

## Had better It's time . . .

### A

**Had better (I'd better / you'd better, etc.)**

**I'd better do something** = it is advisable to do it. If I don't, there will be a problem or a danger:

- I have to meet Amy in ten minutes. **I'd better go now** or I'll be late.
- "Do you think I should take an umbrella?" "Yes, **you'd better**. It might rain."
- **We'd better stop** for gas soon. The tank is almost empty.

The negative is **I'd better not** (= I had better not):

- "Are you going out tonight?" "**I'd better not**. I've got a lot of work to do."
- You don't look very well. **You'd better not go** to work today.

You can use **had better** when you warn somebody that they must do something:

- **You'd better be on time**. / **You'd better not be late**. (or I'll be very angry)

Note that the form is "**had better**" (usually **I'd better / you'd better**, etc., in spoken English):

- **I'd better go now** = I had better go now.

**Had** is a past form, but in this expression the meaning is present or future, not past:

- **I'd better go to the bank now/tomorrow**.

We say **I'd better do . . . (not to do)**:

- It might rain. **We'd better take an umbrella**. (*not* We'd better to take)

### B

**Had better and should**

**Had better** is similar to **should** (see Unit 31A) but not exactly the same. We use **had better** only for specific occasions (not for things in general). You can use **should** in all types of situations to give an opinion or to give advice:

- It's cold today. **You'd better wear a coat** when you go out. (a specific occasion)
- I think all drivers **should wear seat belts**. (in general – *not* "had better wear")

Also, with **had better**, there is always a danger or a problem if you don't follow the advice.

**Should** means "it is a good thing to do." Compare:

- It's a great movie. **You should go and see it**. (but no problem if you don't)
- The movie starts at 8:30. **You'd better go now**, or you'll be late.

### C

**It's time . . .**

You can say, "**It's time (for somebody) to do something**":

- **It's time to go home**. / **It's time for us to go home**.

You can also say:

- It's late. **It's time we went home**.

Here we use the past (**went**), but the meaning is present, not past:

- It's 10:00 and he's still in bed. **It's time he got up**. (*not* It's time he gets up)

**It's time you did something** = you should have done it already or started it. We often use the structure **it's time** to criticize or to complain:

- **It's time the children were in bed**. It's long past their bedtime.
- The windows are very dirty. I think **it's time somebody washed them**.

You can also say **It's about time . . .**. This makes the criticism stronger:

- Jack is a great talker. But **it's about time he did something** instead of just talking.

# Exercises

### 33.1 Read the situations and write sentences with *had better*. Use the words in parentheses.

1. You're going out for a walk with Tom. It might rain. You say to Tom:  
(an umbrella) We'd better take an umbrella.
2. Alex has just cut himself. It's a bad cut. You say to him:  
(a bandage) \_\_\_\_\_
3. You and Kate plan to go to a restaurant this evening. It's a very popular restaurant. You say to Kate: (make a reservation) We \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Jill doesn't look very well – not well enough to go to work. You say to her:  
(work) \_\_\_\_\_
5. You received your phone bill four weeks ago, but you haven't paid it yet. If you don't pay very soon, you could be in trouble. You say to yourself:  
(pay) \_\_\_\_\_
6. You want to go out, but you're expecting an important phone call. You say to your friend:  
(go out) I \_\_\_\_\_.
7. You and Jeff are going to the theater. You've missed the bus, and you don't want to be late. You say to Jeff: (a taxi) \_\_\_\_\_

### 33.2 Put in *had better* or *should*. Sometimes either is possible.

1. I have an appointment in ten minutes. I 'd better go now or I'll be late.
2. It's a great movie. You should go and see it. You'll really like it.
3. I \_\_\_\_\_ get up early tomorrow. I've got a lot to do.
4. When people are driving, they \_\_\_\_\_ keep their eyes on the road.
5. Thank you for coming to see us. You \_\_\_\_\_ come more often.
6. She'll be upset if we don't invite her to the wedding, so we \_\_\_\_\_ invite her.
7. These cookies are delicious. You \_\_\_\_\_ try one.
8. I think everybody \_\_\_\_\_ learn a foreign language.

### 33.3 Complete the sentences. Sometimes you need only one word, sometimes two.

1. a) I need some money. I'd better go to the bank.  
b) John is expecting you to call him. You \_\_\_\_\_ better do it now.  
c) "Should I leave the window open?" "No, you'd better \_\_\_\_\_ it."
2. a) It's time the government \_\_\_\_\_ something about the problem.  
b) It's time something \_\_\_\_\_ about the problem.  
c) I think it's about time you \_\_\_\_\_ about me instead of thinking only about yourself.

### 33.4 Read the situations and write sentences with *It's time* . . . .

1. You think the children should be in bed. It's already 11:00.  
It's time the children were in bed.
2. You haven't taken a vacation for a very long time. You need one now.  
It's time I \_\_\_\_\_.
3. You're sitting on a train waiting for it to leave the station. It's already five minutes late.  
\_\_\_\_\_.
4. You enjoy having parties. You haven't had one for a long time.  
\_\_\_\_\_.
5. The company you work for is badly managed. You think there should be some changes.  
\_\_\_\_\_.