Correlative conjunctions, also known as paired coordinators, help readers understand connections or relationships between the elements they join. Here are the four most common pairs:

- **Both . . . and**
- **Neither . . . nor**
- **either . . . or**
- **not only . . . but also**

Notice how each pair makes the following statements more emphatic by repeating words that indicate the following:

1. **more than one choice (both...and)**
   
   I’m going to visit both my mother and my therapist.

2. **limited choices or options (either...or),**
   
   Either you give me the keys or I’m walking.

3. **no choices (neither...nor),**
   
   I will be neither happy nor healthy if you don’t let me go.

4. **a contradictory or additional choice (not only...but also):**
   
   He not only works as a teacher but also performs at the theater.

Correlative conjunctions can precede nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositional phrases, infinitives, participial phrases, appositives, and almost any other grammatical structure. Just remember that the items following the paired coordinators must be **parallel**: whatever grammatically follows one coordinator must also follow the second coordinator. For example, if “both” is followed by a noun, “and” must come before a noun:

- **Noun**
- **Noun**
  
  I went to both Old Navy and Forever 21 this afternoon.

However, notice how easy it is to make a mistake with parallelism by misplacing one of the coordinators:

- **Verb**
- **Noun**
  
  I both went to Old Navy and Forever 21 this afternoon.

Since a verb follows the first coordinator, the reader expects and the logic of the sentence **demands** that a verb also follow the second:

- **Verb**
- **Verb**
  
  I both went to Old Navy and shopped at Forever 21.

Remember that whatever follows paired coordinators in the same sentence must be parallel. If the first is followed by an adjective, an adjective must also follow the second:

- **Adjective**
- **Adjective**
  
  The new Jim Carrey movie is not only fragmented but also horrendous.

If an appositive follows the first, an appositive must also follow the second:
Appositive       Appositive
Harold, both a bus driver for LISD and a CPA, vacations in Bermuda each year.

**Punctuating correlative conjunctions**
Punctuating correlative conjunctions is easy since the same rule that applies to coordinating conjunctions applies here: if the conjunction doesn’t join two independent clauses, no comma is needed.

**Practice 1**
*Directions:* For each sentence below, underline the paired coordinators, correct any errors in punctuation, and decide if what follows the coordinators is parallel. If not, revise the sentence to correct any problems with parallelism.

1. She was both happy and cried when her baby went off to college.
2. Neither you nor they can understand how happy I am to see her.
3. I left the keys either at home, or forgot them in the car.
4. I will do both the assignments and turn them in by the end of the day.
5. He saved not only me, but also my chipmunk, Jericho, as well.
6. Either you can give me the ten dollars now or pay me off with two payments of five dollars.
7. You, neither, should sell, nor, give away that priceless heirloom.
8. They will give her not only an award but also a check.
9. They will either take the long road home or arrive quickly by taking the shortcut.
10. Neither will they be sad nor disappointed if you do not win.

**Practice 2**
*Directions:* Write eight sentences using the following correlative conjunctions twice. Proofread carefully for correct punctuation and proper parallelism.

1. not only...but also 2.either...or
3. both...and 4.neither...nor