

Are you looking for material
to prepare for your
Cambridge English Exam?



CLEFT SENTENCES TABLE

Cleft sentences are used to emphasize certain parts of a sentence by introducing it or building up to it with a kind of relative clause. They let us focus on new information. We use them to connect what is already understood to what is new to the listener/reader, which is emphasised for them. Because these sentences have two parts, they are called cleft (from the verb cleave), which means divided into two.

Normal sentence (non-emphatic)	Wh-cleft sentences (pseudo-cleft sentences)
	WHAT CLAUSE + BE + EMPHASIS
We should tell the truth.	What we should do is tell the truth .
We now need actions rather than words.	What we now need are actions rather than words .
My boss offered me a pay rise.	What my boss did was offer me a pay rise .

Normal sentence (non-emphatic)	OTHER WH-CLEFT SENTENCES - CLAUSE + BE + EMPHASIS
You should mix the dough with your hands	How you should mix the dough is with your hands
I ask because I need to file a report.	Why I ask is because I need to file a report .
You should speak with Mike.	Who you should speak with is Mike .

Normal sentence (non-emphatic)	REVERSED WH-CLEFT: EMPHASIS + IS/WAS ...
He ate a pizza yesterday.	A pizza is what he ate yesterday.
We used to live in that house.	That house is where we used to live.
The dog chased the cat.	Chasing the cat is what the dog did.

Normal sentence (non-emphatic)	IT-CLEFT SENTENCES IT IS/WAS + EMPHASIS (WHO/THAT) ...
My brother bought a new car from...	It was a new car that my brother bought from ...
I didn't break the vase.	It was not me who broke the vase.
She called me yesterday.	It was yesterday when she called me.
You are in the wrong, not me.	It is you who is in the wrong, not me.

Normal sentence (non-emphatic)	CLEFT STRUCTURES : ... IS /WAS + EMPHASIS
	The reason why/that ... is/was + emphasis
I'm calling to ask a favour.	The reason (that) I'm calling is to ask a favour .
	The place where... is/was + emphasis
I do most of my shopping at Tesco.	The place where I do most of my shopping is Tesco .
	The person/one/people who ... is/was + emphasis
Jack helped me.	The person who helped me was Jack .
	The day when ... is/was + emphasis
The Second World War ended on 7 May 1945 in Europe.	The day (when) the Second World War ended in Europe was 7 May 1945
	The (one/first/only) thing that...is/was + emphasis
His voice impressed me.	The thing that impressed me was his voice .
	All ... do/does/did + is/was + emphasis
He complained about how busy he was.	All he did was complain about how busy he was .