Verb agreement

Neither...nor and either...or

Neither the passengers nor the driver \textit{were} hurt.

Neither the passengers nor the driver \textit{was} hurt.

Explanation

In these sentences the verb agrees with the subject that follows \textit{nor}. If we change the order of the subjects in this sentence we will get: \textit{Neither the driver nor the passengers were hurt}.

The same rule applies to \textit{either...or}. For example: \textit{Either your parents or your sister is required to attend}.

\textbf{Note:} Remember that \textit{neither} or \textit{either} on its own (i.e. without \textit{nor/or}) is singular. [See rule B04]

More Examples

- Neither black pepper nor pimento \textit{has} / \textit{have} the pungency of green chili.
  (In \textit{neither... nor} constructions, the verb agrees with the last mentioned item: \textit{pimento has}.)

- Either the two beds or the wardrobe \textit{has} / \textit{have} to be left behind as the removal van is too full.
  (The verb agrees with the last mentioned item: \textit{wardrobe has}.)

- The surgeon insisted that neither he nor his nurses \textit{was} / \textit{were} responsible for the error.
  (The verb agrees with the last mentioned item: \textit{nurses were}.)
