

What are Emphasis and Focus Structures?

Worksheet

Emphasis and focus structures are grammatical devices—cleft sentences, inversion, fronting, and stress—that highlight key information and reorder words to control what the listener attends to.

Questions

1. Which sentence uses cleft structure?
A) Never have I seen such beauty.
B) It is beauty that I have never seen.
C) Beauty I have never seen.
D) I never saw beauty.
2. Emphasize 'only then' using inversion: 'She understood.'
A) Only then she understood.
B) Only then did she understand.
C) She only then understood.
D) Only she then understood.
3. What does 'Hard work she admires' demonstrate?
A) Inversion
B) Fronting
C) Cleft
D) Stress
4. Which sentence uses stress emphasis?
A) It is the cost that worries me.
B) Never will I forget.
C) 'I' said it, not you. (stress on 'I')
D) The cost, it worries me.
5. Emphasize 'yesterday' in: 'She visited the museum.'
6. Emphasize 'I' in: 'I didn't steal the jewels.'
7. Emphasize 'hard work' in: 'She appreciates hard work.'
8. Define: What is a cleft sentence?
9. Define: How does inversion create emphasis?
10. Define: What is fronting?

Answer Key

1. B) It is beauty that I have never seen. — Cleft uses 'It is...that': 'It is beauty that I have never seen.'
2. B) Only then did she understand. — With negative/restrictive adverbs, invert subject and auxiliary: 'Only then did she understand.'
3. B) Fronting — Fronting moves 'hard work' (object) to the front for emphasis.
4. C) 'I' said it, not you. (stress on 'I') — Stress emphasis uses intonation: emphasizing 'I' makes it stand out.
5. Original: She visited the museum. Using fronting: Yesterday she visited the museum. Using cleft: It was yesterday that she visited the museum. Each moves 'yesterday' to focus position.
6. Original: I didn't steal the jewels. Using inversion (negative fronting): Never did I steal the jewels. Using cleft: It was I who didn't steal the jewels. Stress: 'I didn't steal the jewels' (emphasis on 'I').
7. Original: She appreciates hard work. Using fronting: Hard work she appreciates. Using cleft: It's hard work that she appreciates. Both move the object to the front for focus.
8. A sentence that splits a simple statement using 'It is...that' to emphasize one element: 'It is the goal that matters.'
9. Reversing normal word order draws attention: 'Never have I felt this way' emphasizes 'never.'
10. Moving an element to the front of the sentence: 'This song I love' emphasizes 'this song.'

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