

When we want to focus attention on or emphasize one part of a sentence, we can do this by adding certain words or phrases to the beginning of the sentence. This is sometimes called a 'cleft sentence'.

### More emphatic sentence

#### 1 beginning with *What* or *All*

|                                |                                               |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| I need a coffee.               | <b>What I need</b> is a coffee.               |
| I don't like the weather here. | <b>What I don't like here</b> is the weather. |
| I just want to travel.         | <b>All I want</b> is to travel.               |
| I only touched it!             | <b>All I did</b> was touch it.                |

#### 2 beginning with *What happens is...* / *What happened was...*

|                                               |                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| You do a test and then you have an interview. | <b>What happens is</b> (that) you do a test and then you have an interview. |
| We left our passports at home.                | <b>What happened was</b> (that) we left our passports at home.              |

#### 3 beginning with *The person who...*, *The place where...*, *The first / last time...*, *The reason why...*, etc.

|                                   |                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| I spoke to the manager.           | <b>The person (who / that) I spoke to</b> was the manager.                  |
| We stayed in a five-star hotel.   | <b>The place where we stayed</b> was a five-star hotel.                     |
| I last saw him on Saturday.       | <b>The last time I saw him</b> was on Saturday.                             |
| I bought it because it was cheap. | <b>The reason (why / that) I bought it</b> was that / because it was cheap. |

#### 4 beginning with *It*

|                                     |                                                          |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| A boy in my class won the prize.    | <b>It was a boy in my class who</b> won the prize.       |
| We had the meeting last Friday.     | <b>It was last Friday when</b> we had the meeting.       |
| They charged us extra for the wine. | <b>It was the wine (that)</b> they charged us extra for. |

- We can make some kinds of sentences more emphatic by beginning with *What* (= the thing) or *All* (= the only thing) + clause + *be*, and then the part of the sentence we want to emphasize.
- To emphasize an event or sequence of events, we can begin with *What happens is (that)...* / *What happened was (that)...*
- We can also make part of a sentence more emphatic by beginning with an expression like *The person who...*, *The place where...*, *The first / last time that...*, *The reason why...*, etc. + clause + *be*, with the emphasized part of the sentence at the end.
- We can also use *It is / was* + the emphasized part of the sentence + a relative clause.

⚠ If the emphasized part is a pronoun, we normally use the object pronoun after *It is / was*, e.g. *It was me who paid the bill.* NOT *It was I who paid the bill.*

#### a Complete the sentences with one word.

The **last** time I saw my brother was at his 40th birthday party.

- \_\_\_\_\_ was my father who told me not to marry him.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I hate about Sundays is knowing you have to work the next day.
- The \_\_\_\_\_ why I want you to come early is so that we can have some time on our own before the others arrive.
- After you've sent in your CV, what \_\_\_\_\_ next is that you get called for an interview.
- It's not my fault you can't find them! \_\_\_\_\_ I did was tidy up your desk a bit.
- The \_\_\_\_\_ where we're going to have lunch is a sort of artist's café near the theatre.
- \_\_\_\_\_ happened was that I lost the piece of paper with my flight details on it.
- It was \_\_\_\_\_ who told Angela about the party. I'm terribly sorry. I didn't know you hadn't invited her.

#### b Rewrite the sentences with the **bold** word.

I only need a small piece of paper.

**ALL**

*All I need* is a small piece of paper.

- She left her husband because he cheated on her.  
**REASON**  
\_\_\_\_\_ he cheated on her.
- We stopped in an absolutely beautiful place for lunch.  
**PLACE**  
\_\_\_\_\_ was absolutely beautiful.
- We got stuck in an enormous traffic jam.  
**HAPPENED**  
\_\_\_\_\_ we got stuck in an enormous traffic jam.
- They didn't apologize for arriving late, which really annoyed me.  
**WHAT**  
\_\_\_\_\_ they didn't apologize for arriving late.
- A girl from my town won the silver medal.  
**IT**  
\_\_\_\_\_ won the silver medal.

- I only said that I didn't like her dress.  
**ALL**  
\_\_\_\_\_ that I didn't like her dress.
- I like my Aunt Emily best of all my relatives.  
**PERSON**  
\_\_\_\_\_ is my Aunt Emily.
- You pick up your tickets at the box office.  
**HAPPENS**  
\_\_\_\_\_ you pick up your tickets at the box office.
- Right now you need to sit down and put your feet up.  
**WHAT**  
\_\_\_\_\_ to sit down and put your feet up.
- I first met Serena at a conference in Berlin.  
**TIME**  
\_\_\_\_\_ at a conference in Berlin.