

English Grammar: Paired (or Correlative) Conjunctions

English sometimes uses “paired conjunctions” - these are two words or phrases which are used to create a link between similar elements. For example:

1) both ... and Used to apply the same item/action to two things:

- When I go to the USA, I intend to take **both** my cellphone **and** my laptop.
- When I go to the USA, I intend to **both** work **and** study.

2) not only ... but also Used to include two items/actions:

- When I go to the USA, I intend to take **not only** my cellphone **but also** my laptop.
- When I go to the USA, I intend to **not only** study **but also** work.

3) either ... or Used to select one of two items/actions:

- When I go to the USA, I intend to take **either** my cellphone **or** my laptop.
- When I go to the USA, I intend to **either** work **or** study.

4) neither ... nor Used to discard two items/actions:

- When I go to the USA, I intend to take **neither** my cellphone **nor** my laptop.
- When I go to the USA, I intend to **neither** work **nor** study.

5) whether ... or Used to select one of two possible options (similar to ‘if’):

- When I go to the USA, I don’t know **whether** to take my laptop **or** leave it at home.
- When I go to the USA, I don’t know **whether** to work **or** study.
- When I go to the USA, I don’t know **whether** to work **or** not.

Exercise 1. Match the phrases to make complete sentences.

1. Both Peter	but we also have enough money. (a)
2. We not only want to go to the USA	nor realistic. (b)
3. Either Jack will have to work more hours	but it’s also in your best interest. (c)
4. That story was neither true	and I are going to the party next week. (d)
5. Good students not only study hard	you are black or white. (e)
6. It’s not important whether	either his career or his hobby. (f)
7. In the end he had to choose	and my cell phone to the USA. (g)
8. It’s not only polite to listen to your parents	but also use their instincts in tests. (h)
9. I would love to take both my laptop	or we will have to hire an extra person. (i)

Exercise 2. Combine the following sentences into one using paired conjunctions. Sometimes there is more than one possibility.

Example. We could fly. We could go by train.

We could either fly or go by train.

1. She will have to study hard. She will have to concentrate during the exam.

2. Jack is ignorant. He is stupid too.

3. The journalist will not confirm the story. The journalist will not deny the story.

4. Pneumonia is a dangerous illness. Small pox is a dangerous illness.

5. My wife is pregnant, but I don't know if it's a boy. And I don't know if it's a girl.

6. It might rain tomorrow. It might snow tomorrow.

7. Swimming is good for your health. Jogging is good for your health.

8. Fred loves traveling. He wants to go around the world too.
