‘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 didn’t 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’d rather sooner have hot weather 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 contrac t with the owner before you start to have problems.
2.- It ______________________________ an answer th an 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:

1.- Please, don’t interrupt me when I’m talking on the phone.
   I’d rather ...

2.- Please let me know your decision today, not tomorrow.
   I’d prefer ...

3.- Staying at home would be better than going out tonight.
   I’d rather ...

4.- I don’t want to be punished but it’s worst to remind silent
   I’d rather ...

5.- .- I´d rather have the one with the new processor.
   I’d prefer ...

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7.- Don’t come and see me today. Better tomorrow.
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   Would ...

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    I’d ...

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    I ...

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    I’d ...

16.- Tom prefers reading to speaking in English.
    Tom prefers ...

17.- You ought to take the car to go there.
    You’d ....