

# 87 Shifting focus

"It" clauses, "what" clauses, or moving a noun to the front of a sentence can all be used to put emphasis on a certain word or phrase.

See also:

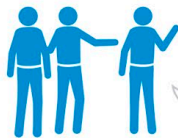
Types of verbs **49** Defining relative clauses **81**

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## 87.1 FOCUSING WITH "IT" CLAUSES

Part of a sentence can be emphasized by adding "it is" or "it was" before it, and "that" after it. This can correct a misunderstanding or emphasize something unexpected.

You've met my friend John before, haven't you?



This stresses that it wasn't John who I met before.

"That" is added before the main verb.

No, **it was your friend Michael that** I met.

"It is" or "it was" is added before the noun phrase to be focused.

"Your friend Michael" is now the focus of the sentence.

The main verb moves to the end.

## FURTHER EXAMPLES

The second clause is a relative clause. It is most commonly introduced by "that," "which," or "who." "When" and "where" can also be used, but they're less formal.

**It is the engine that** I need to replace.



**It was summertime when** Zoe last saw her cousins.



**It was the doctor who** I needed to call.



**It was in a bar where** Ollie first met his wife.



**It was the cold weather which** made me sick.



**It was the price which** changed my mind.



**It was my colleague who** prepared the food.



**It was the toaster that** set off the fire alarm.



## 87.2 FOCUSING WITH "WHAT" CLAUSES

Simple statements can be made more emphatic by adding "what" with the verb "be." This structure is often used with verbs expressing emotions, such as "love," "hate," "like," and "want."

Would you like to go to a movie?



No, thanks. **What** I really want **is** to go to bed early.

"What" is added to the start of the sentence.

The focused information is put outside the "what" clause.

This has more emphasis than "I really want to go to bed early."

## FURTHER EXAMPLES

**What** we hated **was** the bad service.

**What** I like here **is** the weather.

**What** they loved the most **were** the museums.

**What** she enjoys the most **is** the music.

## 87.3 FOCUSING WITH A NOUN

If the subject of the sentence cannot be replaced with "what" (for example, people, places, or times) a general noun that has a similar meaning can be used.



I've been to many countries.

**The place** I most enjoyed visiting **was** Nepal.



I've read about some great people.

**The woman** I respect the most **is** Marie Curie.



I don't know why the show was canceled.

**The reason** they gave **was** not good enough.



I have lots of fun memories.

**The evening** I remember most **is** my first concert.