

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
but:	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.*

1. (San Francisco / Los Angeles) I prefer San Francisco
2. (calling people / writing letters) I prefer
3. (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.*

4. (2) I prefer to call
5. (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.*

1. Would you like to play tennis? (go for a swim) I'd
2. Do you want to watch television? (read a book) I
3. Shall we leave now? (wait for a few minutes)
4. Would you like to go to a restaurant? (eat at home)
5. 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.*

6. (go for a swim / play tennis) I'd rather
7. (read a book / watch television) I
8. (wait for a few minutes / leave now)
9. (eat at home / go to a restaurant)
10. (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.*

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