

Click to prove
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Talking about likes and dislikes is a popular conversation activity to do in class, and English language learners can use a variety of verbs such as like, dislike, love, hate, enjoy, etc. But when it comes to describing what they like better out of two or more options, learners should know how to use prefer and rather correctly. Read on for some teaching tips on these two commoners. Prefer Prefer is a verb that means "to like better." Note the use of to and/or some of the following patterns. Form: Wh- word + prefer Examples: Which one do you prefer? What does he prefer to do tonight? Where would you prefer to go this weekend? Form: prefer + gerund/infinite Examples: They prefer eating out to cooking at home. Do you prefer playing or watching sports? Because I'm a bit shy, I prefer to listen during meetings. Form: prefer + noun Examples: I prefer the red dress. She prefers apples to oranges. Prefer also has a noun form, preference. Form: preference Examples: Do you have a preference? She made her preference clear. Rather Rather is an adverb that has several uses, but it is commonly used to express a preference. Note that it is usually preceded by the modal would and followed by a verb. The use of and/or is also common in some patterns with rather. Form: Wh- word + would + rather + verb Examples: Which would you rather wear, the black shirt or the white one? What would they rather discuss? When would she rather meet? Form: would + rather + verb Examples: She would rather stay home than go out. I'd rather call you tomorrow. Would you rather read a book or watch TV? Other Options Some other ways to express preferences in English include the verb like/better or more. Negative preferences can be expressed with like/less/dissimilar. She likes the color blue better than green. He likes playing the guitar more than studying. I like Chinese food less than Japanese food. They dislike cold weather more than rain. Practice in the following lessons, your students can see prefer and rather in context and practice the different sentence patterns. Would you like to go to a restaurant for dinner tonight? No, I think I'd rather eat at home / I'd prefer to eat at home. I'd rather listen to music than watch TV. I prefer listening to music to watching TV. Rather than pay/paying the taxi fare, he walked to work. I'd prefer to stay home rather than go out. I'd rather we stayed home tonight. I'd rather you didn't smoke in the bedroom. Prefer and rather are both used to express a preference for one thing over another, but they are used in slightly different contexts and have different connotations. Prefer is used when stating a general preference for something, while rather is used when expressing a preference for one thing in a specific situation. For example, "I prefer chocolate ice cream" is a general statement of preference, while "I would rather have chocolate ice cream than vanilla right now" is a specific preference in a particular moment. Both words convey a sense of choice and personal preference, but rather adds a nuance of immediacy or specific circumstances. Prefer and rather are both words that express a preference for one thing over another. However, they are used in slightly different contexts and have different connotations. Prefer is often used when expressing a strong liking for something, while rather is used to indicate a preference that is more moderate or conditional. Usage Prefer is typically followed by a verb in the infinitive form, while rather is followed by a verb in the base form. For example, "I prefer to eat pizza" versus "I would rather eat pizza." Prefer is also used to indicate a first choice or a stronger preference, while rather is used to indicate a secondary choice or a preference that is not as strong. Intensity One key difference between prefer and rather is the level of intensity they convey. Prefer is often used to express a strong preference or liking for something, while rather is used to express a more moderate or conditional preference. For example, "I prefer chocolate ice cream" indicates a strong liking for chocolate ice cream, while "I would rather have chocolate ice cream" indicates a preference that is not as strong. Formality Prefer is generally considered more formal than rather. While both words can be used in both formal and informal contexts, prefer is often used in more formal writing and speech. Rather, on the other hand, is often used in more casual or conversational settings. For example, "I prefer chocolate ice cream" is a statement in a formal business email, you might say "I prefer to schedule the meeting for next week," while in a casual conversation with a friend, you might say "I'd rather meet up for coffee." Subjectivity Prefer is often used to express a subjective preference based on personal taste or opinion. For example, "I prefer action movies to romantic comedies" is a statement of personal preference. Rather, on the other hand, can be used to express a preference that is more objective or based on external factors. For example, "I would rather take the train than drive in traffic" is a statement based on practicality rather than personal taste. Flexibility Prefer is often used to express a fixed or unchanging preference. For example, "I prefer tea to coffee" indicates a consistent preference for tea over coffee. Rather, on the other hand, can be used to express a more flexible or conditional preference. For example, "I would rather go to the beach, but if it's raining, I'll stay home" indicates a preference that is subject to change based on circumstances. Conclusion In conclusion, prefer and rather are both words that express a preference for one thing over another, but they are used in slightly different contexts and convey different levels of intensity, formality, subjectivity, and flexibility. Understanding the nuances of these two words can help you communicate your preferences more effectively and accurately in both written and spoken language. Comparisons may contain inaccurate information about people, places, or facts. Please report any issues. April L., asked 01/29/13 I don't know when to use "rather" or "prefer", can someone explain the difference? 7 Answers By Expert Tutors Lori W. answered 01/29/13 Math and English Tutor. Dare to Discover, Dare to Soar Rather is used when talking about an action. Example: I would rather... [insert verb].... than.... [insert verb].... Prefer is used when stating a person's preference of a person place or thing. Example: I prefer.... [insert noun] Note: I prefer blue to green, vs I would rather blue to green. This "rather" sentence is incorrect, although someone might infer that you must mean "rather GO swimming than HOG swimming. The word "rather" is often used when you are comparing two ideas and favor one of them over the other one. For example: "I would rather swim than go shopping in the mall today." (You are preferring swimming over shopping.) "Rather" is usually used in a "would rather" and "than" comparison sentence. However, if I say, "I prefer chocolate ice cream." - I am stating what I like and I am implying that I like chocolate over the other flavors. However, with the verb "prefer", I do not need to explain the entire comparison or the two ideas being compared. Beverly M. answered 01/30/13 Certified WyzAnt Tutor - Many Subjects including ASL Interpreting When we talk about general preferences we can use prefer or would rather. The meaning is the same, for example: I prefer walking to cycling. I'd rather walk than cycle. After prefer we use the verb in the -ing form. After would rather we use than, for example: I prefer using a keyboard to writing with a pen. I'd rather use a keyboard than write with a pen. We use a past tense after would rather when we speak about the actions of other people, even though that action may be in the present or future, for example: I'd rather you took a taxi than walk - it's not safe on the street at night. "The film is quite violent. I'd rather our children didn't watch it." The meaning of "would rather" (keep the two together) is the same as "would prefer". The way you use them is different. I'd rather stay, but I'd prefer. I'd = 1 would. However, if "would rather" is contrasted with "prefer" (alone, or with no "would" preceding it), the meaning is shifted. The former (would rather) will be used in the moment, while the latter (prefer) will refer to a more "constant" preference. I'd rather have fish. (Used to express a "constant", or general, preference) Notice the form of the verb used. After "would rather" you will use a base form, for example "have". After "prefer" you will use "eating", to stick to the example given above, (or "to eat" if you prefer). - Dorota G. less than a minute ago James M. answered 03/22/13 Tutor English, French, German, American Sign Language "When used without a comparison, as above, one may glean an inference that the other option is implausible. When used with a comparison, the form is (would rather verb1 THAN verb2 OR verb3...) Prefer may be followed by an infinitive in a subjunctive construction, a gerund or a noun, (would prefer to verb) (prefer verb-ing) (prefer buttons) "Prefer" can never be mistaken to mean that other options are implausible, but leaves them as possible alternatives. When used with a comparison, the forms utilize the prepositions over or to: (would prefer to verb1 OVER verb2-ing OR verb3-ing...) "note the use of parallel structure and use of or," this is fine and avoids ambiguity and redundancy. (prefer verb-ing TO verb2-ing AND verb3-ing...) (prefer noun1 TO noun2 AND noun3...) "all nouns and verbs have the option of being modified in any of these constructions. Much of this is based on common, everyday usage or general expressions. I prefer is not used very often because we tend to say "I like" instead. They have very similar meanings and but we find other ways of saying how we feel which are more simple and direct. We use "rather" usually when referring to things we want to do. Today we say "I'd rather go to the mall" but today we say "I want to go to the mall" or "Let's go to the mall" or "I like the mall better." When we use "prefer" we are usually expressing preference when deciding or comparing (without using these nouns). But we use "prefer" say "I like/love a better than chocolate" or "I prefer tea to coffee". I'd rather go to the mall. Prefer is followed by an infinitive - Example - I prefer to go to the mall. I hope this is what you want to do. You can read a few more examples to learningenglishbytutu. Introduction Maria has sent us a question by email. She wants to know what the difference is between "I prefer" and "I would rather". Stan says... Use prefer...to say you like one thing more than another when talking about general preference e.g. I prefer coffee to tea with the preposition 'to'with nouns e.g. I prefer coffee to tea with verbs in the -ing form e.g. I prefer staying in to going out. Use would rather...to say you like one thing more than another when talking about general preference e.g. Tonight, I'd rather stay in than go out. I'm tired with the preposition 'than'with verbs in the infinitive (without 'to')e.g. Nowdays, I'd rather stay in than go out to talk about general preference e.g. Nowadays, I'd rather stay in than go out to talk about a specific preference e.g. Tonight, I'd rather stay in than go out, the verb in the 'to' plus infinitive form e.g. I'd prefer to go out rather than stay in tonight. In spoken English, it's common to contract 'I would' to 'I'd' and it's common to drop the 'rather' e.g. I'd prefer to go out than stay in tonight. Do this next Home > Resources (Grammar & vocabulary) > Grammar rules A2 > Here are the rules for using would rather, would prefer and prefer correctly. The first table looks at how we can express specific preference: the second table shows us how to express general preference. When we speak about a specific preference, would rather and would prefer have the same meaning and are interchangeable. We went to the theatre yesterday. Today I'd rather go to the cinema. Would rather can be abbreviated to 'd rather. Would prefer can be abbreviated to 'd prefer. I'd rather go to the cinema. Would rather is followed by the infinitive without to. Would prefer is followed by to + infinitive or a noun. I'd rather have fruit juice. I'd prefer to have fruit juice. We use a past tense after would rather when we speak about the actions of other people, even though that action may be in the present or future. I'd rather you took a taxi (instead of walking) it's not safe on the streets at night. The film is quite violent. I'd rather our children didn't watch it. We say:would rather... than... than it's such nice weather I'd rather sit in the garden than watch TV. When we talk about general preferences, we can use prefer or would rather. The meaning is the same. I prefer walking to cycling. I'd rather walk than cycle. After prefer we use the infinitive without to. I prefer using a keyboard to writing with a pen. I'd rather use a keyboard than write with a pen. (Id = I would) We say: prefer ... to ... We say: would rather ... than ... I prefer walking to driving. Id rather walk than drive. Preferences are one of the most basic conversational demands when given a choice between two items, Which one to select. There are indeed different ways in English we can ask about preferences. To ask about peoples general tastes or preferences, we can use one of the following. Which do you prefer juice or water? I prefer water to juice. Which do you prefer drinking juice or water? I prefer drinking water to juice. Which do you like better water or juice? I like water better than juice. Do you prefer water or juice? I prefer water to juice. Would you prefer to see a movie or go to a club? I would prefer to see a movie. 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