

Both / both of      neither / neither of  
either / either of

A

We use **both/neither/either** for *two* things. You can use these words with a *noun* (**both books, neither book** etc.).

For example, you are going out to eat. There are two possible restaurants. You say:

- ☐ **Both restaurants** are very good. (*not* The both restaurants)
- ☐ **Neither restaurant** is expensive.
- ☐ We can go to **either restaurant**. I don't mind.  
(**either** = one or the other, it doesn't matter which one)

You can also use **both/neither/either** alone, *without* a noun:

- ☐ I couldn't decide which of the two shirts to buy. I liked **both**. (*or* I liked **both** of them.)
- ☐ 'Is your friend British or American?' '**Neither**. She's Australian.'
- ☐ 'Do you want tea or coffee?' '**Either**. I don't mind.'

B

**Both of ... / neither of ... / either of ...**

We use **both of / neither of / either of + the/these/my/Tom's ...** etc. So we say 'both of **the** restaurants', 'both of **those** restaurants' etc. (*but not* both of restaurants):

- ☐ **Both of these** restaurants are very good.
- ☐ **Neither of the** restaurants we went to was (*or were*) expensive.
- ☐ I haven't been to **either of those** restaurants. (= I haven't been to one or the other)

You don't need **of** after **both**. So you can say:

- ☐ **Both my parents** are from Egypt. *or* Both **of** my parents ...

You can use **both of / neither of / either of + us/you/them**:

- ☐ (*talking to two people*) Can **either of you** speak Russian?
- ☐ I asked two people the way to the station, but **neither of them** could help me.

You must say 'both **of**' before **us/you/them**:

- ☐ **Both of us** were very tired. (*not* Both us were ...)

After **neither of ...** a *singular* or a *plural* verb is possible:

- ☐ Neither of the children **wants** (*or want*) to go to bed.

C

You can say:

**both ... and ...**

- ☐ **Both Chris and** Paul were late.
- ☐ I was **both tired and** hungry when I arrived home.

**neither ... nor ...**

- ☐ **Neither Chris nor** Paul came to the party.
- ☐ There was an accident in the street where we live, but we **neither** saw **nor** heard anything.

**either ... or ...**

- ☐ I'm not sure where Maria's from. She's **either** Spanish **or** Italian.
- ☐ **Either** you apologise, **or** I'll never speak to you again.

D

Compare **either/neither/both** (two things) and **any/none/all** (more than two):

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> There are <b>two</b> good hotels here.<br/>You could stay at <b>either</b> of them.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> We tried <b>two</b> hotels.<br/>    { <b>Neither</b> of them had any rooms.<br/>    { <b>Both</b> of them were full.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> There are <b>many</b> good hotels here.<br/>You could stay at <b>any</b> of them.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> We tried <b>a lot of</b> hotels.<br/>    { <b>None</b> of them had any rooms.<br/>    { <b>All</b> of them were full.</li> </ul> |
|---|--|



## Exercises

**89.1** Complete the sentences with **both/neither/either**.

- 1 'Do you want tea or coffee?' ' Either . I really don't mind.'
- 2 'What day is it today – the 18th or the 19th?' ' ..... It's the 20th.'
- 3 A: Where did you go on your trip – Korea or Japan?  
B: We went to ..... A week in Korea and a week in Japan.
- 4 'Shall we sit in the corner or by the window?' ' ..... I don't mind.'
- 5 'Where's Lisa? Is she at work or at home?' ' ..... She's away on holiday.'

**89.2** Complete the sentences with **both/neither/either**. Use **of** where necessary.

- 1 Both my parents are from London.
- 2 To get to the town centre, you can go along the footpath by the river or you can go along the road. You can go ..... way.
- 3 I tried twice to phone Carl, but ..... times he was out.
- 4 ..... Tom's parents is English. His father is Polish and his mother is Italian.
- 5 I saw an accident this morning. One car drove into the back of another. Fortunately ..... driver was injured, but ..... cars were badly damaged.
- 6 I've got two sisters and a brother. My brother is working, but ..... my sisters are still at school.

**89.3** Complete the sentences with **both/neither/either + of us / of them**.

- 1 I asked two people the way to the station, but neither of them could help me.
- 2 I was invited to two parties last week, but I couldn't go to .....
- 3 There were two windows in the room. It was very warm, so I opened .....
- 4 Sarah and I play tennis together regularly, but we're not very good. .... can play very well.
- 5 I tried two bookshops for the book I wanted, but ..... had it.

**89.4** Write sentences with **both ... and ... / neither ... nor ... / either ... or ...**.

- 1 Chris was late. So was Pat. Both Chris and Pat were late.
- 2 He didn't say hello, and he didn't smile. He neither said hello nor smiled.
- 3 Joe is on holiday and so is Sam.  
.....
- 4 Joe doesn't have a car. Sam doesn't have one either.  
.....
- 5 Brian doesn't watch TV and he doesn't read newspapers.  
.....
- 6 It was a boring movie. It was long too.  
The movie .....
- 7 Is that man's name Richard? Or is it Robert? It's one of the two.  
That man's name .....
- 8 I haven't got time to go on holiday. And I don't have the money.  
I have .....
- 9 We can leave today or we can leave tomorrow – whichever you prefer.  
We .....

**89.5** Complete the sentences with **neither/either/none/any**.

- 1 We tried a lot of hotels, but none of them had any rooms.
- 2 I took two books with me on holiday, but I didn't read ..... of them.
- 3 I took five books with me on holiday, but I didn't read ..... of them.
- 4 There are a few shops at the end of the street, but ..... of them sells newspapers.
- 5 You can phone me at ..... time during the evening. I'm always at home.
- 6 I can meet you next Monday or Friday. Would ..... of those days suit you?
- 7 John and I couldn't get into the house because ..... of us had a key.