

Distributive pronouns

Read the following sentences.

Each of the boys got a prize.

Each of these answers is correct.

Each of these roads leads to the airport.

Each individual is different.

Neither of the keys opens the door.

Either answer is correct.

The words each, either and neither are called distributive pronouns because they refer to people or things one at a time. Because of this reason, distributive pronouns are always singular.

Notes

Each is used to refer to every one of a number of people or things taken singly. Either means one or the other of two. Neither is the opposite of either. It means 'not the one nor the other' of two.

Either and neither are only used to speak of two individuals or things.

Neither method is right.

When more than two people or things are spoken of, we use other expressions like any, none or no one.

The word each can go in different positions in a sentence.

She kissed them each on the forehead.

She kissed each of them on the forehead.

The boys were each given a present.

Each of the boys was given a present.

These pens cost 70 cents each.

Each of these pens costs 70 cents.

The words each, either and neither can also be used as adjectives. In this case, they are followed by a singular noun.

Each girl took her turn.

Neither accusation is true.

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There were roses on either side.