UK–EU deal to ease food checks

LEVEL B1


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I. WARM-UP

1. What foods from abroad do you most like to buy? Why?
2. Have you ever had a delivery delayed by border checks? What happened?
3. How can trade rules affect small shops in your town?

II. KEY VOCABULARY

exporter
a person or company that sells goods to another country

retailer
a shop or business that sells goods to the public

import
to bring goods into a country to sell

reopen
to open again after being closed or blocked

variety
a type within a group, such as a type of potato

customs
the government office that checks goods at borders

hesitant
not sure or slow to act because of doubts

resume
to start something again after stopping

III. READING

The UK–EU sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) deal is due to take effect on 1 March 2028. It should lower exporter costs and let UK delicatessens and other small retailers import European cheese and wine again. The agreement is expected to reopen the EU market for fresh sausages, burgers, seed potatoes and molluscs.

Iain Barbour of Jamieson Brothers, a Scottish seed potato producer, said the sector was hit after Brexit. His firm spent about £500,000 to adapt. Before Brexit, Ireland and the EU made up a fifth of its trade, and some Irish-favoured potato varieties stopped being grown. He hopes to supply Ireland again.

But he warned many growers will be hesitant until the rules apply, so trade may resume fully in 2029. Offshore Shellfish in Devon kept exporting rope-grown mussels despite extra paperwork and occasional blocks by French customs. The industry for live bivalve molluscs was worth under £12m a year before Brexit.

Reading text adapted from reporting by **The Guardian***: "UK-EU food deal hailed by British firms...". Original article linked at theenglishwire.com.*

IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. When is the UK–EU SPS deal planned to take effect?
2. Which products could the agreement reopen the EU market for?
3. How much did Jamieson Brothers spend to adapt after Brexit?
4. What share of Jamieson Brothers' trade came from Ireland and the EU before Brexit?
5. Which company kept exporting mussels despite border problems?

V. DISCUSSION

1. Who benefits most from fewer border checks, and why?
2. Should small retailers get extra help while they wait for 2028?
3. What risks do firms face if they resume trade too early?
4. How do food rules balance safety with easy trade?

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Second conditional

Use this for unreal or unlikely present/future situations. Form: If + past simple, … would + base verb.

> *"If the rules applied now, small shops* **would import** *EU cheese."*
>
> *"If exporter costs were lower, some growers* **would invest** *sooner."*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Complete each sentence using "would".

1. If checks were scrapped, exporters (save) ___ time and money. _____
2. If costs fell, small retailers (stock) ___ EU cheese again. _____
3. If the deal applied now, growers (plan) ___ spring orders. _____
4. If customs blocks ended, mussel firms (ship) ___ faster. _____
5. If rules were clear, producers (return) ___ to EU trade. _____

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.


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I. LESSON GUIDE

- Timing: 8–10 minutes warm-up, 10 minutes vocabulary, 12–15 minutes reading and comprehension, 8–10 minutes grammar, 10 minutes discussion.
- Pre-teach key items on the board: SPS deal, seed potatoes, molluscs, delicatessen; check students know customs and retailer.
- Reading: first skim for the start date, products, and company names; second read to find numbers (£500,000; a fifth; under £12m). Pair-check before class feedback.
- Discussion: begin in pairs, then whole class. Keep the focus on trade rules and local examples; students may speak about the news rather than personal situations.

II. DISCUSSION FACILITATION TIPS

1. Start with a quick poll of who says consumers, exporters or shops; then group by choice to compare reasons.
2. Elicit one cost small shops face now, then ask what kind of help would fix that specific cost.
3. List two real risks from the text (hesitant growers, lost varieties) and push for a third from students.
4. Board two aims: safety and speed. Ask for one policy idea that supports each, then test trade-offs.

III. EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Writing: In pairs, write a 70-word notice for a UK delicatessen explaining how the SPS deal will change stock in 2028.

Debate: Half the class are exporters, half are small retailers; prepare 2 minutes of arguments on who should get support first and present.

IV. ANSWER KEY OVERVIEW

Comprehension questions: short factual answers from the text.

Grammar exercise: Second conditional

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

Answer Key

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IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. When is the UK–EU SPS deal planned to take effect?
   1 March 2028.
2. Which products could the agreement reopen the EU market for?
   Fresh sausages, burgers, seed potatoes and molluscs.
3. How much did Jamieson Brothers spend to adapt after Brexit?
   About £500,000.
4. What share of Jamieson Brothers' trade came from Ireland and the EU before Brexit?
   A fifth of its trade.
5. Which company kept exporting mussels despite border problems?
   Offshore Shellfish in Devon.

V. DISCUSSION

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

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Key point: Use this for unreal or unlikely present/future situations. Form: If + past simple, ... would + base verb. (Examples constructed.)

> *"If the rules applied now, small shops* **would import** *EU cheese."*
>
> *"If exporter costs were lower, some growers* **would invest** *sooner."*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Complete each sentence using "would".

1. If checks were scrapped, exporters ___ time and money. **would save**
2. If costs fell, small retailers ___ EU cheese again. **would stock**
3. If the deal applied now, growers ___ spring orders. **would plan**
4. If customs blocks ended, mussel firms ___ faster. **would ship**
5. If rules were clear, producers ___ to EU trade. **would return**