



# 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

It was Tom who didn't want to come.

**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.

**WH- cleft sentences:**  
**WH- Clause + BE + EMPHASISED WORD / PHRASE**

EMPHASIS ON THE ACTION	What Mike did was (to) take Sally to the party
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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.*

**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.*