

UNIT 65

Had better do something

It's time someone did something

a) Had better do something

The meaning of **had better** (I'd better) is similar to **should**. 'I'd better do something' = I should do something or it is advisable for me to do something; if I don't do this, something bad might happen:

- I have to meet Tom 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've almost run out of petrol. We'd better stop at the next petrol station to fill up.

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

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

The form is always '**had better**' (usually 'd better in spoken English). We say **had** but the meaning is present or future, not past:

- I'd better go to the bank **this afternoon**.

Remember that **had better** is followed by the infinitive without to:

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

b) It's time ...

You can say '**it's time** (for someone) to do something':

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

There is another structure: **It's time someone did something**:

- It's nearly midnight. **It's time we went home**.

We use the *past* (**went**) after **It's time someone ...**, but the meaning is present or future, not past:

- Why are you still in bed? **It's time you got up**. (*not* 'time you get up')

We use the structure **It's time someone did something** especially when we are complaining or criticising or when we think someone should have already done something:

- **It's time the children were** in bed. It's long after their bedtime.
- You've been wearing the same clothes for ages. **Isn't it time you bought** some new ones?
- I think **it's time the government did** something about pollution.

We also say { 'It's **high** time } someone **did** something'.
{ 'It's **about** time }

This makes the complaint or criticism stronger:

- You're very selfish. **It's high time you realised** that you're not the most important person in the world.
- **It's about time Jack did** some work for his examinations.

UNIT 65 Exercises

65.1 Read each situation and write a sentence with **had better**.

Examples: You're going out for a walk with Tom. You think you should take an umbrella because it might rain. What do you say to Tom? We'd better take an umbrella.
Tom doesn't look very well. You don't think he should go to work today. What do you say to Tom? You'd better not go to work today.

- 1 Ann suddenly begins to feel ill. You think she should sit down. What do you say to her?
- 2 You and Tom are going to the theatre. You've just missed the bus. You think you should take a taxi. What do you say to Tom? We
- 3 Ann wants to play the piano late at night. You know that she'll wake up the people next door. What do you say to Ann?
- 4 You and Ann are going to a restaurant for a meal. You think you should reserve a table because the restaurant might be crowded. What do you say to Ann?
- 5 Tom has just cut himself. You think he should put a plaster on the cut. What do you say to him?
- 6 You are going to take your car on holiday. You think you should have it serviced before you go. What do you say (to yourself)?
- 7 You are by a river. It's a very warm day and your friend suggests going for a swim. You don't think you should do this because the river looks very dirty. What do you say?

65.2 Now you have to write sentences with **It's time someone did something**.

Examples: You think the children should be in bed. It's already 11 o'clock.
It's time the children were in bed. (or went to bed.)
You think something should be done about the traffic problem in the city centre. It's (about) time something was done about the traffic problem in the city centre.

- 1 You think you should have a holiday because you haven't had one for a very long time. It's time I
- 2 You think Tom should write to his parents. He hasn't written to them for ages. It's time
- 3 This room should be redecorated. It looks awful. It's
- 4 You're waiting for Ann. She is late. She should be here by now.
- 5 You're sitting in a train waiting for it to leave. It's already five minutes late.
- 6 You feel very strongly that governments should stop spending money on arms and should concentrate on raising the standard of living.
- 7 You think you should start getting the dinner ready. It's nearly dinner-time now.
- 8 You haven't been to the dentist for nearly a year. You should go every six months.