



# Preference (would rather/had better): Would Prefer, Prefer & Would Rather: Expressing and Comparing Preferences Exercises

Fill in the blank with the correct option.

1. She'd prefer \_\_\_\_ by train. It's more comfortable than the bus.  
a) to travel  
b) travel  
c) travelling  
d) to travelling
2. I'd rather \_\_\_\_ at home tonight. I'm too tired to go out.  
a) to stay  
b) stay  
c) staying  
d) to staying
3. Tom would rather \_\_\_\_ football than tennis.  
a) to play  
b) playing  
c) play  
d) played
4. In general, I \_\_\_\_ cooking at home to eating out.  
a) would rather  
b) rather  
c) would prefer  
d) prefer
5. He prefers \_\_\_\_ rather than take the bus to work.  
a) to walk  
b) walking  
c) walk  
d) to walking
6. My parents prefer tea \_\_\_\_ coffee.  
a) than  
b) to  
c) from  
d) rather
7. I'd prefer \_\_\_\_ a taxi. It's too far to walk.  
a) take  
b) taking  
c) to take  
d) to taking
8. She'd rather \_\_\_\_ the earlier flight tomorrow.  
a) to catch  
b) catching  
c) to catching  
d) catch
9. We prefer \_\_\_\_ to swimming. We go to the gym every day.  
a) running  
b) to run  
c) run  
d) to running
10. I'd prefer not \_\_\_\_ about it right now.  
a) think  
b) to think  
c) thinking  
d) to thinking





## Answers

1. a) to travel
2. b) stay
3. c) play
4. d) prefer
5. a) to walk
6. b) to
7. c) to take
8. d) catch
9. a) running
10. b) to think
11. d) stay
12. c) rather than
13. a) prefers
14. d) to have
15. b) go
16. c) snowboarding
17. a) to go
18. b) prefers
19. c) do
20. d) to travel



# Explanations

## 1. “to travel” (a)

After 'would prefer', use the to-infinitive. 'She'd prefer to travel by train' is correct. Compare with 'would rather': 'She'd rather travel' (bare infinitive, no 'to'). This is one of the key structural differences between the two expressions.

## 2. “stay” (b)

After 'would rather', always use the bare infinitive (without 'to'). 'I'd rather stay' is correct. 'I'd rather to stay', 'I'd rather staying', and 'I'd rather to staying' are all grammatically incorrect.

## 3. “play” (c)

After 'would rather', use the bare infinitive. 'Tom would rather play football than tennis' compares two options using 'than'. Never add 'to' or '-ing' after 'would rather'.

## 4. “prefer” (d)

Use 'prefer + -ing + to + -ing' for general, habitual preferences. 'I prefer cooking to eating out' describes what you generally like more. The phrase 'in general' confirms this is a habitual preference. 'Would rather' and 'would prefer' are typically for specific situations, not general habits.

## 5. “to walk” (a)

In the structure 'prefer + to-infinitive + rather than + bare infinitive', use the to-infinitive after 'prefer'. 'He prefers to walk rather than take the bus.' This is an alternative to 'He prefers walking to taking the bus' (both -ing forms).

## 6. “to” (b)

In the structure 'prefer + noun + to + noun', use 'to' to connect the two things being compared. 'My parents prefer tea to coffee' means they like tea more. Important: with 'prefer', use 'to' (not 'than'). With 'would rather', use 'than' (I'd rather have tea than coffee).

## 7. “to take” (c)

After 'would prefer', use the to-infinitive. 'I'd prefer to take a taxi' is correct. Remember: would prefer + to do, but would rather + do (no 'to').

## 8. “catch” (d)

After 'would rather', use the bare infinitive. 'She'd rather catch the earlier flight' — no 'to' or '-ing'. The contracted form 'she'd' stands for 'she would'.

## 9. “running” (a)

Use 'prefer + -ing + to + -ing' when comparing two activities as a general habit. 'We prefer running to swimming' — both activities use the -ing form. The phrase 'every day' confirms this is a general preference. Note: 'to running' is not a valid form.

## 10. “to think” (b)

The negative of 'would prefer + to-infinitive' is 'would prefer not + to-infinitive'. 'I'd prefer not to think about it' is correct. Compare with 'would rather': 'I'd rather not think about it' (bare infinitive).

## 11. “stay” (d)

After 'would rather', use the bare infinitive. 'He'd rather stay at a hotel than stay with relatives.' Both verbs after 'would rather ... than ...' take the bare infinitive form.

## 12. “rather than” (c)

In the structure 'prefer + to-infinitive + rather than + bare infinitive', use 'rather than' before the second option. 'I prefer to read rather than watch TV.' Don't confuse this with 'prefer + -ing + to + -ing' (I prefer reading to watching TV) — these are two different structures.

## 13. “prefers” (a)

Use 'prefers + -ing + to + -ing' for general preferences. 'She prefers living in the countryside to living in the city.' Only 'prefers' works with the '-ing + to + -ing' pattern. 'Would rather' needs a bare infinitive, and 'had better' is for advice.

## 14. “to have” (d)

After 'would prefer', use the to-infinitive. 'Would you prefer to have coffee or tea?' is a polite way to offer a choice. 'Have' (bare infinitive) would be used with 'would rather': 'Would you rather have coffee or tea?'

## 15. “go” (b)

The negative of 'would rather' is 'would rather not + bare infinitive'. 'I'd rather not go out' — simply add 'not' after 'rather', followed by the bare infinitive. No 'to' is needed.

## 16. “snowboarding” (c)

Use 'prefer + -ing + to + -ing' to compare two activities. 'They prefer snowboarding to skiing.' When using 'to' as a comparison word between two activities, both sides should be in the -ing form.

## 17. “to go” (a)

After 'would prefer', use the to-infinitive. 'We'd prefer to go somewhere quiet' is correct. Remember: 'would prefer to do' vs 'would rather do' — the 'to' makes the difference.

## 18. “prefers” (b)

Use 'prefers + -ing + to + -ing' for comparing two activities. 'He prefers playing chess to playing cards.' Only 'prefers' fits the '-ing + to + -ing' structure. 'Would rather' requires a bare infinitive, 'had better' is for advice, and 'would prefer to' needs a to-infinitive (not -ing).

## 19. “do” (c)

After 'would rather', use the bare infinitive. 'I'd rather do the washing up now than leave it.' Both verbs in the 'would rather ... than ...' comparison take the bare infinitive.

## 20. “to travel” (d)

In the structure 'prefer + to-infinitive + rather than + bare infinitive', use the to-infinitive after 'prefer'. 'She prefers to travel by train rather than drive.' This is different from 'She prefers travelling to driving' (both -ing with 'to').