A Prefer to do and prefer doing

You can use '**prefer to** (do)' or '**prefer -ing**' to say what you prefer in general:
- ○ I don't like cities. I **prefer to live** in the country. *or* I **prefer living** in the country.

Study the differences in structure after **prefer**. We say:

	I prefer	something	to something else.
	I prefer	**doing** something	**to doing** something else.
but	I prefer	**to do** something	**rather than** (**do**) something else.

- ○ I **prefer** this coat to the coat you were wearing yesterday.
- ○ I **prefer driving to travelling** by train.
- *but* ○ I **prefer to drive rather than travel** by train.
- ○ Sarah **prefers to live** in the country **rather than** (**live**) in a city.

B Would prefer (I'd prefer ...)

We use **would prefer** to say what somebody wants in a specific situation (not in general):
- ○ '**Would** you **prefer** tea or coffee?' 'Coffee, please.'

We say 'would prefer **to do** something' (*not usually* would prefer doing):
- ○ 'Shall we go by train?' 'I**'d prefer to drive**.' (*not* I'd prefer driving)
- ○ I**'d prefer to stay** at home tonight **rather than go** to the cinema.

C Would rather (I'd rather ...)

Would rather (do) = **would prefer** (to do). We use **would rather** + *infinitive* (without **to**).
Compare:
- ○ 'Shall we go by train?' { 'I'd **prefer to drive**.'
- 'I'd **rather drive**.' (*not* to drive)
- ○ '**Would** you **rather have** tea or coffee?' 'Coffee, please.'

The negative is 'I**'d rather not** (do something)':
- ○ I'm tired. I**'d rather not go** out this evening, if you don't mind.
- ○ 'Do you want to go out this evening?' 'I**'d rather not**.'

We say '**would rather do** something **than do** something else':
- ○ I**'d rather stay** at home tonight **than go** to the cinema.

D I'd rather somebody did something

We say '**I'd rather** you **did** something' (*not* I'd rather you do). For example:
- ○ 'Who's going to drive, you or me?' 'I**'d rather** you **drove**.' (= I would prefer this)
- ○ 'Jack says he'll repair your bike tomorrow, OK?' 'I**'d rather** he **did** it today.'
- ○ Are you going to tell Anna what happened, or **would** you **rather** I **told** her?

In this structure we use the *past* (**drove, did** etc.), but the meaning is present *not* past.
Compare:
- ○ I'd rather **make** dinner now.
- I'd rather **you made** dinner now. (*not* I'd rather you make)

I'd rather you **didn't** (do something) = I'd prefer you not to do it:
- ○ I**'d rather you didn't tell** anyone what I said.
- ○ 'Are you going to tell Anna what happened?' 'No. I**'d rather** she **didn't** know.'
- ○ 'Shall I tell Anna what happened?' 'I**'d rather you didn't**.'

Would prefer ➜ Unit 58B   Prefer (one thing) to (another) ➜ Unit 136D