

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.
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- 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**.'

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 get a taxi.

(rather) I'd rather wait till later.

(prefer)

(rather)

(prefer)

(rather)

(prefer)

(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

- driving
- to go
- to go
- raining
- to buy
- asking
- asking
- to answer
- breaking
- to pay
- eating
- to shut
- meeting ... to see
- crying or to cry
- to get

55.2

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

55.3

- lending
 - to phone
 - to give
 - leaving/putting
- saying
 - to say or to tell you
- to become
 - working
 - reading

UNIT 56

56.1

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

56.2

- It needs cutting.
- It needs redecorating.
- They need tightening.
- It needs emptying.

56.3

- knocking
 - to put
 - asking
 - to reach
 - to concentrate
- to go
 - looking
 - cleaning
 - to go
 - You don't need to iron ... It doesn't need ironing.
- overhearing
 - get or to get
 - smiling
 - make or to make

UNIT 57

57.1

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

57.2

Example answers:

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

57.3

Example answers:

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

57.4

- waiting
- going / to go
- writing
- working/being
- to come / to go
- wearing / to wear
- to sit
- to get
- to talk / to speak

57.5

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

- I would prefer to have travelled by train.

UNIT 58

58.1

- I prefer tennis to football. or ...football to tennis.
- I prefer phoning people to writing letters. or ...writing letters to phoning people.
- I prefer going to the cinema to watching films on TV. or ...watching films on TV to going to the cinema.
- I prefer to phone people rather than write letters. or ...to write letters rather than phone people.
- 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

- I'd prefer to listen to some music.
- I'd rather go for a swim.
- I'd rather wait a few minutes.
- I'd prefer to eat at home.
- I'd rather think about it for a while.
- I'd rather stand.
- I'd prefer to go alone.
- I'd rather go for a swim than play tennis.
- I'd rather wait a few minutes than leave now.
- I'd prefer to eat at home rather than go to a restaurant.
- I'd rather think about it for a while than decide now.

58.3

- I told her
- would you rather I did it
- would you rather I answered it

58.4

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

UNIT 59

59.1

- lending you any money.
- remembering names.
- passing the exam.
- being late?
- eating at home, we went to a restaurant.
- doing nothing.
- telling any of their friends.
- playing well.