

Legal English: Statutory Interpretation and Judicial Reasoning in UK Commercial Law

About this Training

This training material was originally developed for legal professionals working within the legal department of a German energy company. The lesson explored how legislation, judicial interpretation and legal reform interact within the English legal system while drawing comparisons with German legal principles and methods of interpretation.

Using an authentic case study, statutory provisions and judicial reasoning from a leading court decision, participants developed both their legal vocabulary and their confidence when discussing complex legal concepts in English.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, participants will be able to:

- Explain key differences between the German and UK legal systems.
- Understand how judges interpret ambiguous statutory language within the common law system.
- Discuss the relationship between legislation and case law in UK commercial law.
- Analyse legal reasoning and identify how judicial decisions can influence subsequent legislative reform.
- Develop greater confidence when discussing complex legal concepts and case law in English.

Introduction to the Case Study

The lesson began by considering the facts of *Rogers v Parish (Scarborough) Ltd*, a leading case concerning the meaning of "satisfactory quality" under the Sale of Goods Act 1979.



Participants discussed whether a luxury vehicle containing numerous minor defects could still be considered satisfactory if it remained functional and roadworthy. The case provided an accessible introduction to the broader question of how courts interpret legislation when statutory language is unclear or open to multiple interpretations.

From Legislation to Judicial Interpretation

Participants then examined the relevant statutory provisions before considering several important questions left unanswered by the legislation itself:

- What does a "reasonable person" mean in this context?
- How much weight should be given to the different factors determining quality?
- At what point does a defect become unacceptable?



Sale of Goods Act 1979

- [F2]** (2) Where the seller sells goods in the course of a business, there is an implied term that the goods supplied under the contract are of satisfactory quality.
- (2A) For the purposes of this Act, goods are of satisfactory quality if they meet the standard that a reasonable person would regard as satisfactory, taking account of any description of the goods, the price (if relevant) and all the other relevant circumstances.

These discussions naturally led to an examination of the court's reasoning in *Rogers v Parish* and how the judges expanded the meaning of "quality" to include factors such as appearance, reliability, durability and freedom from minor defects.

Legal Reasoning and Legislative Reform

Having explored the court's judgment, participants considered how judicial interpretation subsequently influenced legislative reform. Particular attention was given to the relationship between case law and legislation within the UK legal system and how principles developed by the courts were later reflected in statutory amendments.

Throughout the lesson, comparisons were drawn with German legal principles and methods of statutory interpretation, providing participants with opportunities to discuss both legal systems using appropriate legal English.

The Learning Effect

By combining authentic legal materials with guided discussions and comparative legal analysis, participants developed greater confidence when communicating complex legal concepts in English. The lesson was designed not only to introduce specialist legal vocabulary, but also to develop the language needed to discuss legal reasoning, statutory interpretation and judicial decision-making within an international professional context.

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