

EMPHATIC STRUCTURES: CLEFT SENTENCES

Cleft means divided. In a cleft sentence, information which could be given in one clause is divided into two parts, each with its own verb. This way you give extra emphasis to part of the sentence

EX: *It was Tom who didn't want to come.*

TYPE 1:

It Cleft sentences:

IT + BE (+ NOT AND/OR ADVERB) + EMPHASISED WORD/PHRASE + THAT (WHO) CLAUSE

SENTENCE		Mike took Sally to the party on Saturday.
EMPHASIS ON THE SUBJECT	☞	It was Mike who took Sally to the party on Saturday.
EMPHASIS ON THE OBJECT	☞	It was Sally that Mike took to the party on Saturday.
EMPHASIS ON THE ADVERBIAL	☞	It was on Saturday that Mike took Sally to the party.
EMPHASIS ON THE PREP. PHRASE	☞	It was to the party that Mike took Sally on Saturday.

TYPE 2:

WH- cleft sentences:

WH- Clause + BE + EMPHASISED WORD / PHRASE

EMPHASIS ON THE ACTION ☞ What Mike did was (to) take Sally to the party
In these sentences *WHAT* means *THE THING(S) THAT*. The WH-clause must contain a verb. To highlight the action we use a form of *DO* in the WH-clause. The highlighted phrase usually contains a bare infinitive or *TO + INF*. If the highlighted verb is in the continuous or perfect, the form of *DO* matches it.

The boys are taking Sandy to the match ☞ *What the boys are doing is taking Sandy to the match.*

TYPE 3:

Other cleft sentences

- *The thing that I most disliked was the colour of her dress.*
- *The only thing I won't do is phone her again.*
- *All you need is love.*

Some other examples:

1. The thing that impresses me more than anything else is your generosity.
2. The jewels are hidden under the floor at 23 Robin Hood Road, Epping.
3. The place where the jewels are hidden is under the floor at 23 Robin Hood Road, Epping.
4. Under the floor at 23 Robin Hood Road is the place where the jewels are hidden.
5. Mary works harder than anybody else in this organisation.
6. The person who works harder than anybody else in this organisation is Mary.
7. Mary is the person in this organisation who works harder than anybody else.
8. The Second World War ended on 7 May 1945 in Europe.
9. The day (when) the Second World War ended in Europe was 7 May 1945
10. 7 May 1945 was the day (when) the Second World War ended in Europe.

EXERCISES

I. Read the information in the box then complete the replies. Each reply must contain a cleft sentence.

Nick turned up late for work on Monday because he got stuck in a traffic jam on the ring road. Luckily Nick has a mobile phone so he was able to phone his boss and warn her that he would be late. She was furious but managed to reschedule an important meeting for the afternoon.

EMPHATIC STRUCTURES: CLEFT SENTENCES

1. Nick was late because he overslept, wasn't he?

☐ No, it _____ that he was late.

2. How on earth did Nick let the boss know he'd be late?

☐ Well, what _____ call her from his mobile phone.

3. Wasn't Nick late on Wednesday?

☐ No, _____ that he was late.

4. Nick's boss had to start the meeting without him, didn't she?

☐ No, what she _____ the afternoon.

5. Didn't Nick get stuck in a traffic jam in the town centre?

☐ No, not in the town centre; it _____ got stuck.

6. I heard the boss was a little annoyed with Nick for being late.

☐ No, she wasn't "a little annoyed". What _____!

EXERCISES KEY

1. Nick was late because he overslept, wasn't he?

☐ No, it **WAS BECAUSE OF THE TRAFFIC JAM** that he was late.

2. How on earth did Nick let the boss know he'd be late?

☐ Well, what **HE DID WAS (TO)** call her from his mobile phone.

3. Wasn't Nick late on Wednesday?

☐ No, **IT WAS ON MONDAY** that he was late.

4. Nick's boss had to start the meeting without him, didn't she?

☐ No, what she **DID WAS (TO) RESCHEDULE THE MEETING FOR** the afternoon.

5. Didn't Nick get stuck in a traffic jam in the town centre?

☐ No, not in the town centre; it **WAS ON THE RING ROAD THAT NICK** got stuck.

6. I heard the boss was a little annoyed with Nick for being late.

☐ No, she wasn't "a little annoyed". What **SHE WAS WAS FURIOUS!**

II. For each of the sentences below, write a new sentence as similar as Possible in meaning to the original sentence, but using the words given in bold.

1. We just need 5 minutes to fix it. **ALL**

2. I'm not questioning his dedication. **ISN'T**

3. These men are totally ruthless. **WHAT**

4. We inherited everything except the house. **ONLY THING**

5. You know the sales assistant told me exactly the same thing. **THAT'S**

6. We're taking the au-pair with us. **DOING**

EXERCISES KEY

1. We just need 5 minutes to fix it. **ALL**

☐ **ALL WE NEED IS 5 MINUTES (TO FIX IT)**

2. I'm not questioning his dedication. **ISN'T**

☐ **IT ISN'T HIS DEDICATION THAT I'M QUESTIONING.**

3. These men are totally ruthless. **WHAT**

EMPHATIC STRUCTURES: CLEFT SENTENCES

- ☐ WHAT THESE MEN ARE IS TOTALLY RUTHLESS.
- 4. We inherited everything except the house. ONLY THING
 - ☐ THE ONLY THING WE DIDN'T INHERIT WAS THE HOUSE.
- 5. You know the sales assistant told me exactly the same thing. THAT'S
 - ☐ THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT THE SALES ASSISTANT TOLD ME.
- 6. We're taking the au-pair with us. DOING
 - ☐ WHAT WE ARE DOING IS TAKING THE AU-PAIR WITH US.

III. Rewrite the sentences, making them more emphatic.

- 1. I was most unhappy with the service.
 - ☐ What..... (to be unhappy with)
- 2. I can't stand the noise.
 - ☐ It's..... (the noise)
- 3. John didn't pay for the wedding ring, Sarah did.
 - ☐ It..... (Jonh)
 - ☐ It..... (Sar)
- 4. He's always late. It really annoys me.
 - ☐ What..... (to annoy)
- 5. Did you choose the furniture?
 - ☐ Was..... (you)
- 6. The waiter's attitude made things worse.
 - ☐ It..... (waiter's attitude)
- 7. I love autumn because of the colour of the leaves.
 - ☐ What..... (autumn)
- 8. Her terrible accent annoyed me most.
 - ☐ What..... (to annoy)
- 9. I bought it because it was a bargain.
 - ☐ It was..... (to be a bargain)
- 10. In the end Martha went to the police.
 - ☐ What..... (go to the police)

EXERCISES KEY

- 1. What I was most unhappy with was the service.... (to be unhappy with)
- 2. It's the noise that I can't stand.... (the noise)
- 3. It was John who didn't pay for the wedding ring.... (Jonh)
-It was Sara who did pay for the wedding ring.... (Sarah)
- 4. What really annoys me is that/(the fact that)he's always late.... (to annoy)
- 5. Was it you who chose the furniture.... (you)
- 6. It was the waiter's attitude thatmade/did make things worse.... (waiter's attitude)
- 7. What I love is autumn because of the colour of the leaves.... (autumn)
- 8. What annoyed me most was her terrible accent.... (to annoy)
- 9. It was because it was a bargain that I bought it.... (to be a bargain)
- 10. What Martha did in the end was (to) go to the police.... (go to the police)

IV. Rewrite the following sentences; using Cleft sentences

- 1. The boy visited his uncle last month.

☐

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2. **My mother** bought me a present on my birthday.
☐
3. **Huong and Sandra** sang together at the party.
☐
4. **Nam's father** got angry with him.
☐
5. **The boys** played football all day long.
☐
6. **The girl** received a letter from her friend yesterday.
☐
7. **His presence at the meeting** frightened the children.
☐
8. The man is learning **English**.
☐
9. The woman gave him **the book**.
☐
10. She sent **her friend** the postcard.
☐
11. Hoa borrowed **the book** from Long.
☐
12. The little boy greeted **his grandfather** in a strange language.
☐
13. The pedestrian asked **the policeman** a lot of questions.
☐
14. The dog barked **at the stranger**.
☐
15. She made some cakes **for tea**.
☐
16. His father repaired the bicycle **for him**.
☐
17. She presented him a book **on his birthday**.
☐
18. He met his wife **in Britain**.
☐
19. She bought that present **from the shop**.
☐
20. The meeting started **at 8.00 a.m.**.
☐
21. **My friend** came to see me late last night.
☐
22. I can't stand **the noise**.
☐
23. **John** didn't pay for the wedding ring, Sarah did.
☐
24. I saw **him** in the street only last week.
☐
25. She bought **a new dress** to go to the party.
☐

EMPHATIC STRUCTURES: CLEFT SENTENCES

26. **You** are wrong, not me.

☐

27. England won **the World Cup** in 1966.

☐

28. **Peter** lent us money.

☐

29. **The smoke from the factory chimneys** pollutes the air.

☐

30. **The neighbour** told them about it.

☐

31. **That boy** scored the goal for his team.

☐

32. **The dog** grabbed at the piece of meat and ran away.

☐

33. **The strong wind** blew the roof off.

☐

34. The woman answered **the man** rudely.

☐

35. The boy played **ping pong** the whole afternoon.

☐

36. The girl gave **the boy** a special gift on his birthday.

☐

37. The police arrested **the man** at the railway station.

☐

38. He borrowed **the money** from Linda

☐

39. He bought the book **from that corner shop**.

☐

40. He got married **when he was 26**.

☐

41. They were having a barbecue **in the park**.

☐

42. I met him **on the way to school**.

☐

43. They often had parties **on weekends**.

☐

44. My brother bought his new car from our next-door neighbour **last Saturday**.

☐

45. My brother bought **his girlfriend** a beautiful bunch of flowers for her birthday last Saturday.

☐

46. The Second World War ended **on 7 May 1945** in Europe.

☐

47. If I had to choose between staying in my country or moving abroad, I would take **the first option**.

☐

48. We always meet **on Friday**.

☐

49. They went **to the cinema**.

☐

EMPHATIC STRUCTURES: CLEFT SENTENCES

50. We were supposed to meet at 6 o'clock.

☐

51. When the play was about to end, I couldn't help weeping.

☐

52. Spring didn't set in until late May.

☐

53. The official announcement was made at that time.

☐

54. Corline has been feeling a bit depressed for some time.

☐

55. The Prime Minister was traveling to France yesterday when the alarm sounded.

☐

V. Change the sentences into cleft sentences in the passive.

1. Fans gave Christina lots of flowers.

☐

2. The pedestrian asked the policeman for direction to the post office.

☐

3. People talked a lot about his house.

☐

4. His father bought him a bicycle for his birthday.

☐

5. He described his hometown in his novel.

☐

6. She frightened the children.

☐

7. Her younger sister broke her glasses.

☐

8. The prince kissed my younger sister at the party.

☐

9. My father gave me this story book as a birthday present.

☐

10. Vietnamese people celebrate Tet as the greatest occasion in a year.

☐

11. Fred gave Mary the money.

☐

12. Mr. Johnson sent the Jiff Company a letter.

☐

13. I show my friends all of the photographs.

☐

14. Did the boy throw his friend the baseball?

☐

15. The teacher told the students an interesting story.

☐

16. My brother bought his new car from our next-door neighbour last Saturday.

☐

17. My mother gave me this camera.

EMPHATIC STRUCTURES: CLEFT SENTENCES

☐

18. The monkeys amused **the children**.

☐

19. John took **the money**.

☐

20. People talk about **this film**.

☐

21. Columbus discovered **America**.

☐

22. She gave me **these flowers**.

☐

23. Jose has washed **his car**.

☐

24. Nguyen Du wrote **Kieu story**.

☐

25. They grow **corn** in India.

☐

26. The cat is going to catch **the mouse**.

☐

27. Mary bought **this book** yesterday.

☐

28. Someone stole **my car** last week.

☐

29. They feed **these animals** twice a day.

☐

30. George was doing **the homework** 8.00 last night.

☐

31. A Japanese company makes **these television** sets.

☐

32. The earthquake destroyed **the town**.

☐

33. Nobody has used **this room** for ages.

☐

34. Jane did **this task** yesterday morning.

☐

35. They took **the sick man** to the hospital last night.

☐

36. John will sell **his old house** soon.

☐

37. The storm has delayed **the 11.20 flight to London**.

☐

38. The police stopped **us** on our way to school.

☐

39. They may use **this room** for the classroom.

☐

40. You mustn't use **this machine** after 5.30.

☐

41. They haven't stamped **the letter**.

EMPHATIC STRUCTURES: CLEFT SENTENCES

☐

42. They didn't look after **the children** properly.

☐

43. John has stored **all the data** on the floppy disk.

☐

44. Tom saw **Mary** yesterday morning.

☐

45. Linda loves **Jack** very much.

☐

46. Tom killed **the tiger**.

☐

47. Mr. Duy teaches **English** in Thong Linh High school.

☐

48. Mary sent **him a lot of presents**.

☐