom, “That looks lovely. I love pies, except for apple, of course!”

*Faux Pas Detection Question: In the story did someone say something that they should not have said?*

If “no”, proceed to the comprehension question.

*Identification Question: What did they say that they should not have said?”*

*Comprehension Question: What kind of pie had Kim made?*

*False Belief Question: Did Uncle Tom know that the pie was an apple pie?*

5. James bought Richard a toy airplane for his birthday. A few months later, they were playing with it, and James accidentally dropped it. “Don’t worry” said Richard, “I never liked it anyway. Someone gave it to me for my birthday”.

*Faux Pas Detection Question: In the story did someone say something that they should not have said?*

If “no”, proceed to the comprehension question.

*Identification Question: What did they say that they should not have said?”*

*Comprehension Question: What did James give Richard for his birthday?*

*False Belief Question: Did Richard remember James had given him the toy airplane for his birthday?*

6. Sally has short blonde hair. She was at her Aunt Carol’s house. The doorbell rang. It was Mary, a neighbour. Mary said “Hello”, then looked at Sally and said “Oh, I don’t think I’ve met this little boy. What’s your name?” Aunt Carol said “Who’d like a cup of tea?”.

*Faux Pas Detection Question: In the story did someone say something that they should not have said?*

If “no”, proceed to the comprehension question.

*Identification Question: What did they say that they should not have said?”*

*Comprehension Question: Whose house was Sally at?*

*False Belief Question: Did Mary know that Sally was a little girl?*

7. Mrs. West the teacher had something to tell her class, “One of the boys in our class, Simon, is very seriously ill” she said. The class were all very sad and were sitting quietly when a little girl, Becky, arrived late. “Have you heard my new joke about sick people?” she asked. The teacher said to her “Sit down and get on with your work”.

*Faux Pas Detection Question: In the story did someone say something that they should not have said?*

If “no”, proceed to the comprehension question.

*Identification Question: What did they say that they should not have said?”*

*Comprehension Question: What did the teacher tell the class at the beginning of the story?*

*False Belief Question: Did Becky know Simon was sick?*

8. Tim was in a restaurant. He spilt his coffee on the floor by accident. Jack was another person in the restaurant, standing by the cash desk waiting to pay. Tim went up to Jack and said “I’m terribly sorry, but I’ve spilt my coffee. Would you be able to mop it up?”.

*Faux Pas Detection Question: In the story did someone say something that they should not have said?*

If “no”, proceed to the comprehension question.

*Identification Question: What did they say that they should not have said?”*

*Comprehension Question: Where did the story take place?*

*False Belief Question: Did Tim know Jack was a customer?*

9. Jill had just moved into a new house. She went shopping with her Mum and bought some new curtains. When Jill had just put them up, her best friend Lisa came round and said, “Oh, those curtains are horrible, I hope you’re going to get some new ones.” Jill asked, “Do you like the rest of my bedroom?”.

*Faux Pas Detection Question: In the story did someone say something that they should not have said?*

If “no”, proceed to the comprehension question.

*Identification Question: What did they say that they should not have said?”*

*Comprehension Question: What had Jill just bought?*

*False Belief Question: Did Lisa know the curtains were new?*

10. Helen’s mum was having a surprise party for Helen’s birthday. She invited Nicky and said, “Don’t tell anyone, especially Helen!”. The day before the party Nicky and Helen were playing together and Nicky ripped her new dress. “Oh!” said Nicky, “I was going to wear this to your party.” “What party?” said Helen. “Come on,” said Nicky “Let’s go and see if my mum can mend the tear.”

*Faux Pas Detection Question: In the story did someone say something that they should not have said?*

If “no”, proceed to the comprehension question.

*Identification Question: What did they say that they should not have said?”*

*Comprehension Question: Who was the surprise party for?*

*False Belief Question: Did Nicky remember the party was a surprise?*

### **10 Control Stories**

*Following each story, ask the four questions (these are shown after each story below).*

**N.B.** *If the child says “no” to the first question (the faux pas detection question), then the second question (the identification question) is not asked.*

1. All of the class took part in a poetry competition. Jane really wanted to win. While she was away, the results of the competition were announced: Mary was the winner. The next day, Jane bumped into Mary. Mary said “How are you feeling?”. “Fine thanks?” said Jane, “Oh good” said Mary.

*Faux Pas Detection Question: In the story did someone say something that they should not have said?*

If “no”, proceed to the comprehension question.

*Identification Question: What did they say that they should not have said?”*

*Comprehension Question: Who won the story competition?*

*False Belief Question: Did Mary know that Jane hadn’t heard the results of the competition?*

2. David had just started at a new school. He said to his new friend, Mike, “My Mum is a teacher in this school.” Then Jeff came over. “I hate school” he told them, “It’s so small”. “Do you want to come and play rounders?” Mike asked Jeff. “No” he replied “I’m not feeling very well.”

*Faux Pas Detection Question: In the story did someone say something that they should not have said?*

If “no”, proceed to the comprehension question.

*Identification Question: What did they say that they should not have said?”*

*Comprehension Question: What job does David’s Mum do?*

*False Belief Question: Did Jeff know that David’s Mum was a teacher?*

3. John was in one of the cubicles in the toilets at school. Sam and Eddy were at the sinks nearby. Sam said “You know that new boy in the class -you know, his name is John. Doesn’t he look cool!”. John then came out of the cubicles. Peter said “Oh, hi John. Are you going to play football now?”

*Faux Pas Detection Question: In the story did someone say something that they should not have said?*

If “no”, proceed to the comprehension question.

*Identification Question: What did they say that they should not have said?”*

*Comprehension Question: Where were Sam and Eddy when they were talking?*

*False Belief Question: Did Sam know that John was in the cubicles?*

4. Kate helped her Mum make a fruit pie for her neighbour when he came to visit. She carried it out of the kitchen. “I made it just for you”, said Kate. “Mmm”, replied her neighbour, “That looks lovely - I love pies, especially fruit ones!”

*Faux Pas Detection Question: In the story did someone say something that they should not have said?*

If “no”, proceed to the comprehension question.

*Identification Question: What did they say that they should not have said?”*

*Comprehension Question: What kind of pie had Kate made?*

*False Belief Question: Did the neighbour know that the pie was a fruit pie?*

5. Simon bought Robert a toy car for his birthday. A few months later, they were playing with it, and Simon dropped it. “Don’t worry”, said Robert, “It was only an accident”.

*Faux Pas Detection Question: In the story did someone say something that they should not have said?*

If “no”, proceed to the comprehension question.

*Identification Question: What did they say that they should not have said?”*

*Comprehension Question: What did Simon give Robert for his birthday?*

*False Belief Question: Did Simon know Robert had given him the toy car for his birthday?*

6. Jill has short brown hair. She was at her Uncle Ted’s house. The doorbell rang. It was Mrs. Smith, a neighbour. Mrs. Smith said “Hello”, then looked at Jill and said “Oh, I don’t think I’ve met this little girl. What’s your name?” Uncle Ted said “Who’d like some tea?”

*Faux Pas Detection Question: In the story did someone say something that they should not have said?*

If “no”, proceed to the comprehension question.

*Identification Question: What did they say that they should not have said?”*

*Comprehension Question: Whose house was Jill at?*

*False Belief Question: Did Mrs. Smith know that Jill was a little girl?*

7. Mrs. Jones the teacher had something to tell her class, “You all know George in our class, well, he is very seriously ill” she said. The class were all very sad and were sitting quietly when a little girl, Amy, arrived late. “I’ve just been to the dentist” she said. The teacher said to her “Sit down and get on with your work”.

*Faux Pas Detection Question: In the story did someone say something that they should not have said?*

If “no”, proceed to the comprehension question.

*Identification Question: What did they say that they should not have said?”*

*Comprehension Question: What did the teacher tell the class at the beginning of the story?*

*False Belief Question: Did Amy know George was sick?*

8. Alan and Ed were having a drink in a restaurant. Alan spilt his coke on the floor by accident. He said to Edward “Oh dear, haven’t I been clumsy - I’ve spilt my coke!” Edward said "I'll order another one."

*Faux Pas Detection Question: In the story did someone say something that they should not have said?*

If “no”, proceed to the comprehension question.

*Identification Question: What did they say that they should not have said?”*

*Comprehension Question: Where did the story take place?*

*False Belief Question: Did Alan know Ed was a customer?*

9. Michelle had just moved into a new house. Michelle went shopping with her Mum and bought a new rug for her bedroom. When Michelle had just put it down, her best friend, Samantha, came round and said, “Oh, your new rug is just like my new one.” Michelle asked, “Do you like the house?”

*Faux Pas Detection Question: In the story did someone say something that they should not have said?*

If “no”, proceed to the comprehension question.

*Identification Question: What did they say that they should not have said?”*

*Comprehension Question: What had Michelle just bought?*

*False Belief Question: Did Samantha know the rug was new?*

10. Annette’s mum was having a surprise party for Annette’s birthday. She invited Bridget and said to her. “Don’t tell anyone, especially not Annette!”. The day before the party Annette and Bridget were playing together and Annette ripped her new shirt. “Oh!" said Annette, “My mother will be cross.” “Don’t worry” said Bridget. “Let’s go and see if my mum can mend the tear.”

*Faux Pas Detection Question: In the story did someone say something that they should not have said?*

If “no”, proceed to the comprehension question.

*Identification Question: What did they say that they should not have said?”*

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*Comprehension Question: Who was the surprise party for?*

*False Belief Question: Did Annette know there was a surprise party planned?*

## Scoring

There are several scores which can be calculated in order to make clear where participants are having trouble. For example performance on the comprehension and false belief questions (as these are control questions). Scores for the faux pas and control stories are calculated separately.

Basically, use common sense. For each Faux Pas Story the subject gets 1 point for each question answered correctly.

### *Faux Pas Stories*

Participants are given one point for each faux pas they identify correctly.

To detect a faux pas the child has to answer all the questions correctly, i.e., identify that someone had said something that they should not have, identify what it was that they should not have said, or some approximation of it, answer a comprehension question, and recognize that the faux pas was a consequence of a false belief.

Failure of any of these questions leads to a score of zero for that story.

### *Control Stories*

Participants are given one point for recognising no faux pas occurred.

To accurately detect that no faux pas took place, the child has to answer all the questions correctly, i.e., identify that no-one said anything they should not have, answered the comprehension question and the false belief question.

If the child says that a faux pas occurred, doesn’t answer the comprehension question or the false belief question correctly, then they receive a zero for that story.