Cleft Sentences

What I need is… · It was… that… | C1 · Answers on the last page.

THE RULE

Cleft sentences split one idea into two clauses to add emphasis or correct information.

It-cleft: It + was / is + [focus] + that / who …
It was Sara who called. · It was in Paris that we met.

Wh-cleft (pseudo-cleft): What + subject + verb + is / was + [focus].
What I need is a break. · What he did was (to) call the police.

Also: All (that) I want is… · The reason (why) … is … · The place where … is …

1 Rewrite with an It-cleft, emphasising the words in brackets.

1 *John broke the window. (emphasise: John)*

2 *I met her in Paris. (emphasise: in Paris)*

3 *We need money, not advice. (emphasise: money)*

4 *She called yesterday. (emphasise: yesterday)*

5 *The storm caused the damage. (emphasise: the storm)*

2 Rewrite with a What-cleft (What … is / was …).

1 *I need a holiday.*

2 *She wants respect.*

3 *He said sorry. (What he did …)*

4 *The noise annoys me.*

5 *We should leave now. (What we should do …)*

3 Complete each cleft with the correct beginning (All / It / What / The reason / The place).

1 _____ I want is a good night's sleep.

2 _____ was the rain that ruined the trip.

3 _____ I left early is that I felt ill.

4 _____ you need is more practice.

5 _____ we first met was a small café.

6 _____ was my brother who fixed it.

4 Choose the correct option.

1 It was Maria (who / what) won the prize.

2 What I need (is / are) some new ideas.

3 (It / What) she wants is a holiday.

4 It was in 2019 (that / when) we moved house.

5 It was the manager (who / which) I spoke to.

6 What he did (was / did) apologise to everyone.

5 Find and correct the mistake in each sentence.

1 *What I need are a holiday.*

2 *It was John which broke it.*

3 *The reason why I'm late is because of the traffic.*

4 *What she wants is to travelling.*

5 *It was in the park where we met.*

Soluciones

Answer key.

1 · It-cleft

1 It was John who broke the window.
2 It was in Paris that I met her.
3 It's money (that) we need, not advice.
4 It was yesterday that she called.
5 It was the storm that caused the damage.

2 · What-cleft

1 What I need is a holiday.
2 What she wants is respect.
3 What he did was (to) say sorry.
4 What annoys me is the noise.
5 What we should do is leave now.

3 · Complete the cleft

1 All (that) 2 It 3 The reason (why) 4 What 5 The place where 6 It

4 · Choose

1 who 2 is 3 What 4 that 5 who 6 was

5 · Error correction

1 What I need is a holiday. 2 It was John who / that broke it. 3 The reason (why) I'm late is the traffic.
4 What she wants is to travel. 5 It was in the park that we met.