

*QualityTime-ESL” presents...*



## QT-ESL Podcast No. 60

### Either/Or vs. Neither/Nor (2)

Hi! I'm Marianne Raynaud, and I'm here to help you improve your level of spoken English. If you find this episode too difficult, please try some of our earlier ones that may be better suited to your level. In a previous episode we trained expressing alternatives with *either/or* for a positive idea and *neither/nor* for a negative idea. We used these expressions only after the verb, i.e. together with the direct object. Now we will use *either/or* and *neither/nor* with the subject, which will in some cases take a singular verb and in other cases a plural verb.

*The rule is simple. When the subject has two elements joined by “either... or” or “neither... nor”, the verb agrees with the element which is closest to the verb, in other words the second or the last one in a series. In our first exercise, I will ask a question with two different possibilities both in the singular joined by “or”, and you will use the expression “either / or” and a singular verb in your answer. Listen to the examples. I will stress the verb.*

*I ask: Is Greek or Latin recommended for English literature students?*

*You say: Either Greek or Latin is recommended for English literature students.*

*I ask: Does her son or her daughter call her often?*

*You say: Either her son or her daughter calls her often.*

*I ask: Is tennis or football a popular sport?*

*You say: Either tennis or football is a popular sport.*

*Now you go on in the same way. Be sure to speak before I give the answer.*

Is Greek or Latin recommended for English literature students?

Either Greek or Latin is recommended for English literature students.

Does her son or her daughter call her often?

Either her son or her daughter calls her often.

Is tennis or football a popular sport in this country?

Either tennis or football is a popular sport in this country.

Is meat or fish part of a healthy diet?

Either meat or fish is part of a healthy diet.

*In the previous exercise both nouns making up the subject and joined by “or” were in the singular. Thus, the verb was obviously in the singular. In the next exercise the subject has two plural nouns so the verb is naturally in the plural. Listen to the examples.*

*I ask: Are phones or computers allowed in this class?*

*You say: Either phones or computers are allowed in this class.*

*I ask: Are boys or girls admitted to this school?*

*You say: Either boys or girls are admitted to this school.*



QT-ESL Podcast No. 60 Either/Or vs. Neither/Nor Part 2 (Cont.)

*Now you go on in the same way. Be sure to speak before I give the answer.*

Are phones or computers allowed in this class?	Either fruits or vegetables are part of a healthy diet.
Are phones or computers allowed in this class.	Are tennis champions or football stars idolized in this country?
Are boys or girls admitted to this school?	Either tennis champions or football stars are idolized in this country.
Are boys or girls admitted to this school.	
Are fruits or vegetables part of a healthy diet?	

*Now onto a more difficult exercise. The subject is made up of two elements, one in the singular and the other in the plural. The verb will agree with the element that is closest. For example: "Meat or vegetables are part of a healthy diet." Here the verb agrees with "vegetables", which is in the plural. But if we inverse the order, putting the singular noun closest to the verb, we should say: "Vegetables or meat is part of a healthy diet". This may seem strange in the beginning, and all native speakers do not respect this rule. But it is the grammatically correct form. Let's do an exercise inverting the subjects. Listen to the examples.*

*I say: What is part of a healthy diet? Vegetables or meat?*

*You say: Vegetables or meat is part of a healthy diet.*

*I say: What is part of a healthy diet? Meat or vegetables?*

*You say: Meat or vegetables are part of a healthy diet.*

*Now you give the answers using the grammatically correct form. Emphasize the verb as I did.*

What is part of a healthy diet? Vegetables or meat?	Who knows the answer? Tom or the Browns?
Vegetables or meat <u>is</u> part of a healthy diet.	Tom or the Browns <u>know</u> the answer.
What is part of a healthy diet? Meat or vegetables?	What was served? Cakes or ice cream?
Meat or vegetables <u>are</u> part of a healthy diet.	Cakes or ice cream <u>was</u> served.
Who knows the answer? The Browns or Tom?	What was served? Ice cream or cakes?
The Browns or Tom <u>knows</u> the answer.	Ice cream or cakes <u>were</u> served.

*Finally, we will work on sentences with "neither/nor" and a singular plus a plural subject. Each time emphasize the verb, either singular or plural. Just listen and repeat.*

Neither cakes nor ice cream <u>was</u> served.	...found the origin of the fire.
Neither ice cream nor cakes were served.	Neither the policeman nor the firemen
Neither alcoholic beverages nor beer <u>was</u> offered at the party.	<u>have</u> found the origin of the fire.
Neither beer nor alcoholic beverages <u>were</u> offered at the party.	Neither the winds nor the cold <u>keeps</u> him from going on his daily hike.
Neither the firemen nor the policeman <u>has</u>	Neither the cold nor the winds <u>keep</u> him from going on his daily hike.

That's the end of this long and rather difficult episode. Visit [www.qualitytime-esl.com](http://www.qualitytime-esl.com) to download the script. For more practice with vocabulary or basic structures try our other series "Your English". Teachers interested in more effective teaching can order "QualityTime-ESL: The Digital Resource Book" either on a DVD or in a lighter downloadable version. See, I just used "either... or". Bye for now, and don't forget to keep smiling.