

Distributives – both – neither – either

Introduction

1) Distributive determiners or simply distributives refer to a group of people or things, and to individual members of the group. They show different ways of looking at the individuals within a group, and they express how something is distributed, shared, or divided.

Both of us like Mexican food.

2) *Both* refers to the whole pair and is equivalent to 'one and the other'. *Both* can be used with plural nouns on its own, or it can be followed by *of*, with or without an article. When followed by a plural pronoun, *both* must be separated from the pronoun by *of*.

Both (of) my parents approve of me going to college.

I told ***both of them*** to give me a call.

Both cannot be used with singular nouns, because it refers to two things.

~~*Both my sister likes travelling.*~~ ***Both my sisters*** like travelling.

Either is positive and when used alone refers to one of the two members of the pair. It is equivalent to 'one or the other'. Because it refers to just one member of a pair, *either* must be used before a singular noun. It can also be used with a plural noun or pronoun if followed by *of*.

Either day is fine.

We could stay at ***either of the hotels***.

Either can also be used with *or* in a construction that talks about each member of the pair in turn. The meaning remains the same, but in this case *either* is not functioning as a distributive. It is functioning as a conjunction.

You can have ***either ice cream or cake***.

Neither is negative and when used alone refers to the whole pair. It is equivalent to 'not one or the other'. Because it refers to just one member of a pair, *neither* must be used before a singular noun. It can also be used with a plural noun or pronoun if followed by *of*.

Neither date is convenient for me.

Neither of these dresses suits her.

Neither can also be used with *nor* in a construction that talks about each member of the pair in turn. The meaning remains the same, but in this case *neither* is not functioning as a distributive. It is functioning as a conjunction.

*It is **neither** snowing **nor** raining.*

Short Story Dialogue

- *Do you want ice cream or cake?*
- *I want **neither** this **nor** that.*
- *OK. Do you want tea or coffee?*
- *I'll have **either** juice **or** milk.*
- ***Neither thing** is good for you. **Either** stop being picky **or** I'll stop treating you.*

Independent Practice - Distributives – both – neither – either

1) Complete the sentences with *both, either, neither*.

- a. Where is Kim? Is she at work or at home? – She's on vacation in Peru.
- b. Do you want tea or coffee? – I'll have what you want.
- c. this dress or that green one. We can't afford of them.
- d. We are huge fans of their music. of us want to go to their concert!
- e. Is it the 13th or the 14th today? – It's the 16th!

2) Write sentences with *both ... and ..., either ... or ... , neither ... nor ...* .

a. I don't have time and desire to go to the party.
b. Adam was late. And Kate was late too.
c. Is he James or John? I don't remember his name but it's one of the two.
d. She didn't smile, she didn't cry.
e. We can stay for a little longer or leave right now. It's up to you.

Independent Practice: Answers - Distributives – both – neither – either

1) Complete the sentences with *both, either, neither*.

- a. Where is Kim? Is she at work or at home? – **Neither**. She's on vacation in Peru.
- b. Do you want tea or coffee? – **Either**. I'll have what you want.
- c. **Either** this dress or that green one. We can't afford **both** of them.
- d. We are huge fans of their music. **Both** of us want to go to their concert!
- e. Is it the 13th or the 14th today? – **Neither**. It's the 16th!

2) Write sentences with *both ... and ..., either ... or ... , neither ... nor ...* .

- a. I have neither time nor desire to go to the party.
- b. Both Adam and Kate were late.
- c. His name is either James or John.
- d. She neither smiled nor cried.
- e. We can either stay for a little longer or leave right now.