86 Introductory "it"

"It" is often used when a sentence has no clear subject, and is sometimes known as a dummy subject or empty subject.

See also:

Defining relative clauses **81**Non-defining relative clauses **82**

86.1 "IT" AS A DUMMY SUBJECT

"It" is used to talk about the time, dates, distance, or the weather. In these sentences, "it" doesn't have a specific meaning, but it serves as the grammatical subject of the sentence.

"It" can be used to talk about the time.

"It" can be used to talk about distances.

"It" can be used to talk about the day, date, month, or year.

"It" can be used to talk about the weather. What time is it?

It's 3 o'clock.

How far is it to the beach?



It's 1 mile that way.

What day is it?



It's Tuesday.

What's the weather like today?

It's cloudy and raining.

FURTHER EXAMPLES

It's 2 o'clock in the morning. Please stop singing!



I'm going to walk to work. It's only two miles away.



It's the 21st century. I can't believe you still use that phone.



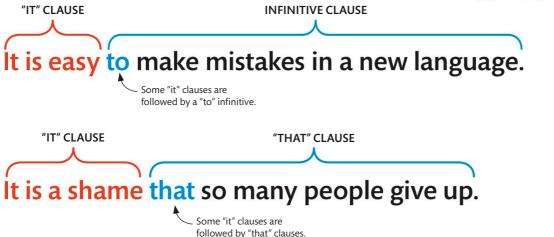
I'm surprised that it's so sunny in the middle of January.



86.2 INTRODUCTORY "IT"

Certain set phrases beginning "it is" can be used at the start of a sentence. "It" is the subject of the sentence, and can be used to express a general truth or belief.





FURTHER EXAMPLES INTRODUCTORY "IT"



It is important to be relaxed about making mistakes.



It is essential to give yourself time to study regularly.



It is difficult to remember facts if you don't write them down.



It's unlikely that you will be comfortable speaking aloud at first.



It's true that being able to speak a second language is useful.



It is often said that going to the country of the language helps.