



# Preference (would rather/had better): Would Rather & Had Better: Basic Preference and Strong Advice Exercises

Fill in the blank with the correct option.

1. It's a beautiful day. I \_\_\_\_ go for a walk than stay inside.  
a) had better  
b) would rather  
c) would rather to  
d) would prefer to
2. You're coughing badly. You \_\_\_\_ see a doctor.  
a) had better  
b) would rather  
c) had better to  
d) would rather to
3. A: Shall we go to the beach or the park? B: I \_\_\_\_ go to the beach.  
a) had better to  
b) would rather to  
c) would rather  
d) had better
4. The exam starts in an hour. You \_\_\_\_ not waste any more time.  
a) would rather to not  
b) hadn't better  
c) had better to  
d) had better
5. My sister is afraid of flying. She always says she \_\_\_\_ take the train.  
a) had better to  
b) would rather  
c) would rather to  
d) had better
6. It's freezing outside. You \_\_\_\_ wear a warm coat.  
a) had better  
b) would rather  
c) would rather to  
d) had better to
7. A: Tea or coffee? B: I \_\_\_\_ have tea, please.  
a) had better to  
b) had better  
c) would rather  
d) would rather to
8. The milk smells bad. We \_\_\_\_ not drink it.  
a) would rather to  
b) hadn't better  
c) had better to  
d) had better
9. I don't enjoy action films. I \_\_\_\_ watch a documentary.  
a) would rather  
b) had better  
c) would rather to  
d) had better to
10. You \_\_\_\_ hurry. The shop closes in ten minutes.  
a) would rather  
b) would rather to  
c) had better to  
d) had better

11. We \_\_\_ take an umbrella. It looks like rain.  
a) would rather to  
b) had better to  
c) had better  
d) hadn't better
12. I \_\_\_ walk to work than drive in this terrible traffic.  
a) had better  
b) would rather  
c) had better to  
d) would rather to
13. You \_\_\_ not touch that wire. It's very dangerous.  
a) had better  
b) would rather  
c) would rather to  
d) had better to
14. A: What shall we have for dinner? B: I \_\_\_ have pasta, if that's OK.  
a) had better to  
b) had better  
c) would rather  
d) would rather to
15. You \_\_\_ apologise to her before it's too late.  
a) would rather to  
b) had better  
c) would rather  
d) had better to
16. I \_\_\_ not go to the party. I might lose my job if I'm late again tomorrow.  
a) would rather to  
b) had better to  
c) would rather  
d) had better
17. The children are tired. They \_\_\_ go to bed early tonight.  
a) had better  
b) would rather to  
c) had better to  
d) would rather
18. I \_\_\_ stay at this hotel again. The service was terrible last time.  
a) had better not to  
b) would rather not  
c) would not rather  
d) had not better
19. You \_\_\_ book your train tickets soon. They're selling out fast.  
a) would rather to  
b) would rather  
c) had better  
d) had better to
20. A: Do you want to eat out or cook at home? B: I \_\_\_ cook at home tonight.  
a) had better to  
b) had better  
c) would rather to  
d) would rather



## Answers

1. b) would rather
2. a) had better
3. c) would rather
4. d) had better
5. b) would rather
6. a) had better
7. c) would rather
8. d) had better
9. a) would rather
10. d) had better
11. c) had better
12. b) would rather
13. a) had better
14. c) would rather
15. b) had better
16. d) had better
17. a) had better
18. b) would rather not
19. c) had better
20. d) would rather



# Explanations

## 1. “would rather” (b)

Use 'would rather + bare infinitive + than + bare infinitive' to express a preference between two things. 'I'd rather go for a walk than stay inside' compares two options. 'Had better' is for advice or warnings and doesn't use 'than' to compare preferences. 'Would prefer to' needs a different structure (would prefer to go ... rather than stay).

## 2. “had better” (a)

Use 'had better + bare infinitive' to give strong advice, often with a warning that something bad may happen if you don't follow it. The person's cough could get worse without medical attention. Don't add 'to' after had better — 'had better to see' is incorrect.

## 3. “would rather” (c)

Use 'would rather + bare infinitive' to express your preference when choosing between options. This is a casual choice between two leisure activities, so 'would rather' (preference) is appropriate. 'Had better' would imply an urgent reason or warning, which doesn't fit this relaxed context. Don't add 'to' after would rather.

## 4. “had better” (d)

Use 'had better not + bare infinitive' for a strong warning about consequences. With only an hour until the exam, wasting time could lead to poor results. The negative form is 'had better not' (not 'hadn't better'). Don't add 'to' after had better, and don't put 'not' in the wrong position.

## 5. “would rather” (b)

Use 'would rather + bare infinitive' to express a personal preference. 'She always says' tells us this is her repeated, stated preference — she prefers the train because of her fear. You wouldn't 'always say' you 'had better' do something, as had better is for specific advice, not habitual preferences.

## 6. “had better” (a)

Use 'had better + bare infinitive' to give practical advice. In freezing weather, not wearing a coat could make you ill. 'Had better' implies a consequence — you might get sick if you don't. 'Would rather' is for personal preferences, not advice about potential negative outcomes.

## 7. “would rather” (c)

Use 'would rather + bare infinitive' to express your preference in everyday choices. Choosing between tea and coffee is a simple preference — there's no warning or consequence involved. 'Had better' would be inappropriate for a casual drink choice.

## 8. “had better” (d)

Use 'had better not + bare infinitive' for a strong warning about danger. Drinking spoiled milk could make you sick — this is about avoiding a negative consequence, not a preference. The correct negative form is 'had better not' — don't say 'hadn't better' (wrong word order) or add 'to' after had better.

## 9. “would rather” (a)

Use 'would rather + bare infinitive' to express what you prefer based on personal taste. The speaker doesn't enjoy action films and prefers documentaries — this is about personal preference, not advice or warnings.

## 10. “had better” (d)

Use 'had better + bare infinitive' for urgent advice. If you don't hurry, you won't arrive before the shop closes — there's a clear negative consequence. 'Would rather' expresses preference and lacks the urgency this situation requires.

**11. “had better” (c)**

Use 'had better + bare infinitive' to give practical advice based on circumstances. If it rains and you don't have an umbrella, you'll get wet. 'Had better' implies 'it's a good idea because otherwise something unpleasant will happen'. Don't say 'hadn't better' — the correct negative form is 'had better not'.

**12. “would rather” (b)**

Use 'would rather + bare infinitive + than + bare infinitive' to compare two options and state your preference. 'I'd rather walk than drive' means walking is preferable. 'Had better' doesn't use 'than' to compare options.

**13. “had better” (a)**

Use 'had better not' for a serious safety warning. Touching a dangerous wire could cause injury or death — this requires a strong warning, not a preference. The negative form is 'had better not + bare infinitive'.

**14. “would rather” (c)**

Use 'would rather + bare infinitive' to express a polite preference. The phrase 'if that's OK' reinforces that this is a preference, not advice. Choosing what to eat is a personal choice, making 'would rather' the appropriate expression.

**15. “had better” (b)**

Use 'had better + bare infinitive' for strong advice with an implied negative consequence. 'Before it's too late' signals urgency — the relationship may be damaged if you don't apologise soon. This is advice about consequences, not a preference.

**16. “had better” (d)**

Use 'had better not' for strong self-advice with serious consequences. The speaker could lose their job — this is much more than a simple preference. 'Had better not' conveys the urgency and importance of the decision. The consequence (losing a job) makes 'had better' clearly more appropriate than 'would rather'.

**17. “had better” (a)**

Use 'had better + bare infinitive' for parental advice. Tired children who don't sleep early may become unwell or irritable — there's a clear reason for the advice. Note that children rarely 'would rather' go to bed, so 'had better' is the natural choice here.

**18. “would rather not” (b)**

Use 'would rather not + bare infinitive' to express a strong preference against doing something. The speaker had a bad experience and prefers not to return. The correct word order is 'would rather not' — 'would not rather' and 'had not better' are incorrect. 'Had better not to' is wrong because 'to' should not follow had better.

**19. “had better” (c)**

Use 'had better + bare infinitive' for urgent advice. If you don't book soon, the tickets may all be sold — there's a time-sensitive consequence. 'Would rather' merely expresses preference and doesn't convey the urgency of the situation.

**20. “would rather” (d)**

Use 'would rather + bare infinitive' to express your preference when given a choice. This is a casual decision about dinner plans — no warning or consequence is involved. 'Had better' would imply something bad will happen if you eat out, which doesn't fit the context.