



Either and Neither

We've already learnt the basic definitions on either and neither, let's recap them before expanding on this further.

Either

Either is used to express 1 of 2 and is used with singular nouns.

Either doctor is available - you can choose.

When we use either with a negative verb it has the same meaning as neither.

I don't like either doctor.

In this case, we can also eliminate the noun altogether when in context.

I don't like either.

Either

Remember we can insert “of” to these sentences too, but it must be followed by a demonstrative adjective, possessive adjective, object pronoun or article. In this case, it will be followed by a plural noun instead.

I don't like either of the houses.

I don't like either of these houses.

I don't like either of your houses.

I don't like either of them.

Neither

Neither is used to express 0 of 2 and is used with singular nouns.

Neither doctor is available - they are both busy.

Neither

Remember we can insert “of” to these sentences too, but it must be followed by a demonstrative adjective, possessive adjective, object pronoun or article. In this case, it will be followed by a plural noun instead.

Neither of the houses are nice.

Neither of these houses are nice.

Neither of your houses are nice.

Neither of them are nice.

We also have two part phrases that can be used with either and neither.

Either

Either can be used with OR to offer two options. Your listener would be expected to answer with one of the two presented options.

Shall we have either Chinese or Italian food tonight?

We can watch either a romcom or a horror film.

Neither

Neither can be used with NOR to express the same opinion about two things.

Neither Kelly nor Jane attended class today.

I like neither strawberries nor bananas.

“Neither” and “nor” are negative words in English, which means they must be used with affirmative verbs and phrases to avoid a double negative. If there is a negative verb, we must use “either” and “or” instead.

I don't like either strawberries or bananas.

And a final note on neither ...

Neither

In informal spoken English, we can also use neither to mean “also not”. Typically, this would be followed by the auxiliary verb or main verb and then the subject.

I don't like strawberries.

Neither do I!