

UNIT 61

Prefer and would rather

a Prefer to do and prefer doing

You can use "prefer to do" or "prefer doing" to say what you prefer in general.

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

Study the difference in structure:

	I prefer	(doing)	something	to (doing)	something else
<i>but:</i>	I prefer	to do	something	rather than (do)	something else

- I **prefer** tea to coffee.
- Tom **prefers driving** to traveling by train.

but: Tom **prefers to drive** rather than travel by train.

- I **prefer to live** in the country **rather than** (live) in a city.

Use **would prefer** to say what someone wants (to do) in a particular situation. You can say **would prefer to (do)** or **would prefer (doing)**:

- "Would you **prefer** tea or coffee?" "Coffee, please."
- "Should we go by train?" "Well, I'd **prefer to go** by car." or "Well, I'd **prefer going** by car."

b Would rather (do) = would prefer to do. After would rather we use the base form.

Compare:

Should we go by train?	{	Well, I'd prefer to go by car.
		Well, I'd rather go by car. (<i>not to go</i>)

- "Would you **rather have** tea or coffee?" "Coffee, please."
- 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**."

Note the structure:

I'd rather do something than (do) something else
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- I'd **rather stay** at home **than go** to the movies.

c Would rather someone did something

When you want someone else to do something, you can say **I'd rather you did . . . /I'd rather he did . . .**, etc. We use the *past* in this structure, but the meaning is present or future, *not* past. Compare:

I'd rather cook dinner now.
I'd rather you cooked dinner now. (<i>not</i> I'd rather you cook)

- "Shall I stay here?" "Well, I'd **rather you came** with us."
- I'd **rather you didn't** tell anyone what I said.
- "Do you mind if I smoke?" "I'd **rather you didn't**."

UNIT 61 Exercises

61.1 Make sentences using "I prefer (something) to (something else)."

Example: (driving / traveling by train) *I prefer driving to traveling by train.*

- (San Francisco / Los Angeles) I prefer San Francisco
- (calling people / writing letters) I prefer
- (going to the movies / watching movies on TV)
I

Now rewrite sentences 2 and 3 using the structure "I prefer to do (something)"

Example: *I prefer to drive rather than travel by train.*

- (2) I prefer to call
- (3) I

61.2 Answer these questions using I'd rather Use the words in parentheses (. . .) for your answers.

Example: Would you like to walk? (go by car) *I'd rather go by car.*

- Would you like to play tennis? (go for a swim) I'd
- Do you want to watch television? (read a book) I
- Shall we leave now? (wait for a few minutes)
- Would you like to go to a restaurant? (eat at home)
- Should we decide now? (think about it for a while)

Now make sentences using I'd rather . . . than . . . (see section b).

Example: (walk / go by car) I'd rather *walk than go by car.*

- (go for a swim / play tennis) I'd rather
- (read a book / watch television) I
- (wait for a few minutes / leave now)
- (eat at home / go to a restaurant)
- (think about it for a while / decide now)

61.3 Use "I'd rather you (did something)." You are talking to a friend. You say you'll do something, but really you want your friend to do it.

Example: I'll cook the dinner if you really want me to, but *I'd rather you cooked it.*

- I'll call Tom if you really want me to, but I'd rather
- I'll do the dishes if you really want me to, but
- I'll go to the bank if you really want me to, but
- I'll tell Ann what happened if you really want me to, but