

## I'd 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 do it, 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.
- ☐ 'Shall I take an umbrella?' 'Yes, **you'd better**. It might rain.'
- ☐ **We'd better stop** for petrol soon. The tank is almost empty.

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

- ☐ A: That jacket looks good on you. Are you going to buy it?  
B: **I'd better not**. It's very expensive.
- ☐ You don't look very well. **You'd better not go** out tonight.

Remember that:

**I'd better** = I **had** better, **you'd better** = you **had** better etc.

- ☐ **I'd better** phone Chris, **hadn't** I?
- ☐ We **had better** go now.

**Had** is normally past, but we use **had better** for the present or future, *not* past.

- ☐ I'd better go **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** but not exactly the same. We use **had better** only for a specific situation, not for things in general. You can use **should** in all types of situations to give an opinion or give advice:

- ☐ It's late. **You'd better go**. *or* You **should go**. (a specific situation)
- ☐ You're always at home. You **should go** out more often. (in general – *not* 'had better go')

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

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

- ☐ It's a great film. You **should** go and see it. (but no problem if you don't)
- ☐ The film starts at 8.30. **You'd better** go now or you'll miss the beginning.

## C it's time ...

You can say **It's time** (for somebody) **to** ...:

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

But you can also say:

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

When we use **it's time** + past ('it's time we **went**' etc.), the meaning is present, *not* past:

- ☐ **It's time** they **were** here. Why are they so late? (*not* It's time they are here)

**It's time** somebody **did** something = they should have already done it or started it.

We often use this structure to criticise or to complain:

- ☐ This situation can't continue. **It's time** you **did** something about it.
- ☐ He's very selfish. **It's time** he **realised** that he isn't the most important person in the world.

You can also say **It's about time** ...:

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

## Exercises

**35.1** Read the situations and write sentences with **'d better** or **'d better not**. Choose a verb from:

check    disturb    go    put    reserve    ~~take~~

- You're going out for a walk with a friend. It looks as if it might rain.  
You say: We'd better take an umbrella.
- You and Kate plan to go to a restaurant tonight. It will be busy.  
You say to Kate: We ..... a table.
- Oliver has just cut himself. It's bleeding and he'll need a plaster on it.  
You say to him: You ..... on it.
- Rebecca doesn't look well this morning – not well enough to go to work.  
You say to her: ..... this morning.
- You're going to the cinema, but you're not sure what time the film starts.  
You say: ..... the film starts.
- You need to talk to your boss, but she's very busy right now.  
You say to a colleague: ..... right now.

**35.2** Is **had better** OK in these sentences? Change to **should** where necessary.

- I have an appointment in ten minutes. I'd better go now or I'll be late. OK
- You'd better set your alarm. You have to get up early tomorrow. ....
- I'm glad you came to see us. You'd better come more often. ....
- She'll be sad if we don't invite her to the party, so we'd better invite her. ....
- It's nearly time to go out. I'd better get ready. ....
- I think everybody had better learn a foreign language. ....
- We've just missed the last bus. We'd better get a taxi. ....

**35.3** Complete the sentences. Choose from the box.

- It might rain. We'd better take an umbrella.
- Ben needs to know what happened. Somebody ..... better tell him.
- We'd better ..... park the car here. The road is too narrow.
- You ..... brush your teeth at least twice a day.
- What are we going to do? It's time ..... decide.
- ..... better not be late. It's an important meeting.
- It's time they ..... here. They promised they wouldn't be late.
- The window is open. You'd ..... close it before you go out.
- We'd better leave as soon as possible, ..... we?
- The government should ..... something about the problem.
- It's time the government ..... something about the problem.
- It's time something ..... done about the problem.

**better**  
**do**  
**did**  
**had**  
**hadn't**  
**I'd**  
**not**  
**to**  
~~**take**~~  
**should**  
**was**  
**were**

**35.4** Read the situations and write sentences with **It's time** (somebody **did** something).

- You're at a friend's house. You planned to go home at 11 o'clock. It's already 11 o'clock now.  
(I / go) It's time I went home.
- You haven't had a holiday for a very long time. You need one now.  
(I / holiday) It's time .....
- It's 10 o'clock. It's after the children's bedtime. You think they should be in bed.  
(children / bed) .....
- You didn't realise it was so late. You need to start cooking dinner.  
(start / cook) ..... dinner.
- Kate is always complaining about everything. You think she complains too much.  
(stop / complaining) ..... about everything.
- The company you work for has been badly managed for a long time. You think some changes should be made.  
(changes / make) ..... in the way the company is run.