

LESSON 17

Had better

The phrase (you) “**had better**” is used to advise someone to do something. It suggests that if the listener does not follow the advice, he may face a problem or danger.

We use “should” or “ought to” also to say what we think is a good idea. But, if we want to make our statement sound stronger, we can use the phrase “had better”. “Should” and “ought to” are used to suggest what is advisable. “Had better” is used to give strong advice or a warning.

The structure used for the negative form of the above two phrases is “(you) had better not”.

Short forms (used only in spoken English).

You had better = You’d better.

Examples: We’d better leave immediately – we are late.

(It means we should leave in time as we are getting late).

The structure of a sentence using ‘had/had not better’ will be ‘had/had not better + simple present tense’.

Examples:

- (i) You’d better inform Sonu about the changed programme.
- (ii) You’d better stop smoking. You are coughing too much.
- (iii) They’d better finish repairing the house. The guests are arriving next week.
- (iv) You are sick. You’d better rest for a few days.
- (v) The exams are approaching. You’d better start studying seriously.

Sample Dialogues:

- (i) Ramesh: Today our class teacher was annoyed with us.
Rinku: Why?
Ramesh: Because the children were making a lot of noise. They ought to learn to behave properly.
Rinku: Yes, you’d better warn them not to do this again.
- (ii) Daughter: Mother, I’d better go now – I am already late for school.
Mother: You’re lazy. You should get up earlier than you do.

Exercise 1

Rewrite the following sentences using ‘had better’. Delete some words if necessary. Follow the example.

Example:

We are in a weak position. Let us surrender.

We are in a weak position, we’d better surrender.

(i) It may rain, take an umbrella.

.....

(ii) The manager wants to meet the new officer right now. Call him immediately.

.....

(iii) This dress is torn. Change it.

.....

(iv) You are planning to move to France. Learn French.

.....

Exercise 2

Fill in the blanks with should / had better whichever is suitable:

(i) The car has broken down; we take a taxi so that we reach in time.

(ii) It is very cold outside. You wear your coat before leaving.

(iii) I sleep early as I have to travel tomorrow.

(iv) We be in the habit of having a light dinner.

(v) The next time you are in Delhi you visit us.

Answers to Exercise 1

(i) We'd better take the umbrella. It may rain.

(ii) The manager wants to meet the new officer, you'd better call him immediately.

(iii) This dress is torn, you'd better change it.

(iv) You are planning to move to France. You'd better learn French.

Answers to Exercise- 2

(i) had better (ii) should (iii) had better (iv) should (v) should