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Lesson 5

Exploring the Past

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Learn English Differently

Grammar Explorer

had to.

Function

Expressing obligation in the past

Part Three

Read the following short text:

A letter to your Twenties!

As a child, your mom had to look after you. She had to understand what you were going through and decipher your crying and laughter. Getting older, your mother had to cope with your temper and new mindset. Maybe, you did not care or pay attention to the efforts she was making to make you happy. She had to conceal her sadness every time you slammed the door or broke something. And you, instead of apologizing, neglected her feeling knowing she is your mom and will always forgive you. Now that you are mature enough and stronger, you must take care of her… Remember that!



- ✓ Notice the underlined parts in the text.
- ✓ Why would you use “had to”?

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Use

Just like ‘must’ and ‘have to’ in the present, ‘had to’ is used to express obligation in the past. Although there is a difference between ‘must’ and ‘have to’, ‘had to’ replaces both of them in the past.
If you want to express a task that you were obliged to perform in the past, use ‘had to’.
E.g.
Yesterday, I had to look after my little brother because mom was sick.

Rule:

‘had to’ + verb (infinitive).

Examples

- I **had to** work harder in order to achieve the success you witness today.
- Don’t forget that our martyrs **had to** sacrifice their lives so that we can live in freedom and independence today.
- You **did not have to** have everything, you only **had to** be you!

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