

# 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 talking about two restaurants:

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

**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 Michigan. *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 Spanish?
- I asked two people the way to the station, but **neither of them** knew.

You must say "both of" before **us/you/them** (of is necessary):

- **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 also use **both/neither/either** alone:

- 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 care."

**D**

You can say:

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <b>both . . . and . . . :</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Both Ann and Tom were late.</li> <li>■ I was both tired and hungry when I got home.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>neither . . . nor . . . :</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Neither Liz nor Robin came to the party.</li> <li>■ She said she would contact me, but she neither wrote nor called.</li> </ul>             |
| <b>either . . . or . . . :</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ I'm not sure where he's from. He's either Spanish or Italian.</li> <li>■ Either you apologize, or I'll never speak to you again.</li> </ul> |

**E**

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

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ There are two good hotels in the town. You can stay at <b>either</b> of them.</li> <li>■ We tried two hotels. <b>Neither</b> of them had any rooms. / <b>Both</b> of them were full.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ There are many good hotels in the town. You can stay at <b>any</b> of them.</li> <li>■ We tried a lot of hotels. <b>None</b> of them had any rooms. / <b>All</b> of them were full.</li> </ul> |
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# Exercises

## 86.1 Complete the sentences with *both/neither/either*.

1. "Do you want tea or coffee?" "*Either* . It really doesn't matter."
2. "What's today's date – the 18th or the 19th?" " . It's the 20th."
3. A: Where did you go for your vacation – Florida or Puerto Rico?  
B: We went to . A week in Florida and a week in Puerto Rico.
4. "When should I call you, morning or afternoon?" " . I'll be home all day."
5. "Where's Kate? Is she at work or at home?" " . She's out of town."

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

1. *Both* my parents are from Michigan.
2. To get downtown, you can take the city streets or you can take the freeway. You can go \_\_\_\_\_ way.
3. I tried to call George twice, but \_\_\_\_\_ times he was out.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Tom's parents is American. 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 have two sisters and a brother. My brother is working, but \_\_\_\_\_ my sisters are still in school.

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

1. I asked two people the way to the airport, but *neither of them* could help me.
2. I was invited to two parties last week, but I didn'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 \_\_\_\_\_ can play very well.
5. I tried two bookstores for the book I wanted, but \_\_\_\_\_ had it.

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

1. She didn't write, and she didn't call. *She neither wrote nor called.* \_\_\_\_\_
2. Jim is on vacation, and so is Carol. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Brian doesn't smoke, and he doesn't drink. \_\_\_\_\_
4. It was a very boring movie. It was very long, too.  
The movie \_\_\_\_\_ .
5. Is that man's name Richard? Or is it Robert? It's one of the two.  
That man's name \_\_\_\_\_ .
6. I don't have the time to go on vacation. And I don't have the money.  
I have \_\_\_\_\_ .
7. We can leave today, or we can leave tomorrow – whichever you prefer.  
We \_\_\_\_\_ .

## 86.5 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 vacation, but I didn't read \_\_\_\_\_ of them.
3. I took five books with me on vacation, but I didn't read \_\_\_\_\_ of them.
4. There are a few stores in the next block, but \_\_\_\_\_ of them sell newspapers.
5. You can call me at \_\_\_\_\_ time during the evening. I'm always at home.
6. I can meet you on the 6th or the 7th. Would \_\_\_\_\_ of those days be convenient for you?
7. John and I couldn't get into the house because \_\_\_\_\_ of us had a key.
8. A few letters came this morning, but \_\_\_\_\_ of them were for me.