

IT'S (HIGH /ABOUT) TIME

- We use **It's time**, **It's high time** and **It's about time** to express present or future wishes, or to express our impatience about things that haven't happened yet:
 - It's (high) time that child **was** in bed – it's nearly midnight! (**ref to present/future time**) → **PAST**
 - It's time **to go** – it's almost 8 o'clock. **INF**
 - When the infinitive is used to refer to a specific person who is not the speaker or the person being spoken to, then the expression *It's time for X to...* must be used.
 - e.g. **It's time for him to decide** what he wants to do with his life.

- **High** is more emphatic, suggesting that the event is overdue. It is not generally followed by the infinitive.

Put in the right forms for the words in brackets:

HAVING A WONDERFUL TIME! WISH YOU WERE HERE!

While trying to sail round the world in a small boat, Harry, Sandy and Joe were shipwrecked one night. "I wish there **(be) was/were** (1) an island nearby", Harry said. By morning, they were washed up on to a desert island. For six months they lived on fish, nuts and fruit. One day, they saw a bottle on the shore. "If only it **(contain)** _____ (2) a note or something!" Sandy said. They opened it and a genie appeared. "It's high time someone **(open)** _____ (3) that bottle!" the genie gasped. "I'm so grateful, I'll give you one wish each. You first," the genie said, pointing to Harry. "That's easy," Harry said. "I wish I **(be)** _____ (4) with my family." And (whoosh!) he disappeared. "Me too," Sandy said. "If only I **(can be)** _____ (5) in dear old Glasgow." And (whoosh!) off he went. "and you, sir?" the genie asked Joe. "I wish I **(have)** _____ (6) my friends back! Joe said.

I WOULD RATHER/ I WOULD SOONER

I'd rather/I'd sooner + infinitive (without to) → both parts of sentence refer to the same person.

- We use **would rather** and **would sooner** in exactly the same way to express preference.

We can refer to the present or the future:

I'd rather tell him myself. (referring to future time)

I'd rather be anywhere than here! (referring to present time)

I didn't enjoy the holiday at all – I'd rather have stayed at home. (referring to past time)

- We can omit the verb in negative short answers:

Are you coming with us? – No, **I'd rather/sooner not.**

I'd rather + clause:

I'd rather you didn't tell him – he'd be upset. (referring to future time)

I'd rather you were on holiday (referring to present time)

I'd rather you hadn't told him – he was upset. (referring to past time)

- We generally omit the main part of the verb in short responses:

1- negative responses: Frank is going to buy a motorcycle. – **I'd rather he didn't.**

2- affirmative responses: I haven't told anyone about it. – **I'd rather you had.**

Put in the missing preferences:

KNOW YOURSELF!

Most parents **(their children not decide) would rather their children didn't decide** (1) to join the acting profession because it is so hard to earn a living. They **(their children choose)** _____ (2) secure, well-paid jobs. But if you ask actors themselves, they always tell you there is nothing they **(do)** _____ (3). An actor is a person who **(be)** _____ (4) a different man or woman: An actor **(talk, walk, and behave)** _____ (5) like someone else. That's what acting is about. Many actors **(be called)** _____ (6) something other than their real names. The great American comic actor Claude William Dukenfield **(be called)** _____ (7) W.C. Fields, which was the name he adopted when he became an actor. Fields was eccentric and **(live)** _____ (8) in a world in which there were no dogs or children. He used to wear a funny top hat and carry a walking-stick. He loved to pretend to be other people in real life as well. He opened bank accounts all over America using comic names. He died in 1946 and the epitaph he wrote for his tombstone clearly expressed a healthy preference for life: "On the whole, I **(be)** _____ (9) in Philadelphia!"

I WOULD PREFER

I would prefer it if they were left on their own. (future time)

I would prefer it **if-clause:** I would have preferred it if I could have studied maths. (past time)

I would prefer + **to-infinitive (present or perfect):** I'd prefer **to be** left on my own.

You can use **prefer to-infinitive** and **prefer doing** to say what you prefer in general.
Prefer to-infinitive is more usual.

e.g. I don't like cities. I prefer to live/living in the country.

Note: Study the difference in structure:

I prefer (doing) something TO (doing) something else.

e.g. Tom prefers driving to travelling by train.

But: I prefer to do something RATHER THAN (do) something else.

e.g. Tom prefers to drive rather than travel by train.

I would rather do something THAN (do) something else.

e.g. Tom would rather drive than travel by train.

HAD BETTER do SOMETHING:

- The meaning of **had better** is similar to should.

I'd better do something = I should do something or it is advisable for me to do something;
if I don't do this, something bad might happen

- The form is always "**had better**" (usually '**d better** in spoken English). We say **had** but the meaning is present or future, not past: e.g. I'd better go to the bank this afternoon.

- The negative form is **had better not** ('**d better not**):

You don't look very well. You'd better not go to work today.

- Remember that **had better** is followed by the infinitive without to.

Rephrase the following sentences using the given words:

1- Unless you like live music, don't go to that restaurant. (**if**)

Don't go to that restaurant _____ live music.

2- If I have plenty of warning, I'll willingly baby-sit for you.

3- **Provided you** _____, I'll willingly baby-sit for you.

4- I cannot play the guitar, which is a pity. (**wish**)

I _____ the guitar.

5- I wish I hadn't been so angry. (**only**)

If _____ so angry.

6- I wish I had taken a few books with me. (**regret**)

I _____ a few books with me.

7- I would prefer you to wear something more formal to work.

I'd rather/sooner _____.

8- Without your sound advice, I would never have made such a good investment.

If it hadn't _____.

9- I'd better be getting home now.

It's time _____.

10- I prefer to phone people rather than write letters.

I'd rather _____.

11- You are in a pub. You have to drive home afterwards. Tom offers you a drink but you don't think you should drink any more. What do you say?

I'd better _____.