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C1 EMPHASIS ≈ 26 MIN

Cleft Sentences — *practice on paper*

You can highlight information deliberately; now reinforce it-clefts and wh-clefts with fresh business situations.

An **it-cleft** spotlights a person or thing; a **wh-cleft** frames a need, action, or priority.

NAME _____ DATE _____

YOUR BUILD 1 · SORTING ◯ 2 · FILL-IN ◯ 3 · CORRECT ◯ 4 · WRITE ◯

BRICK 1 · SORT BY FOCUS · APPROX. 4 MIN ●○○

Sort each sentence: **it-cleft** for a highlighted person or thing, wh-cleft for a need or priority.

- It was Elena who chaired the review.
- It was the backup server that restored access.
- It was our legal adviser who spotted the clause.
- It was the old template that caused the error.
- It was the product team that proposed the fix.
- What the client wants is a weekly summary.
- What we must change is the approval route.
- What matters today is response time.
- What the panel needs is clearer evidence.
- What finance wants is to see the assumptions.

IT-CLEFT: PERSON OR THING	WH-CLEFT: NEED OR PRIORITY

BRICK 2 · COMPLETE THE FOCUS · APPROX. 6 MIN ●●○

Add the missing word. Check whether the sentence highlights a **person, thing, or priority**.

01 It _____ Raj who presented the recovery plan yesterday.

02 What we _____ to meet the deadline is a simpler handover. (need)

03 It was the contract _____ delayed the launch.

04 What the directors want _____ to review the evidence.

05 It was Dr Lewis _____ presented the findings.

06 What _____ is the delivery date.

07 It was the revised budget _____ convinced the lender.

08 What the team needs is _____ reduce waiting time.

YOUR BUILD

1 · SORTING ○ | 2 · FILL-IN ○ | 3 · CORRECT ○ | 4 · WRITE ○

BRICK 3 · FIND AND CORRECT THE MISTAKE · APPROX. 7 MIN ●●○

Each sentence contains one error in its cleft pattern. Rewrite the full sentence correctly.

01 It was Ms Chan which approved the revised schedule.

02 It was the late shipment, that triggered the complaint.

03 What the department needs is, that we update the checklist.

04 What matters are the final deadline.

05 It was the invoices who caused the discrepancy.

06 What the board wants that is a shorter report.

BRICK 4 · CREATE A CLEAR FOCUS · APPROX. 8 MIN ●●●

Write one English sentence for each prompt. Use a cleft only when the **focus** helps in context.

01 Audit report: highlight the person who found a discrepancy.

02 Project email: highlight the thing that caused a delay.

03 Meeting: state the next need with a wh-cleft.

04 Team chat: express the same content once without a cleft.

MINI-CHECK – CAN I DO THIS YET?

- ☐ I use who for people and that for things in the taught it-cleft pattern.
- ☐ I do not place a comma before who or that in an it-cleft.
- ☐ I follow What we need is directly with a noun or infinitive.
- ☐ I choose clefts for a clear focus; neutral sentences often remain more natural.

Unsure? Write the neutral sentence first, then decide which element genuinely needs focus.

Answer key

Check only when you have finished. Every answer comes with the **why** — the rule matters more than the result.

BRICK 1 · SORTING

01 It was Elena who chaired the review.
It-cleft: Elena is the highlighted person.

02 It was the backup server that restored access.
It-cleft: The backup server is the highlighted thing.

03 It was our legal adviser who spotted the clause.
It-cleft: Who refers to a person.

04 It was the old template that caused the error.
It-cleft: That refers to the highlighted thing.

05 It was the product team that proposed the fix.
It-cleft: The product team sits in the focus slot.

06 What the client wants is a weekly summary.
Wh-cleft: The sentence frames the client's need.

07 What we must change is the approval route.
Wh-cleft: The sentence frames the required change.

08 What matters today is response time.
Wh-cleft: The sentence establishes a priority.

09 What the panel needs is clearer evidence.
Wh-cleft: The sentence frames a need.

10 What finance wants is to see the assumptions.
Wh-cleft: An infinitive names the desired action.

BRICK 2 · FILL-IN

01 It **was** Raj who presented the recovery plan yesterday.
Tense: Yesterday calls for was here.

02 What we **need** to meet the deadline is a simpler handover.
Prompt: The supplied verb need builds the requirement frame.

03 It was the contract **that** delayed the launch.
It-cleft: That refers to a thing.

04 What the directors want **is** to review the evidence.
Wh-cleft: Is links the frame and infinitive.

05 It was Dr Lewis **who** presented the findings.
It-cleft: Who refers to Dr Lewis as a person.

06 What **matters** is the delivery date.
Wh-cleft: Matters frames the priority.

07 It was the revised budget **that** convinced the lender.
It-cleft: That refers to the budget.

08 What the team needs is **to** reduce waiting time.
Wh-cleft: To introduces the focused action.

BRICK 3 · CORRECT

01 It was Ms Chan **who** approved the revised schedule.
It-cleft: Who refers to a person.

02 It was the late shipment **that** triggered the complaint.
Punctuation: An it-cleft has no comma before that.

03 What the department needs is **to update** the checklist.
Wh-cleft: The infinitive follows is directly.

04 What matters **is** the final deadline.
Agreement: The what-clause links with is here.

05 It was the invoices **that** caused the discrepancy.
It-cleft: That refers to things.

06 What the board wants **is** a shorter report.
Wh-cleft: No extra that appears before is.

BRICK 4 · WRITE

Answers vary; check focus, reference, and register.

01 It was **the compliance analyst who** found the discrepancy.
It-cleft: The person receives the focus.

02 It was **a missing signature that** delayed approval.
It-cleft: The cause receives the focus.

03 What the project needs is **a confirmed owner** for each task.
Wh-cleft: The complement names the need.

04 A missing signature **delayed approval**.
Register: Without contrast, the neutral statement often feels lighter.

NEXT BRICKS — KEEP BUILDING FREE ONLINE

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