

## Grammar: Cleft sentences

We use cleft sentences to emphasise information we particularly want to focus on, perhaps because the information is new or surprising, because it offers a contrast with what someone else has said, or because we are expressing a strong preference or attitude.

The typical structure of an *it*-cleft sentence is: *it* + *be* + emphasised information + relative clause.

Simple sentence: *Torrential rain is the main cause of flooding.*

Cleft sentence: *It is torrential rain that is the main cause of flooding.*

The typical structure of a *what*-cleft sentence is: *what*-clause + *be* + emphasised information.

Simple sentence: *We like to spend our summers by the lake.*

Cleft sentence: *What we like is to spend our summers by the lake.*

### 9 1 Rewrite the simple sentence below as an *it*-cleft sentence.

Simple sentence: *I can't stand the monsoon season.*

Cleft sentence: \_\_\_\_\_

### 2 Rewrite the simple sentence below as a *what*-cleft sentence.

Simple sentence: *I want to go to the beach.*

Cleft sentence: \_\_\_\_\_

10 Listen to the sample answers to the Part 1 questions in Exercise 7. Then read the Track 23, page 105 and underline three cleft sentences.

### 11 There are other kinds of cleft structures too. Complete sentences 1–3 so they are true for you. Then rewrite them as cleft sentences using the structures given.

- 1 I (dis)like warm weather because \_\_\_\_\_.  
The reason why \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 I spend my summers in/at \_\_\_\_\_.  
The place where \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 I dislike \_\_\_\_\_ weather most of all because \_\_\_\_\_.  
The weather that \_\_\_\_\_.

**Exam tip:** You can use cleft sentences to answer questions the examiner asks you.  
For example:

**Examiner:** What do you do when it's cold outside?

**Candidate:** What we tend to do is stay in and watch our favourite films.

**Examiner:** Which season is your favourite?

**Candidate:** Well, what I like best are the transitions between the seasons, when you first feel the weather begin to change.