

Prefer and would rather

A Prefer to do and prefer doing

You can use 'prefer to (do)' or 'prefer -ing' to say what you prefer in general:

- I don't like cities. I prefer to live in the country. or I prefer living in the country.

Study the differences in structure after prefer. We say:

I prefer	something	to	something else.
I prefer	doing something	to	doing something else.
but	I prefer to do something	rather than	(do) something else.

- I prefer this coat to the coat you were wearing yesterday.

- I prefer driving to travelling by train.

but • I prefer to drive rather than travel by train.

- Ann prefers to live in the country rather than (live) in a city.

B Would prefer (I'd prefer...)

We use 'would prefer' to say what somebody wants in a particular situation (not in general):

- 'Would you prefer tea or coffee?' 'Coffee, please.'

We say 'would prefer to do' (not 'doing'):

- 'Shall we go by train?' 'Well, I'd prefer to go by car.' (not 'I'd prefer going')

- I'd prefer to stay at home tonight rather than go to the cinema.

C Would rather (I'd rather...)

Would rather (do) = would prefer (to do). After would rather we use the infinitive *without to*.

Compare:

- 'Shall we go by train?' { 'I'd prefer to go by car.'
 'I'd rather go by car.' (not 'to go')
- 'Would you rather have tea or coffee?' 'Coffee, please.'

The negative is 'I'd rather not (do something)':

- I'm tired. I'd rather not go out this evening, if you don't mind.

- 'Do you want to go out this evening?' 'I'd rather not.'

Study the structure after would rather:

I'd rather	do something	than	(do) something else.
------------	--------------	------	----------------------

- I'd rather stay at home tonight than go to the cinema.

D I'd rather you did something

When you want somebody to do something, you can say 'I'd rather you did something':

- 'Shall I stay here?' 'I'd rather you came with us.'
- 'Shall I tell them the news?' 'No. I'd rather they didn't know.'
- Shall I tell them or would you rather they didn't know?

In this structure we use the *past* (came, did etc.), but the meaning is present or future, *not* past. Compare:

- I'd rather cook the dinner now.

but • I'd rather you cooked the dinner now. (not 'I'd rather you cook')

The negative is 'I'd rather you didn't...':

- I'd rather you didn't tell anyone what I said.

- 'Do you mind if I smoke?' 'I'd rather you didn't.'

EXERCISES

Which do you prefer? Write sentences using 'I prefer (something) to (something else)'. Put the verb into the correct form where necessary.

1 (drive / travel by train) ... I prefer driving to travelling by train...

2 (tennis / football) I prefer ...

3 (phone people / write letters) I to

4 (go to the cinema / watch films on TV)

Now rewrite sentences 3 and 4 using the structure 'I prefer (to do something)...'.

5 (1) ... I prefer to drive rather than travel by train...

6 (3) I prefer to

7 (4)

Write sentences using I'd prefer... or I'd rather... + one of the following:

eat at home get a taxi go alone go for a swim listen to some music

stand think about it for a while wait a few minutes wait till later

- 1 Shall we walk home?
- 2 Do you want to eat now?
- 3 Shall we watch TV?
- 4 What about a game of tennis?
- 5 Shall we leave now?
- 6 Do you want to go to a restaurant?
- 7 I think we should decide now?
- 8 Would you like to sit down?
- 9 Do you want me to come with you?

(prefer)	... I'd prefer to <u>get a taxi</u> .
(rather)	... I'd rather <u>wait till later</u> ...
(prefer)
(rather)
(rather)
(prefer)
(rather)
(rather)
(prefer)

Now write sentences using than and rather than.

10 (get a taxi / walk home) I'd prefer ... to get a taxi rather than walk home...

11 (go for a swim / play tennis) I'd rather

12 (wait a few minutes / leave now)

I'd rather

13 (eat at home / go to a restaurant)

I'd prefer

14 (think about it for a while / decide now)

I'd rather

Complete the sentences using would you rather I....

1 Are you going to cook the dinner or ... would you rather I cooked it?

2 Are you going to tell Ann what happened or would you rather?

3 Are you going to do the shopping or?

4 Are you going to answer the phone or?

Use your own ideas to complete these sentences.

1 'Shall I tell Ann the news?' 'No, I'd rather she ... didn't ... know.'

2 Do you want me to go now or would you rather I here?

3 Do you want to go out this evening or would you rather at home?

4 This is a private letter addressed to me. I'd rather you read it.

5 It's quite a nice house but I'd rather it a bit bigger.

6 'Do you mind if I turn on the radio?' 'I'd rather you I'm trying to study.'

KEY TO EXERCISES

54.4

2 to go	6 to go
3 to do	7 eating
4 read	8 cry
5 to go	9 to study

UNIT 55

55.1

- 2 driving
- 3 to go
- 4 to go
- 5 raining
- 6 to buy
- 7 asking
- 8 asking
- 9 to answer
- 10 breaking
- 11 to pay
- 12 eating
- 13 to shut
- 14 meeting ... to see
- 15 crying or to cry
- 16 to get

55.2

- 2 He can remember going to Paris when he was eight.
- 3 He can't remember falling into a river.
- 4 He can remember crying on his first day at school.
- 5 He can't remember saying he wanted to be a doctor. or He can't remember wanting to be...
- 6 He can't remember being bitten by a dog.

55.3

- 1 b lending
- c to phone
- d to give
- e leaving/putting
- 2 a saying
- b to say or to tell you
- 3 a to become
- b working
- c reading

UNIT 56

56.1

- 2 Try turning it the other way.
- 3 Have you tried moving the aerial?
- 4 Why don't you try phoning him at work?
- 5 Have you tried taking an aspirin?

56.2

- 2 It needs cutting.
- 3 It needs redecorating.
- 4 They need tightening.
- 5 It needs emptying.

56.3

- 1 b knocking
- c to put
- d asking
- e to reach
- f to concentrate
- 2 a to go
- b looking
- c cleaning
- d to go
- e You don't need to iron ... It doesn't need ironing.
- 3 a overhearing
- b get or to get
- c smiling
- d make or to make

UNIT 57

57.1

- 3 likes taking / to take photographs.
- 4 doesn't like driving / to drive.
- 5 likes working / to work in the open air.
- 6 doesn't like taking / to take risks.
- 7 likes doing / to do nothing.
- 8 doesn't like being / to be kept waiting.

57.2

Example answers:

- 2 I don't mind playing cards.
- 3 I hate doing the ironing.
- 4 I enjoy going to museums.
- 5 I don't like lying on the beach all day.

57.3

Example answers:

- 2 I wouldn't like to be a dentist.
- 3 I'd like to be a hairdresser.
- 4 I'd hate to be an airline pilot.
- 5 I wouldn't mind being a tourist guide.

57.4

- 2 waiting
- 3 going / to go
- 4 writing
- 5 working/being
- 6 to come / to go
- 7 wearing / to wear
- 8 to sit
- 9 to get
- 10 to talk / to speak

57.5

- 2 I would like / I'd like to have seen the programme.
- 3 I would hate to have lost my watch.
- 4 I would love to have met Ann.
- 5 I wouldn't like to have been alone.

- 6 I would prefer to have travelled by train.

UNIT 58

58.1

- 2 I prefer tennis to football. or ... football to tennis.
- 3 I prefer phoning people to writing letters. or ... writing letters to phoning people.
- 4 I prefer going to the cinema to watching films on TV. or ... watching films on TV to going to the cinema.
- 6 I prefer to phone people rather than write letters. or ... to write letters rather than phone people.
- 7 I prefer to go to the cinema rather than watch films on TV. or ... to watch films on TV rather than go to the cinema.

58.2

- 3 I'd prefer to listen to some music.
- 4 I'd rather go for a swim.
- 5 I'd rather wait a few minutes.
- 6 I'd prefer to eat at home.
- 7 I'd rather think about it for a while.
- 8 I'd rather stand.
- 9 I'd prefer to go alone.
- 11 I'd rather go for a swim than play tennis.
- 12 I'd rather wait a few minutes than leave now.
- 13 I'd prefer to eat at home rather than go to a restaurant.
- 14 I'd rather think about it for a while than decide now.

58.3

- 2 I told her
- 3 would you rather I did it
- 4 would you rather I answered it

58.4

- 2 stayed 5 was
- 3 stay 6 didn't
- 4 didn't

UNIT 59

59.1

- 2 lending you any money.
- 3 remembering names.
- 4 passing the exam.
- 5 being late?
- 6 eating at home, we went to a restaurant.
- 7 doing nothing.
- 8 telling any of their friends.
- 9 playing well.