

## 'D RATHER / 'D PREFER / 'D BETTER

**I'd rather do X than do Y  
I prefer doing X to doing Y**

**Prefer** and **would rather** can be used interchangeably when we are talking about general preferences:

**I prefer playing football to watching TV.  
I'd rather play football than watch TV.**

### **'D RATHER ('D SOONER) / 'D PREFER**

When we are talking about specific, **would rather** is used as an alternative to **would prefer**. **Would rather** is very common in spoken English and is often abbreviated to **'d rather** (**'d sooner is less heard**).

**Would you like to go out for dinner tonight?  
~ No, I think I'd rather eat at home / I'd prefer to eat at home.**

**Would you rather drink beer or wine with the curry  
~ I'd rather drink beer. What about you?**

**They'd rather have the strawberries by themselves, but I'd prefer to have them with cream.**

Note: **would rather + infinitive without to  
prefer + gerund**

**Would prefer + to infinitive.**

**Would rather** (but not **would prefer to**) + **past tense** (when we want to involve other people in the action, even though it has a present or future meaning)

**Shall we go out for dinner tonight?  
~ No, I'd rather we ate at home, if you don't mind.**

**Shall I write to Harry and tell him that we've sold the car?  
~ I'd rather you didn't.**

**My mother would rather we caught the bus, rather than walk home after the party.**

Both **would rather/sooner** and **would prefer** can be followed by perfect infinitive to talk about past actions:

**We went on Sunday but I'd rather have gone on Saturday / I'd prefer to have gone on Saturday.**

**Rather than** means **instead of** and can be used in combination with **would prefer to** and **would rather**.

**Rather than lose precious sleep discussing it now, I think we should go to bed and talk about it in the morning.**

**My mother would prefer us to email each other once a week, rather than spend half an hour on the phone every night.**

**My mother would rather we emailed each other once a week instead of spending half an hour on the phone every night. In fact, she insists on it. So we'd better do that, I suppose.**

### **'D BETTER**

Note that **'d better**, which is similar structurally to **'d rather**, is used to suggest necessary action. In this case however, **'d** is the abbreviated form of **had**, not **would**.

Note: **'d better + infinitive without to.:**

**We'd better not be late for the Ambassador's party. It would be unforgivable to arrive late.  
You'd better phone him and tell him that you're not going.  
They'd better buy me a Christmas present or I shall never forgive them.**

It is sometimes slightly threatening in tone, as in the last example. **Had better** is always more urgent than **should or ought to** and has the same force as **I would advise you strongly to**.

## **PRACTICE with keys**

### Fill in the gaps:

- 1.- You 'd better re-new your contract with the owner before you start to have problems.
- 2.- It would be better to write an answer than to leave a blank space if you don't know.
- 3.- I 'd rather buy a flat than a house.
- 4.- They prefer going to bed early tonight.

### Rewrite:

- 1.- Please, don't interrupt me when I'm talking on the phone.  
I'd rather ... you did'n interrupt me when...
- 2.- Please let me know your decision today, not tomorrow.  
I'd prefer ... you to tell me your decision today, ...
- 3.- Staying at home would be better than going out tonight.  
I'd rather ...we stayed at home tonight rather than go out.
- 4.- I don't want to be punished but it's worst to remind silent  
I'd rather ... be punished than remind silent.
- 5.- - I'd rather have the one with the new processor.  
I'd prefer ... to have .....
- 6.- It would be better if I arrived before 10,00 a.m.  
I'd rather ... arrive before 10,00 a.m.
- 7.- Don't come and see me today. Better tomorrow.  
I'd rather ... you came tomorrow.
- 8.- Would you like to eat meat or fish?  
Would ... you prefer (to eat) meat or fish?
- 9.- I'd rather fly than go by see.  
I'd prefer to fly.
- 10.- Would you like some tea? I'd prefer coffee.  
I'd ... rather have coffee than tea.
- 11.- We went by see but I'd rather have gone by air.  
I'd prefer ... to have gone by air.
- 12.- Shall I give you dollars? I'd rather you give me Euros.  
I'd ... prefer you to give me Euros.
- 13.- I'd prefer him not to paint it.  
I'd ... rather he didn't paint it.
- 14.- I like hot weather better than cold.  
I ... prefer hot weather to cold / ... 'd rather/sooner have hot wather than cold.
- 15.- I prefer skiing to skating.  
I'd ... rather/sooner ski than skate.
- 16.- Tom prefers reading to speaking in English.  
Tom prefers ... to read rather than to speak in English.
- 17.- You ought to take the car to go there.  
You'd .... better take the car.

## PRACTICE

### Fill in the gaps:

- 1.- You \_\_\_\_\_ re-new your contract with the owner before you start to have problems.
- 2.- It \_\_\_\_\_ an answer than to leave a blank space if you don't know.
- 3.- I \_\_\_\_\_ buy a flat than a house.
- 4.- They \_\_\_\_\_ going to bed early tonight.

### Rewrite:

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I'd rather ...
- 2.- Please let me know your decision today, not tomorrow.  
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Tom prefers ...
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You'd ....