

Useful Expression

In today's scene, Aldo says, *I had no idea you were so ambitious*. *I had no idea* is a very natural and common way to say that you didn't know anything about a specific topic/subject/situation. It gives the impression that you are surprised and/or shocked to learn a new piece of information.

The fact that Thomas received votes prior to today's scene gives Aldo the impression that Thomas also wants to become pope. This surprises Aldo.

Aldo could have said, *I didn't know you were so ambitious*, but the expression *I had no idea* is stronger and conveys Aldo's shock.

To use this expression ...

1. *I had no idea ...*
2. *Subject + Past tense verb*
(*he was / you could / they knew / there was / etc.*)
3. *A phrase to complete your sentence*
(*he was so tall. / you could dance like that. / etc.*)

Activity

With a partner, read the following descriptions and make sentences in response to them that use the above useful expression.

1. You walk into a ramen restaurant, and you are surprised to see your old high school classmate working there. You say hello to your old classmate and then, *I had no idea ...*

I had no idea you worked here.

2. Your boss calls you Saturday morning. He is angry and wants to know where you are. He tells you that you are supposed to be in the office today because there is an important meeting. You apologize and think to yourself, *I had no idea ...*

I had no idea there was a meeting today.

3. You visit a zoo and are shocked to learn that hippos can't swim. You turn to your friend and say, *I had no idea ...*

I had no idea hippos couldn't swim.

4. Your wife/husband says to you angrily, *I really wanted you to cook dinner tonight*. This is a complete surprise to you, so you say, *I had no idea ...*

I had no idea you wanted me to cook dinner tonight.

5. You are on a business trip with a co-worker. You have worked with him/her for over ten years. At Tokyo Station, the two of you see some confused looking tourists. Your co-worker walks over to them and speaks to them in perfect English. You are shocked because you have never heard him/her use English before. You say this: *I had no idea ...*

I had no idea you knew how to speak English.

6. Think of some things you were surprised/shocked to learn and make original *I had no idea* sentences about them.

Examples

- Until recently, I had no idea Sinéad O'Connor's song "*Nothing Compares 2 U*" was written by Prince.
- Until a few years ago, I had no idea my dad didn't like cucumbers.