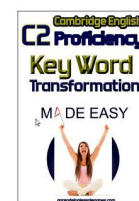
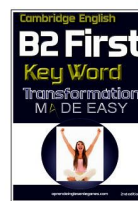


had better

do something - idiom

The best material to prepare for your **Cambridge English exam**



We use had better to refer to the present or the future, to talk about actions we think people should do or which are desirable in a specific situation. The verb form is always had, not have. We normally shorten it to 'd better in informal situations. It is followed by the infinitive without to:

- I'd better leave a note so they'll know I'll be late.

Had better is a strong expression. We use it if we think there will be negative results if someone does not do what is desired or suggested:

- She'd better get here soon or she'll miss the opening ceremony.
- 'I'll give you back the money tomorrow.' 'You'd better!' (= as a threat)

negative form

The negative of had better is had better not (or 'd better not):

- I'd better not leave my bag there. Someone might steal it.
- You'd better not tell Elizabeth about the broken glass – she'll go crazy!

question form

The question form of had better is made by inverting the subject and had. This means the same as should, but is more formal:

- Had I better speak to Joan first before I send this form off? What do you think?
- Had we better leave a note for the delivery guy to take the parcel next door?

negative questions

Negative questions with had better are more common than affirmative ones:

- Hadn't we better ring the school and tell them Liam is sick?
- Hadn't you better switch your computer off? It might overheat if you leave it on.

HAD BEST

In spoken English, people sometimes use had best instead of had better, especially in informal speaking. This sounds slightly less strong and less direct:

- You'd best leave it till Monday. There's no one in the office today.
- If you think it is going to be easy, you'd best think again.