

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.
<i>but</i>	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.
- Sarah **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 specific situation (not in general):

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

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

- 'Shall we go by train?' 'I'd **prefer to drive.**' (*not* I'd prefer driving)
- 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). We use **would rather + infinitive** (without **to**). Compare:

- 'Shall we go by train?' { 'I'd **prefer to drive.**'
'I'd **rather drive.**' (*not* to drive)
- '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.**'

We say '**would 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

We say 'I'd rather you **did something**' (*not* I'd rather you do). For example:

- 'Shall I stay here?' 'I'd **rather you came** with us.' (= I would prefer this)
- 'I'll repair your bike tomorrow, OK?' 'I'd **rather you did** it today.'
- 'Are you going to tell them what happened?' '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 *not* past. Compare:

- I'd rather **make** dinner now.
I'd rather you **made** dinner now. (*not* I'd rather you make)

I'd rather you **didn't** (do something) = I'd prefer you not to do it:

- I'd **rather you didn't** tell anyone what I said.
- 'Shall I tell Linda what happened?' 'I'd **rather you didn't.**'

59.1 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 (basketball / football)
I prefer
- 3 (phone people / send emails)
I to
- 4 (go to the cinema / watch videos at home)
.....

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)

59.2 Write sentences using I'd prefer ... and I'd rather ... + the following:

eat at home ~~get a taxi~~ go alone wait a few minutes listen to some music
stand go for a swim ~~wait till later~~ think about it for a while

- 1 Shall we walk home?
- 2 Do you want to eat now?
- 3 Would you like to watch TV?
- 4 Do you want to go to a restaurant?
- 5 Let's leave now.
- 6 Shall we play tennis?
- 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>I'd prefer to get a taxi.</i> |
| (rather) | <i>I'd rather wait till later.</i> |
| (rather) | |
| (prefer) | |
| (rather) | |
| (rather) | |
| (prefer) | |
| (rather) | |
| (prefer) | |

Now use the same ideas to complete these sentences using than and rather than.

- 10 I'd prefer to get a taxi *rather than walk home.*
- 11 I'd prefer to go for a swim
- 12 I'd rather eat at home
- 13 I'd prefer to think about it for a while
- 14 I'd rather listen to some music

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

- 1 Are you going to make dinner or *would you rather I made it* ?
- 2 Are you going to tell Liz what happened or would you rather ?
- 3 Are you going to do the shopping or ?
- 4 Are you going to phone Diane or ?

59.4 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 I don't really like these shoes. I'd rather they a different colour.
- 6 A: Do you mind if I turn on the radio?
B: I'd rather you I'm trying to study.

Preposition (in/for/about etc.) + -ing

A

If a preposition (*in/for/about* etc.) is followed by a verb, the verb ends in **-ing**:

	<i>preposition</i>	<i>verb (-ing)</i>	
Are you interested	in	working	for us?
I'm not very good	at	learning	languages.
Sue must be fed up	with	studying.	
What are the advantages	of	having	a car?
Thanks very much	for	inviting	me to your party.
How	about	meeting	for lunch tomorrow?
Why don't you go out	instead of	sitting	at home all the time?
Carol went to work	in spite of	feeling	ill.

You can also say 'instead of **somebody** doing something', 'fed up with **people** doing something' etc. :

- I'm fed up with **people** telling me what to do.

B

Note the use of the following prepositions + **-ing**:

before -ing and **after -ing**:

- Before** going out, I phoned Sarah. (*not* Before to go out)
- What did you do **after** leaving school?

You can also say '**Before** I went out ...' and '... **after** you left school'.

by -ing (to say *how* something happens):

- The burglars got into the house **by** breaking a window and climbing in.
- You can improve your English **by** reading more.
- She made herself ill **by** not eating properly.
- Many accidents are caused **by** people driving too fast.

without -ing:

- We ran ten kilometres **without** stopping.
- It was a stupid thing to say. I said it **without** thinking.
- She needs to work **without** people disturbing her. (*or* ... **without** being disturbed.)
- I have enough problems of my own **without** having to worry about yours.

C

To -ing (look forward to doing something etc.)

To is often part of the *infinitive* (to do / to see etc.):

- We decided **to** go out.
- Would you like **to** meet for lunch tomorrow?

But **to** is also a *preposition* (like *in/for/about/from* etc.). For example:

- We drove from London **to** Edinburgh.
- I prefer tea **to** coffee.
- Are you looking forward **to** the weekend?

If a preposition is followed by a verb, the verb ends in **-ing**:

in doing **about** meeting **without** stopping (etc.)

So, when **to** is a preposition and it is followed by a verb, you must say **to -ing**:

- I prefer driving **to** travelling by train. (*not* to travel)
- Are you looking forward **to** going on holiday? (*not* looking forward to go)

60.1 Complete the second sentence so that it means the same as the first.

- 1 Why is it useful to have a car?
What are the advantages of having a car ?
- 2 I don't intend to apply for the job.
I have no intention of
- 3 Helen has a good memory for names.
Helen is good at
- 4 Mark won't pass the exam. He has no chance.
Mark has no chance of
- 5 Did you get into trouble because you were late?
Did you get into trouble for ..?
- 6 We didn't eat at home. We went to a restaurant instead.
Instead of
- 7 We got into the exhibition. We didn't have to queue.
We got into the exhibition without
- 8 Our team played well, but we lost the game.
Our team lost the game despite

60.2 Complete the sentences using **by -ing**. Use the following (with the verb in the correct form):

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|
| borrow too much money | break a window | drive too fast |
| put some pictures on the walls | stand on a chair | turn a key |
- 1 The burglars got into the house by breaking a window
 - 2 I was able to reach the top shelf
 - 3 You start the engine of a car
 - 4 Kevin got himself into financial trouble
 - 5 You can put people's lives in danger
 - 6 We made the room look nicer

60.3 Complete the sentences with a suitable word. Use only one word each time.

- 1 We ran ten kilometres without stopping ..
- 2 He left the hotel without his bill.
- 3 It's a nice morning. How about for a walk?
- 4 We were able to translate the letter into English without a dictionary.
- 5 Before to bed, I like to have a hot drink.
- 6 It was a long journey. I was very tired after on a train for 36 hours.
- 7 I was annoyed because the decision was made without anybody me.
- 8 After the same job for ten-years, I felt I needed a change.
- 9 We lost our way because we went straight on instead of left.
- 10 I like these photographs you took. You're good at photographs.

60.4 For each situation, write a sentence with **I'm (not) looking forward to**.

- 1 You are going on holiday next week. How do you feel?
I'm looking forward to going on holiday.
- 2 Diane is a good friend of yours and she is coming to visit you soon. So you will see her again soon. How do you feel? I'm
- 3 You are going to the dentist tomorrow. You don't enjoy going to the dentist. How do you feel?
I'm not
- 4 Carol is a student at school. She hates it, but she is leaving school next summer.
How does she feel?
- 5 You've arranged to play tennis tomorrow. You like tennis a lot. How do you feel?
.....