

## Emphasis with **What .../ All.../ It...** (Cleft Sentences)

Cleft sentences are used to help us focus on a particular part of the sentence and emphasise this part by fronting it. Cleft sentences are particularly useful in writing.

Common cleft structures:

1. **what-** sentences (to emphasise part of the sentence or the whole sentence)

I really love **having my family over for lunch**.

**What I really love is** having my family over for lunch.

**The police interviewed all the witnesses**.

**What the police did was** (to) interview all the witnesses.

**She writes all her novels on a typewriter**.

**What she does is** (to) write all her novels on a typewriter.

2. **all** – to focus on a particular thing and nothing else

I want **a new coat** for Christmas.

**All I want for Christmas is** a new coat.

**I touched the bedside light** and it broke.

**All I did was** (to) touch the bedside light and it broke.

3. **It** – to emphasise a noun:

The tone of his voice irritated me.

It was the tone of his voice that irritated me.

Cycling to work keeps me fit.

It's cycling to work that keeps me fit.

Also: **it** can be used to emphasise the reason (with **because**) and the time (with **when** or **until**)

**It's because** I was late **that** I wasn't able to do the exam.

**It's when** I closed the door **that** I realised I had left my wallet inside.

**It wasn't until** I read the book **that** I understood how gifted she was.

Other cleft structures:

**The reason why** I have come **is** to discuss my contract.

**The thing that** puzzled me **was** how he unaffected he was by criticism.

**The place where** I work **is** in the city center.

**The day when** my son was born **was** the happiest in my life.