

Ooo la la! Marks & Spencer reopens in France

Paris - After a decade in retreat Marks & Spencer the British retail clothes and food giant has reopened in France. Yesterday, it opened its doors in the French capital. The new three storey shop lies in the shadow of the Arc de Triomphe. Its new £50m 10-year lease makes it one of the most expensive pieces of real estate in eurozone territory. Marks and Spencer will also launch five other stores in Paris and is now searching for suitable premises for its *Simply Food* outlets. A French language website has also been launched. While some French housewives pouted their cheeks and shrugged off the opening of the new outlet, other loyal followers of well-heeled French housewives were pressing their noses up against the windows in anticipation yesterday. "We love their sandwiches, little cakes, shoes, trousers," said Chantal Bruno and Nicole LeClercq yesterday. "When the shop closed before, we went to London, because we couldn't bear not to have M&S clothes. Paris is not the capital of style, Marks & Spencer is." The French you see have a peculiar love affair for the British retailer.

Marks & Spencer closed its 38 stores in continental Europe, including Luxembourg ten years ago to concentrate on its British business. It had 18 stores in France and one in Luxembourg. The retreat followed a catastrophic fall in sales in the late 1990s. The closure was described later by former Chief Executive Stuart Rose as a "tragedy". Although good times returned, the launch in France comes at a difficult period for the company, which has announced an 8% fall in half-year profits. The first Marks & Spencer stores opened in Paris and Lyon in the mid 1970s and despite the nation's ongoing appreciation for the British retailer, it fell victim to a Continental-wide retreat in 2001. The decision to shut 38 stores across Europe, including Luxembourg, followed the companies extraordinary collapse in profitability – down from £1bn in 1998 to just £145m three years later. The withdrawal infuriated its workers – French unions are very strong – and its army of customers. At the time French unions organised sit-ins, protests and strikes. French labour laws are extraordinarily strong. These days Marks and Spencer's have outlets all over the world including Eastern Europe.

Category: France / Paris / Marks & Spencer

Level: Intermediate / Upper intermediate

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EXERCISES

1. Marks & Spencer: Briefly, what three things do you know about *Marks & Spencer*? Go round the room swapping details.

2. Dictation: The teacher will read four to six lines of the article slowly and clearly. Students will write down what they hear. The teacher will repeat the passage slowly again. Self-correct your work from page one - filling in spaces and correcting mistakes. Be honest with yourself on the number of errors. Advise the teacher of your total number of errors. Less than five is very good. Ten is acceptable. Any more is room for improvement! More than twenty - you need to do some work!

3. Reading: The students should now read the article aloud, swapping readers every paragraph.

4. Vocabulary: Students should now look through the article and underline any vocabulary they do not know. Look in dictionaries. Discuss and help each other out. The teacher will go through and explain any unknown words or phrases.

5. The article: Students should look through the article with the teacher.

- a) What is the article about?
- b) What do you think about the article?

6. Geography: France: What region of the world is France in? Name its capital? What famous river runs through Paris? Draw a map on the board then **look on Google maps** to help you.

7. Marks & Spencer: In pairs, think of five things you can buy in the ladies, gents and food departments in Marks & Spencer. Write them below. Explain to your partner why you chose these. What do you like/dislike about M&S?

Ladies department	Men's department	Food department
1	1	1
2	2	2
3	3	3
4	4	4
5	5	5

The teacher will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

8. Let's roleplay: France 24: In pairs/groups. One of you is the interviewer. The others are one of the following people. You are in the *France 24* studio in Paris. Today's interview is about: *Marks & Spencer reopens in Paris. 5-10 minutes.*

1	A British expat housewife in Paris	3	Parisian housewife
2	M&S Chief Executive	4	A tourist

The teacher will choose some pairs to roleplay their interview in front of the class.

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9. **Let's think!** In pairs. On the board write as many words as you can to do with **Marks & Spencer**. *One-two minutes*. Compare with other teams. Using your words compile a short dialogue together.

10. **Business strategy/Risks in Europe for M&S:** In pairs, think of three strategic business reasons why M&S might have returned to Continental Europe. Add three business risks in Europe M&S might face. Write them below. Discuss together. What are your conclusions?

Business strategy	Risks for M&S in Europe
1	1
2	2
3	3

The teacher will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

11. **Presentation:** In pairs, groups or individually: Prepare in class or at home a two minute presentation on: **Retail shops in my town/city**. Stand at the front of the class to give your presentation to the class. The class can vote on the best presentation.

12. **Let's do 'The Article Quiz':** Have the students quiz each other in pairs. They score a point for each correct answer and half a point each time they have to look at the article for help. See who can get the highest score!

Student A

- 1) Name the store.
- 2) Which city has the store reopened an outlet?
- 3) What is an outlet?
- 4) How many stores were closed in 2001?
- 5) Name the countries.

Student B

- 1) Who is the former Chief Executive?
- 2) How much is the new lease and how long is it?
- 3) What did some French housewives do?
- 4) Who have a peculiar love affair of what?
- 5) What is the store searching for and why?

13. **Top stores in my town/city:** In pairs, think of three of your favourite stores in each of the categories in your town/city. Write them below.

1) Food stores	3) Clothes stores
2) Electrical	4) Other

The teacher will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

14. **Let's write an e-mail:** Write and send a 200 word e-mail to your teacher about: **'Marks & Spencer'**.

15. **Sentence starters:** Finish these sentence starters. Correct your mistakes. Compare what other people have written.

a) Marks & Spencer _____

b) The new store _____

DISCUSSION

Student A questions

- 1) Can you demonstrate how to pout your cheeks and how to shrug your shoulders?
- 2) Do French women really pout their cheeks? Why?
- 3) Are the shop unions strong in your country?
- 4) What three things types of food do you like to buy in Marks & Spencer?
- 5) What do you like to buy in Marks & Spencer?
- 6) What advice would you give the Chief Executive of Marks & Spencer?
- 7) Why do the French have a peculiar love affair with the British retailer?
- 8) What is your favourite retail shop?
- 9) Are stores finding it hard to make a profit in these days of economic hardship?
- 10) Will Marks & Spencer survive in France this time round? Explain.

Student B questions

- 1) Why do Marks & Spencer offer inside leg measurements for men's trousers in imperial size e.g. 29,31,33,35, etc, whereas on the Continent men's trouser inside leg measurements are: 28,30,32,34, etc? Are men's legs different on the Continent?
- 2) Have you learnt anything from today's English lesson?
- 3) *Do you/will you* visit Marks & Spencer?
- 4) Would you like to see *a/another* Marks & Spencer in your town/city?
- 5) Is Marks & Spencer right to re-enter the French market?
- 6) Is Marks & Spencer right to spend so much on rent in the centre of Paris?
- 7) Do you think the French will embrace the new stores in France?
- 8) Do you think the British expat's living in France might visit the new Marks & Spencer stores?
- 9) When did you last visit Marks & Spencer?
- 10) Did you like this discussion?

SPEAKING

Let's play a game! *Allow 10 minutes – As a class / small groups / pairs*

Form a circle. The game goes in a clockwise direction. The person who can't remember the previous items(s) is eliminated by the teacher.

<i>I went to Marks & Spencer's last week and I bought...</i>
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The teacher can moderate the session.

GAP FILL: READING:

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Ooo la la! Marks & Spencer reopens in France

Paris - After a (1)___ in retreat Marks & Spencer the British (2)___ clothes and food giant has reopened in France. Yesterday, it opened its doors in the French capital. The new three storey shop lies in the shadow of the Arc de Triomphe. Its new £50m 10-year lease makes it one of the most expensive pieces of real estate in eurozone territory. Marks and Spencer will also launch five other stores in Paris and is now searching for suitable premises for its *Simply Food* outlets. A French language website has also been launched. While some French (3)___ pouted their cheeks and shrugged off the opening of the new outlet, other (4)___ followers of well-heeled French housewives were pressing their noses up against the windows in (5)___ yesterday. "We love their (6)___, little cakes, shoes, trousers," said Chantal Bruno and Nicole LeClerceq yesterday. "When the shop closed before, we went to London, because we couldn't bear not to have M&S clothes. Paris is not the capital of (7)___, Marks & Spencer is." The French you see have a (8)___ love affair for the British retailer.

Marks & Spencer closed its 38 stores in continental Europe, including Luxembourg ten years ago to concentrate on its British business. It had 18 stores in France and one in Luxembourg. The (1)___ followed a catastrophic (2)___ in sales in the late 1990s. The closure was described later by former Chief Executive Stuart Rose as a "(3)___". Although good times returned, the launch in France comes at a difficult period for the company, which has announced an 8% fall in half-year profits. The first Marks & Spencer stores opened in Paris and Lyon in the mid 1970s and despite the nation's ongoing appreciation for the British retailer, it fell (4)___ to a Continental-wide retreat in 2001. The decision to shut 38 stores across Europe, including Luxembourg, followed the companies extraordinary (5)___ in profitability – down from £1bn in 1998 to just £145m three years later. The (6)___ infuriated its workers – French (7)___ are very strong – and its army of (8)___.

anticipation

style

retail

loyal

sandwiches

housewives

peculiar

decade

retreat

customers

unions

tragedy

withdrawal

victim

collapse

fall

GAP FILL: LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Ooo la la! Marks & Spencer reopens in France

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GRAMMAR

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

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SPELLING TEST

The teacher will ask the class individually to spell the following words that are in the article. Afterwards, check your answers with your teacher, using the following ratings: **Pass = 12, Good = 15, Very good = 18, Excellent = 20**

1	yesterday	11	territory
2	profitability	12	retreat
3	housewives	13	extraordinary
4	launch	14	anticipation
5	giant	15	peculiar
6	shadow	16	loyal
7	continental	17	eurozone
8	concentrate	18	expensive
9	decade	19	appreciation
10	catastrophic	20	withdrawal

LINKS

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/this-is-not-just-marks--spencer--this-is-french-marks--spencer-6267112.html>
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2011/apr/01/marks-spencer-paris-champs-elysees>
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/france/8910768/Marks-and-Spencer-opens-in-Paris-again-ending-a-ten-year-drought-for-ex-pats.html>
<http://corporate.marksandspencer.com/page.aspx?pointerid=aaa9a5ecaaee4b919f7f57a25a9ea086>

ANSWERS

GAP FILL: Ooo la la! Marks & Spencer reopens in France: **Paris** - After a **decade** in retreat Marks & Spencer the British **retail** clothes and food giant has reopened in France. Yesterday, it opened its doors in the French capital. The new three storey shop lies in the shadow of the Arc de Triomphe. Its new £50m 10-year lease makes it one of the most expensive pieces of real estate in eurozone territory. Marks and Spencer will also launch five other stores in Paris and is now searching for suitable premises for its *Simply Food* outlets. A French language website has also been launched. While some French **housewives** pouted their cheeks and shrugged off the opening of the new outlet, other **loyal** followers of well-heeled French housewives were pressing their noses up against the windows in **anticipation** yesterday. "We love their **sandwiches**, little cakes, shoes, trousers," said Chantal Bruno and Nicole LeClercq yesterday. "When the shop closed before, we went to London, because we couldn't bear not to have M&S clothes. Paris is not the capital of **style**, Marks & Spencer is." The French you see have a **peculiar** love affair for the British retailer.

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