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*Cleft Sentences - Part I*



# Table of Contents - Part I

- What are Cleft Sentences?
- Why Cleft Sentences?
- Some Examples
- Cleft Sentences: Types
- It-Cleft
  - (That)
  - (Who) VS. (That)
  - Plural or Singular?
  - Interrogative
  - Negative

# What are Cleft Sentences?

A Cleft Sentence is a complex sentence emphasizing an element by re-arranging the typical word order of a simple sentence with the help of a dummy word. So doing, it allows for emphasis on a specific part of the sentence.

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# Why Cleft Sentences?

*Cleft Sentences are commonly used in our daily conversations (i.e. spoken English) so as to connect the part of a message that is already known and/or understood with the part which is new for the listener. So doing, we can put emphasis on the new part of the message about which we are willing to attract attentions*

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# Some Examples

- *It was Ryan who broke the window.*
- *What she needs is time.*
- *It is our support that keeps the nation alive.*
- *It's in a parliament where you can find a politician.*

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# Cleft Sentences: Types

- *It-Cleft*
- *All-Cleft*
- *There-Cleft*
- *WH-cleft*
- *If-Because-Cleft*
- *Inferential-Cleft*

# It-Cleft

The most common and used type is “It-Cleft”. It is the “Cleft clause” where we can see the new information. The clause that follows it contains already-understood information.

- *It's my brother who won the race.*
- *It's after midnight when the city becomes quiet.*
- *It was his personality that impressed the interviewer the most.*
- *It was during the storm when the power went out.*
- *It was his plans that impressed the nation.*

This type is followed by a “Verb Phrase”.

# *(That)*

*Generally speaking, the word “that” connects the “It-Cleft” to the clause that follows it. We can omit it if it is the object of the verb. It is normally seen in spoken English.*

- *It was your father David (that) I met.*
- *It was his wife (that) the murderer murdered.*

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# *(Who) VS. (That)*

*When the focus is on the subject, we use who instead of that.*

- *It was my father who bought me a car.*
- *It was Ryan who got fired last night.*
- *It is David who helps me every day*

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# Plural or Singular?

*It does not matter! Just the main verb becomes plural provided that you have a plural subject.*

- *It is the teachers who act as a bridge between generations.*
- *It was the girls who won the match.*
- *It was the managers who were being blamed for their poor behaviors.*

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# Interrogative

- *Was it the girls who won the match?*
- *Was it the managers who were being blamed for their poor behaviors?*

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# Negative

- *It wasn't the girls who won the match.*
- *It wasn't the managers who were being blamed for their poor behaviors.*

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