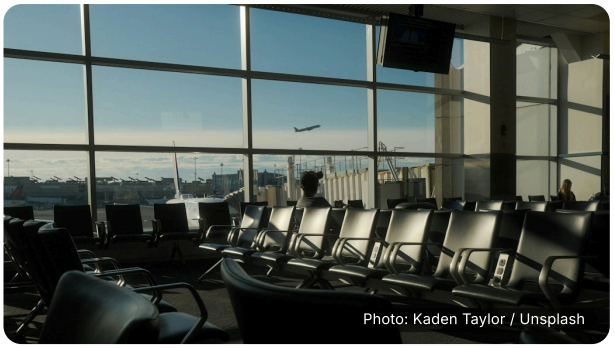
Hoax bomb threats disrupt European flights

LEVEL B1


Photo: Kaden Taylor / Unsplash

I. WARM-UP

1. Have you ever had a flight delay? What happened?
2. What security checks do you notice most at airports?
3. How do you stay calm when travel plans change suddenly?

II. KEY VOCABULARY

hoax
a false claim made to trick or scare people

threat
a warning that something bad may happen

divert
to change the planned route of a vehicle or plane

escort
to go with and protect a person or vehicle

precaution
an action taken to prevent danger or problems

assess
to judge a situation to understand it

credible
able to be believed; convincing

spokesperson
a person who gives official information to the public

III. READING

At least 21 aircraft and several airports across Europe received bomb threats that officials later called a malicious hoax. An Aer Lingus flight from Dublin to Rome was diverted to an air base in France and landed safely. Italian Air Force jets escorted a Finnair Helsinki–Rome flight into Rome.

EasyJet said its flights from Newcastle and Glasgow were met by police in Prague as a precaution. In the UK, Transport Secretary Heidi Alexander said the government takes such threats seriously. A spokesperson for London Heathrow said a threat was assessed as not credible.

Birmingham Airport also reported a threat and started processes with emergency services. Some warnings were emailed and claimed by a little-known group, but authorities have not confirmed any link between the incidents.

Reading text adapted from reporting by **BBC News***: "Hoax bomb threats target European airlines and...". Original article linked at theenglishwire.com.*

IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. How many aircraft were targeted by the bomb threats?
2. Which Aer Lingus route was diverted to an air base in France?
3. What did Italian fighter jets do for a Finnair flight?
4. What did Heathrow say about the credibility of a threat?
5. How were some of the warnings reportedly sent?

V. DISCUSSION

1. How should airlines balance safety and delays after a hoax?
2. What information do passengers need most during a security scare?
3. Would you feel confident to fly after a threat is assessed? Why?
4. How can authorities discourage future hoax threats?

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Third conditional

If + past perfect, then would have + past participle, to imagine a different past result. Form: If + had + V3, would have + V3.

> *"If the threats had been real, airports* **would have closed** *terminals."*
>
> *"If authorities had confirmed a link, passengers* **would have worried** *more."*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

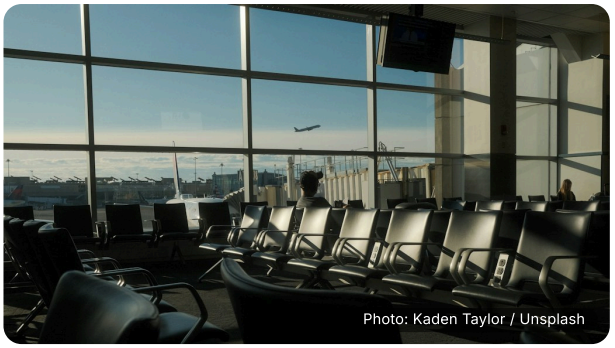
Complete each sentence with the third conditional form (would have + V3).

1. If the emails had named a device, police (search) ___ longer. _____
2. If the flight had not been diverted, it (land) ___ in Rome. _____
3. If airports had ignored the warnings, they (take) ___ a risk. _____
4. If I had been on one of those flights, I (feel) ___ scared. _____
5. If Heathrow had closed gates, passengers (miss) ___ connections. _____

Teacher's Notes

TEACHERS ONLY

These notes are designed to help you get the most out of this lesson. Please do not share this page with students.


Photo: Kaden Taylor / Unsplash

I. LESSON GUIDE

- Timing: 8–10 minutes warm-up, 10 minutes vocabulary, 12–15 minutes reading, 10 minutes comprehension, 8–10 minutes grammar, 10 minutes discussion.
- Pre-teach or check: hoax, threat, divert, escort, precaution, assess, credible, spokesperson. Drill pronunciation and stress (es-CORT as a verb).
- Run the reading in two passes: gist (what happened, where), then detail (examples). Sensitivity: the topic involves threats of violence; begin discussion in pairs, allow students to speak about the news in general rather than personal experiences, and move on if anyone is uncomfortable.
- Differentiation: stronger students summarise one airline's actions; others match airlines to actions from the text. Fast finishers list three ways airports can improve passenger communication.

II. DISCUSSION FACILITATION TIPS

1. Start with examples from the text (diversions, escorts), then ask for pros and cons.
2. Board a list of updates students want; push for reasons and clear priorities.
3. Take a show of hands, then pair students with different views to explain why.
4. Elicit concrete steps (email checks, faster screening) and ask which would work best.

III. EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Role-play: In pairs, act out a Heathrow spokesperson giving a 60-second media update after a threat was assessed as not credible.

Writing: Write a 70-word passenger message from Aer Lingus after the Dublin–Rome flight diverted to an air base in France.

IV. ANSWER KEY OVERVIEW

Comprehension questions: short factual answers from the text.

Grammar exercise: Third conditional

Discussion: open-ended. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

Answer Key

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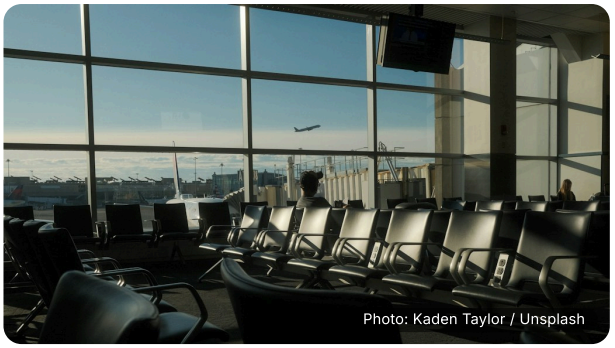


Photo: Kaden Taylor / Unsplash

IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. How many aircraft were targeted by the bomb threats?
   At least 21 aircraft.
2. Which Aer Lingus route was diverted to an air base in France?
   The Dublin to Rome flight.
3. What did Italian fighter jets do for a Finnair flight?
   They escorted a Helsinki–Rome flight into Rome.
4. What did Heathrow say about the credibility of a threat?
   It was assessed as not credible.
5. How were some of the warnings reportedly sent?
   By email.

V. DISCUSSION

Open answers. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Complete each sentence with the third conditional form (would have + V3).

1. If the emails had named a device, police ___ longer.
   would have searched
2. If the flight had not been diverted, it ___ in Rome.
   would have landed
3. If airports had ignored the warnings, they ___ a risk.
   would have taken
4. If I had been on one of those flights, I ___ scared.
   would have felt
5. If Heathrow had closed gates, passengers ___ connections. **would have missed**

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Key point: If + past perfect, then would have + past participle, to imagine a different past result. Form: If + had + V3, would have + V3. (Examples constructed.)

> *"If the threats had been real, airports* **would have closed** *terminals."*
>
> *"If authorities had confirmed a link, passengers* **would have worried** *more."*