

What are Cleft Sentences for Emphasis?

Worksheet

A cleft sentence splits a simple statement into two parts using 'It is/was... that' or 'It is/was... who' to emphasize one specific element. For example: 'It was my brother who won the race' emphasizes 'my brother' instead of just saying 'My brother won the race'.

Questions

1. Which is a cleft sentence?

- A) I saw the film yesterday.
- B) It was the film (that) I saw yesterday.
- C) The film was interesting.
- D) I saw it at the cinema.

2. Emphasize 'tomorrow' in: We leave tomorrow.

- A) It is tomorrow when we leave.
- B) It is tomorrow (that) we leave.
- C) Tomorrow is when we leave.
- D) It was tomorrow we left.

3. What does cleft emphasis do?

- A) Makes sentences longer.
- B) Focuses attention on one part.
- C) Changes the tense.
- D) Replaces adjectives.

4. Which word goes in: It ____ John who helped me.

- A) was
- B) is
- C) were
- D) be

5. Turn into a cleft sentence to emphasize 'Sarah': Sarah helped me with my homework.

6. Rewrite with emphasis on the time: They arrived on Monday.

7. Create a cleft sentence emphasizing 'the report': The report caused all the problems.

8. Define: What is a cleft sentence?

9. Define: Structure of cleft sentences?

10. Define: Why use cleft sentences?

Answer Key

1. B) It was the film (that) I saw yesterday. — Option 2 uses 'It was... that' structure to emphasize 'the film'.
2. B) It is tomorrow (that) we leave. — Option 2 is the proper cleft structure.
3. B) Focuses attention on one part. — Cleft sentences highlight specific information.
4. A) was — Past tense 'was' matches the original action.
5. Normal: Sarah helped me with my homework. Identify focus: Sarah Cleft structure: It was SARAH who helped me with my homework.
6. Normal: They arrived on Monday. Focus: Monday Cleft: It was on MONDAY (that) they arrived.
7. Normal: The report caused all the problems. What caused problems? The report Cleft: It was THE REPORT (that) caused all the problems.
8. A sentence split using 'It is/was... that/who' to emphasize one specific element.
9. It is/was + [emphasized element] + that/who + [rest of sentence]
10. To highlight one important part and draw the reader's attention to it.

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