



Uses

We can use **either** in front of a noun. In this case either means one or the other of two.

Have either scarf. I don't mind one which you take.

Jane can write neatly with either hand. She is ambidextrous.

When we use **either** on its own, we are talking about a choice between one of two things or possibilities.

Could I use the blue pen or the black one - either will do.

Sorry, which one did you say wanted? Either is fine. (In the example above, either takes a singular verb.)

We can use **either** with **of** + a group of two.

Who should play the part of Cinderella?

Either of the girls will be good for the part.

Either of them will be suitable.



We use **either...or** together.

We use this to show a choice between alternatives.

I'd like either a flat white or a cappuccino, thanks.

When we use **either...or** in a negative statement,

we say that the things are not possible.

These dresses are completely wrong for Cinderella. I don't like either this one or that one.

I don't want either tea or coffee, thanks. I'd just like a glass of water.

We can use **not...either** after a negative statement to show that the feeling is similar to the one mentioned.

I don't like her voice. I don't like it either. (This means I also don't like her voice.)

Lauren isn't going to audition and Jane isn't either. (or Lauren isn't going to and Jane isn't going to either.)

Either...or can also be used to link two equal ideas or alternatives.

Either ask him out or forget about him. But please stop talking about him!

You should either phone her and apologize or go and see her. Don't just send her a text.

Agreement

Either is often followed by a plural verb after **of**, often in speaking. In a formal situation, however, we might use a singular verb.

Have either of the girls had any previous acting experience?

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Either of the girls **is** suitable. Which one do you want to hear again?

When **either** is followed by **or**, the verb will agree with the noun or pronoun **following or**.

*Either Jodie or Sue **is** going to be the narrator.*

(Here because the noun (Sue) is singular, the verb is singular.)

(You will quite often hear: *Either Jodie or Sue are going to be the narrator.* This is becoming more common in informal language.)

Either the sopranos or the tenors are going to organize it. (The noun (tenors) is plural so the verb is plural.)

In a sentence with a plural subject and a singular subject joined by **either/or**, make the plural subject the second subject.

I'd like either Sophie or the Kaley twins to help me with this.



Position

When we use **either...or** try to place them directly in front of the things they refer to.

Could I have either a coffee or a tea, please. (This is better than: Could I either have a coffee or a tea, please.)

Either send her flowers or go and apologize. Just do something!



Exercise 1:

Read through this letter. Underline **either** and **either/or**. How are they being used?

Hi Em!

Chris sent me a text telling me about the part. Face it, girl! This part is made for you! So listen up, your big sister is going to tell you something really important!! Either get the part or come straight home now. Yup, that's what I'm saying. Either pull yourself together and win that part or slink home right now with your tail between your legs!

Yeah, yeah, I know you're going to say it's too hard and you either won't get the part or you'll be the understudy.

But you're not a coward and you're not a wimp, either.

Remember when you were the lead in the kindergarten play? What was the part? It was either Cinderella or Sleeping Beauty (I can't remember. It was too long ago.)

Remember when either Mom or Dad would ask you to help out in the store, but you were too busy being Juliet in your bedroom? You have always wanted to act! So start acting! So, wear something nice for the audition. Either your black top and new belt or your pink top will make you stand out.

Get your hair cut and remember to smile. And nails. Wear a dramatic polish. Use either red or black.

OK. That's enough from me. Break a leg, sis.

Your loving sister,

Jodie



Exercise 2:

Complete these sentences with your own ideas and **either/or**.

1. Could I please have... _____ (You continue the sentence.)
2. I don't want... _____
3. Either the girls or the boys will... _____
4. Either bring your... _____
5. You should either... _____
6. You can have either... _____