

EXPRESSING PREFERENCE IN ENGLISH

Prefer • Would prefer • Would rather • Rather than • Instead of

Name: _____

Date: _____

Grammar reminder

prefer A to B: I prefer tea to coffee.

prefer doing A to doing B: I prefer walking to driving.

would prefer to + verb: I would prefer to leave now.

would rather + bare infinitive: I would rather leave now.

would rather A than B: I would rather walk than drive.

would rather + person + past simple: I would rather you stayed.

instead of + noun / -ing: We took the train instead of driving.

1. Choose the correct answer

Circle the best option.

1. I generally prefer working / to work at home to working in a busy office.
2. Would you prefer sit / to sit near the window?
3. I'd rather take / to take the earlier train.
4. My sister prefers tea than / to coffee.
5. We'd rather stay at home than / to go out in the rain.
6. I would prefer you to call / calling before you visit.
7. Daniel stayed at home instead of go / going to the party.
8. I'd rather you don't / didn't mention this to anyone.
9. She prefers to listen rather than / to speak during meetings.
10. The company favours flexible hours instead / rather than a four-day week.

2. Complete the sentences

Use the correct form of the word or phrase in brackets.

1. I prefer _____ by train to driving. (travel)
2. We would prefer _____ the matter tomorrow. (discuss)
3. I'd rather _____ at home this evening. (stay)
4. She would rather her children _____ closer to home. (study)
5. They chose a smaller flat rather than _____ in the suburbs. (live)
6. Would you prefer me _____ the door? (close)
7. I'd prefer it if you _____ your shoes indoors. (not wear)
8. He went for a walk instead of _____ television. (watch)

9. Most employees have a preference _____ flexible working hours. (preposition)
 10. Given the choice, I'd rather _____ more free time than a higher salary. (have)

3. Prefer, would prefer or would rather?

Complete each sentence with the most suitable expression. Use the correct form.

1. In general, I _____ quiet holidays to busy city breaks.
2. It is rather late. I _____ take a taxi tonight.
3. "Tea or coffee?" "I _____ coffee, please."
4. My parents _____ living in the countryside to living in a city.
5. I _____ not discuss the problem in front of the children.
6. For tomorrow's meeting, we _____ to start at ten o'clock.
7. My brother usually _____ cooking at home to eating out.
8. I _____ you didn't use my computer without asking.

4. Correct the mistakes

Each sentence contains one mistake. Rewrite it correctly.

1. I prefer coffee than tea.

2. We would rather to leave before the traffic gets worse.

3. She prefers reading to watch television.

4. I'd rather you don't call after ten.

5. He stayed in instead of to go to the concert.

6. Would you prefer me staying here?

7. I prefer to walk than take the bus.

8. My preference is for work from home.

5. Rewrite the sentences

Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning. Use the word in capitals. Do not change the word.

1. I like working in the morning more than working at night. **(PREFER)**
I _____ at night.
2. I want to take the train today, not the bus. **(RATHER)**
I _____ the bus today.
3. Please do not speak so loudly. **(PREFER)**

I _____ so loudly.

4. She chose to stay at home and did not go shopping. **(RATHER)**

She chose _____ shopping.

5. He wants you to arrive before nine. **(RATHER)**

He _____ before nine.

6. They accepted a smaller room because nothing better was available. **(SETTLED)**

They _____ a smaller room.

7. Her first choice is an afternoon appointment. **(PREFERENCE)**

She _____ an afternoon appointment.

8. We took a taxi; we did not walk. **(INSTEAD)**

We took a taxi _____.

6. Complete the conversation

Use the expressions in the box. You may need to change the form slightly.

Expression box

would rather • would prefer • instead of • preference • preferably • favour • settle for • rather than

Mia: Where should we go for our weekend break?

Leo: My first _____ would be somewhere by the sea.

Mia: I think I'd _____ visit the mountains. The coast will be crowded.

Leo: Would you _____ stay in a hotel or rent a cottage?

Mia: A cottage, _____ somewhere quiet.

Leo: I _____ renting a cottage too. We would have more space.

Mia: Could we travel by train _____ driving?

Leo: Yes. I'd rather read and relax _____ spend three hours behind the wheel.

Mia: The cottages are expensive, though.

Leo: Then we may have to _____ a small guesthouse.

7. Make the sentences more polite

Rewrite each direct statement using the expression in brackets.

1. Do not open the window. (I'd prefer it if...)

2. Come tomorrow, not today. (I'd rather...)

3. Give me a window seat. (I'd prefer...)

4. Do not discuss this during lunch. (I'd rather...)

5. Let us meet online. (My preference would be...)

6. Choose the earlier appointment. (I'd be more inclined...)

ANSWER KEY

1. Choose the correct answer

1. working; 2. to sit; 3. take; 4. to; 5. than; 6. to call; 7. going; 8. didn't; 9. rather than; 10. rather than

2. Complete the sentences

1. travelling / to travel
2. to discuss
3. stay
4. studied
5. live
6. to close
7. didn't wear
8. watching
9. for
10. have

3. Prefer, would prefer or would rather?

1. prefer
2. would rather
3. would prefer
4. prefer
5. would rather
6. would prefer
7. prefers
8. would rather

4. Correct the mistakes

1. I prefer coffee to tea.
2. We would rather leave before the traffic gets worse.
3. She prefers reading to watching television.
4. I'd rather you didn't call after ten.
5. He stayed in instead of going to the concert.
6. Would you prefer me to stay here?
7. I prefer to walk rather than take the bus.
8. My preference is to work from home. / I have a preference for working from home.

5. Rewrite the sentences

Suggested answers

1. I prefer working in the morning to working at night.
2. I would rather take the train than the bus today.
3. I would prefer it if you didn't speak so loudly.
4. She chose to stay at home rather than go shopping.
5. He would rather you arrived before nine.
6. They settled for a smaller room.
7. She has a preference for an afternoon appointment.
8. We took a taxi instead of walking.

6. Complete the conversation

1. preference
2. rather
3. prefer
4. preferably
5. favour
6. instead of
7. rather than
8. settle for

7. Make the sentences more polite

Suggested answers

1. I'd prefer it if you didn't open the window.
2. I'd rather you came tomorrow rather than today.
3. I'd prefer a window seat, please.
4. I'd rather you didn't discuss this during lunch.
5. My preference would be to meet online.
6. I'd be more inclined to choose the earlier appointment.

8. Personalised practice

Students' own answers. Check that each answer uses a suitable preference structure and follows the correct grammar pattern.

9. Short writing task

Students' own answers. Suggested assessment points: range of preference expressions, grammatical accuracy, clear organisation, and appropriate vocabulary.

Teacher note: Accept other grammatically correct answers where more than one structure is possible.

A. Suggested marking guide for the writing task

Award up to 10 points. Adapt the scale to suit the level of your learners.

Criterion	Points	What to look for
Range	0-3	At least five different preference expressions.
Accuracy	0-3	Correct verb forms, prepositions and parallel structures.
Organisation	0-2	Clear paragraphing and logical development.
Vocabulary	0-2	Appropriate, varied vocabulary and natural collocations.

B. Useful feedback codes

These short codes can make correction quicker and encourage students to edit their own work.

VF	verb form	PREP	preposition
WO	word order	EXP	better expression needed