

# Ne

To negate a sentence you use the particle **ne**. **Ne** negates whatever it stands in front of. Normally **ne** stands before the predicate, and when you negate the predicate you negate the entire sentence:

**Mi ne dormas.** - I am not sleeping.

It is not so, that I am sleeping. My sleeping is entirely being denied.

**Al leono ne donu la manon.** - To a lion don't give your hand.

**La patro ne legas libron, sed li skribas leteron.** - The father is not reading a book, but is writing a letter.

The negation affects the verb **legas**. The verb **skribas** and its entire clause remains valid.

A negation in a subclause is valid only inside that subclause: **Mi diris, ke mi ne venos.** (I said, that I will not come) The negation affects only the predicate of the subclause **venos** (will come). The entire sentence remains positive: I did say that.

It may happen that a negated predicate is implied: **Ĉiu povu vidi, kiu el la vastigantoj plenumas sian promeson kaj kiu ne.** What is being negated here is the implied verb **plenumas**: ...**kaj kiu ne plenumas sian promeson.**

**Ne** is also an answer word.

## Table words with NENI

For negation one can also use **table words with NENI**. **NENI**-words suffice to negate the predicate, and therefore the entire sentence. The position of the **NENI**-word usually doesn't matter, it will still negate the whole sentence:

**La tempo pasinta jam neniam revenos; la tempon venontan neniu ankoraŭ konas.** - Time gone by will never come again; about time to come nobody yet knows.

Past time will not come back. One doesn't know about the future.

**Mi neniel povas kompreni, kion vi parolas.** - There is no way I can understand what he is saying.

I can't understand.

**La nokto estis tiel malluma, ke ni nenion povis vidi eĉ antaŭ nia nazo.** - The night was so dark that we couldn't see anything, even in front of our noses.

We could not see. The negation affects only the **ke**-clause. The verb of the main clause, **estis** stays positive.

**Neniu radio al mi lumas, neniu varma aereto blovas sur min, neniu amiko min vizitas.** - No ray shines toward me, no warm breeze blows on me, no friend visits me.

No ray is shining. No breeze is blowing. No friend is visiting.

**Memoru, ke Esperanto estas nenies propraĵo.** - Remember that Esperanto is nobody's property.

Esperanto is not anyone's property.

**Tian Regularon por nia Ligo mi nenial povus aprobi.** - Those Rules and Regulations for our League I could not approve for any reason.

No reason would allow me to approve of them. **Nenial** negates the whole sentence.

## Double negative

When we use a **NENI**-word, and also add the word **ne**, then the sentence becomes positive. This kind of double negation can be used only to express some special meanings:

**Mi ne amas nenion.** - I don't love nobody.

If it's nobody that I don't love, then I must love somebody.

**Ĝi ne estas nenies propraĵo.** - It is not nobody's property.

Since it is not nobody's, it must be somebody's property.

A sentence can also become positive if one **NENI**-word clearly negates the verb, and another **NENI**-word appears in the sentence:

**Mi ankoraŭ neniam gajnis nenion.** = **Neniam okazis tio, ke mi gajnis nenion.** - (lit. I have still never won nothing.)= It has never happened that I won nothing.

Each time I always won something.

But several **NENI**-words in the same sentence don't necessarily result in a positive meaning. Often they only reinforce each other and the negation remains:

But several NENI-words in the same sentence do not necessarily result in a positive meaning. Often they only reinforce for each other and the negation remains:

**Ni malutilon alportus al nia afero grandan, kaj utilon ni alportus al neniu nenian.** - We would bring uselessness to our great enterprise, and usefulness of any kind we would bring to no-one.

We would not bring usefulness.

**Neniam, neniam, neniam li revenos.** - He will never, never, never come back.

He will not come back. No matter how often we say **never**.

## Partial negation

Sometimes the particle **ne** appears in a sentence where it only negates part of the sentence. The predicate stays in force. **Ne** negates precisely that before which it stands, and that can be the word immediately following, the following clause, or even more. Only the context will show precisely what is being negated.

**Ni faris la kontrakton ne skribe, sed parole.** - We made the contract not in writing, but orally.

We did make the contract, but not in writing.

**Ne ĉiu kreskaĵo estas manĝebla.** - Not every plant is edible.

Some plants certainly are edible. Compare with: **Ĉiu kreskaĵo ne estas manĝebla.** = **Neniu kreskaĵo estas manĝebla.**

**Li estas homo ne kredinda.** - He is a person not trustworthy. (lit. belief-worthy)

He really is a person.

**En la animo ĉiuj privataj homoj kaj ĉiuj registaroj ne povas ne aprobi nian ideon.** - In their soul all private individuals and all governments are incapable of not approving our idea.

The first 'ne' applies to the predicate **povas** and negates the whole sentence. The second **ne** applies only to **aprobi (nian ideon)**. The meaning of the whole is: **They cannot refuse our idea.** = **They must approve our idea.**

A NENI-word normally negates the entire sentence, no matter what the word order, but sometimes a NENI-word may also be valid for just one part of the sentence. Then the context and the word order will have to show this clearly:

**Mi decidis paroli jam plu nenion pli pri tiu ĉi temo.** - I decided to say nothing further about this topic.

The decision is real. The negation applies only to the infinitive **paroli** and all parts of the sentence which directly relate to it.

**Pli valoras faro nenia, ol faro malbona.** = **Faro, kiu ne okazis, ja valoras pli, almenaŭ kompare kun faro malbona.** - No action is worth more than an evil action. = An action that does not occur is certainly worth more, at least compared to an evil action.

The predicate **valoras** stays positive.

When **ne** or a NENI-word is part of a compound word, then the negation is valid only inside this word:

**Sinjoro, vi estas neĝentila.** - Sir, you are impolite.

The sentence says that the gentlemen has a certain characteristic, that is a lack of civility. This is only subtly different from: **You are not polite.**

**La pastro, kiu mortis antaŭ nelonge (aŭ antaŭ nelonga tempo), loĝis longe en nia urbo.** - The pastor who died recently (or a short while ago), lived for a long time in our city.

The negation is only concerned with the length of time.

**Bedaŭrinde ili estas ne-Esperantistoj.** - Unfortunately they are non-Esperantists.

They are those kind of people who do not know Esperanto.

**Neniofarado estas tre dolĉa okupo.** - Doing nothing is a sweet occupation.

That time, in which one does nothing, is very sweet.

## Nek

**Nek** means "and also not" (nor). It is used after using **ne**, when you want to add another negation. It is, in a way, a variant of **kaj**, and basically follows the same rules as **kaj**:

**Li ne vidis min, nek aŭdis.** = **...kaj ankaŭ ne aŭdis.** - He neither saw me, nor heard me. = ...and also did not hear.

**Mi ne renkontis lin, nek lian fraton.** = **...kaj ankaŭ ne lian fraton.** - I met neither him nor his brother. = ...and also not his brother.

**Nenia peno nek provo donos lakton de bovo.** - Neither effort nor attempt will yield milk from a bull.

**❌** Do not use **nek** to link two things after **sen**. Use **kaj**: Tiu virino ne foriru de ŝi sen konsolo kaj helpo. Ne: ~~...sen konsolo nek helpo.~~

**❌** **Nek** does not equal to **ne** + emphasis. To emphatically negate, use **eĉ** together with **ne**. Don't say: ~~Mi havas nek unu amikon.~~ Say: **Mi havas eĉ ne unu amikon.** Or: **Mi ne havas eĉ unu amikon.**

**❌** One can also use a **combined, multiple nek**.