

Focus: prefer -ing vs to-infinitive, prefer something to something else, general statements, I'd prefer to do, specific situations, would prefer vs prefer, I'd rather do (without to), negative: I'd rather not, comparison with than, prefer... to

1. General Preferences: *Prefer*

We use **prefer** to say we like one thing or activity more than another in general.

A. Form:

- **Prefer + Noun:** *I prefer tea.*
- **Prefer + -ing (Gerund):** *I prefer **living** in the city.* (Most common for general habits).
- **Prefer + to-infinitive:** *I prefer **to live** in the city.* (Also correct).

B. Comparison (The "To" Rule):

When we compare two things using *prefer*, we use the preposition **to**, not *than*.

- *I prefer summer **to** winter.*
- *She prefers reading **to** watching TV.* (Note: Use -ing for both verbs).

2. Specific Preferences: *Would Prefer*

We use **would prefer** (or the contraction '**d prefer**) to say what we want in a **specific situation** (now or in the future).

A. Form:

- **'d prefer + to-infinitive:** *I'd prefer **to stay** home tonight.*
- **Negative:** *I'd prefer **not to go** out.*

B. Comparison:

- *I'd prefer to drive **rather than** take the bus.*

3. Specific Preferences: *Would Rather*

Would rather (or '**d rather**) means the same as *would prefer*, but the grammar is different. It is followed by the **bare infinitive** (verb without 'to').

A. Form:

- **'d rather + Base Verb:** *I'd rather **stay** home.* (NOT: ~~to stay~~)
- **Negative:** *I'd rather **not go** out.* (NOT: ~~not to go~~)

B. Comparison (The "Than" Rule):

When comparing with *would rather*, we use **than**.

- *I'd rather eat Italian food **than** French food.*

Summary Table

Structure	Verb Form	Preposition for Comparison	Example
Prefer	-ing / to-infinitive	to	<i>I prefer walking to driving.</i>
Would prefer	to-infinitive	rather than	<i>I'd prefer to walk rather than drive.</i>
Would rather	Base Verb (no to)	than	<i>I'd rather walk than drive.</i>

Practice Exercises

Instructions: Complete the sentences using the correct form of the verb, or the correct preposition (to/than).

Grammar Tips:

- Check if the sentence is **General** (prefer) or **Specific** ('d prefer / 'd rather).
- Remember: **Would rather** takes the *base verb* (no "to").
- Remember: **Prefer** compares with "to"; **Would rather** compares with "than".
- Pay attention to the cues for **Negatives** (not/verb) and **Questions** (subject/verb).

1. I don't like cities. I generally prefer _____ (live) in the countryside.
2. _____ (you/rather/have) tea or coffee right now?
3. She would prefer _____ (not/drive) at night because her vision isn't great.
4. I would rather watch a comedy _____ a horror movie.
5. We prefer cooking dinner at home to _____ (go) to expensive restaurants.
6. _____ (you/prefer/sit) outside or inside? The weather is nice today.
7. He would rather _____ (save) his money than spend it on clothes.
8. They generally prefer dogs _____ cats.
9. I am very tired. I _____ (rather/not/go) to the cinema tonight.
10. She prefers _____ (read) books to watching movies.
11. I'd prefer _____ (have) a meeting tomorrow morning instead of this afternoon.
12. _____ (they/prefer/stay) in a hotel or an apartment when they travel next week?
13. Honestly, I'd rather _____ (fail) than cheat on the exam.
14. My parents prefer _____ (not/travel) during the busy summer season.
15. He would prefer to take the train rather than _____ (fly).

Answer Key

1. **living** (General preference usually takes -ing, though 'to live' is possible, -ing fits 'in the countryside' habit best).
2. **Would you rather have**
3. **not to drive** ('d prefer + not + to-infinitive).
4. **than** ('d rather ... than).
5. **going** (prefer doing X to doing Y).
6. **Would you prefer to sit** (Specific situation requires to-infinitive).
7. **save** ('d rather + base verb).
8. **to** (prefer X to Y).
9. **would rather not go** ('d rather + not + base verb).
10. **reading** (Balanced with 'watching').
11. **to have** ('d prefer + to-infinitive).
12. **Would they prefer to stay**
13. **fail** ('d rather + base verb).
14. **not to travel** (or *not traveling*).
15. **fly** (or *drive* depending on context, but here strictly grammar: *rather than* is followed by the bare infinitive in this structure).