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How do I choose between *and*, *but* and *or*?

1 Tick the correct sentence in each pair.

- 1 a To really help the environment, we need to change the way we think or behave.
b To really help the environment, we need to change the way we think and behave.
- 2 a Vegetarians don't eat meat and they get their protein from other foods.
b Vegetarians don't eat meat but they get their protein from other foods.

We use *and* to join two similar ideas:

Would you like some tea and biscuits? (= you can have both of them)

We use *but* to show contrast between two different ideas:

I have tea but I don't have any coffee, I'm afraid. (I have tea = positive, I don't have any coffee = negative)

We use *or* to give an alternative:

Would you like some tea or coffee? (= you will choose only one of them)

★ Note: to join two negative ideas, we use *or* if the subject and the verb are the same:
I don't have tea or coffee. (not: *I don't have tea and coffee.*)

After *if* / *whether*, we can use *or not* to suggest the alternative idea:

We decided to go whether it was raining or not. (= whether it rained or whether it didn't rain)

2 Correct the mistake below.



Jenny loves the snow

Jenny loves the snow
and James hates it.

3 Fill in the blanks with *and* / *but* / *or* / *or not*.

- 1 The town was quite small; it had no university college.
- 2 What shall we do tomorrow? We could go to the beach after that we could see a movie.
- 3 The number of people reaching the age of 100 more is increasing.
- 4 He had a computer, without a phone connection he couldn't access the internet.
- 5 It had black blue stripes on it – I can't remember which.
- 6 Do you know if our team won ?
- 7 I enjoy playing football I don't really like watching it.
- 8 If you study in a country such as Australia, England America, your English will improve dramatically.