



## Cleft Sentences: Mixed Cleft Sentences: Choosing the Right Structure

Fill in the blank with the correct option.

- It \_\_\_\_ in 1969 that humans first landed on the moon.  
a) was  
b) has  
c) did  
d) had
- \_\_\_\_ truly frightens me is the thought of failure.  
a) It  
b) What  
c) All  
d) The thing
- \_\_\_\_ she ever talks about is her new job.  
a) What  
b) It  
c) All  
d) The thing
- \_\_\_\_ was my brother who fixed the car.  
a) What  
b) All  
c) The person  
d) It
- It was Sarah \_\_\_\_ suggested the idea first.  
a) which  
b) who  
c) what  
d) whom
- What the team needs most \_\_\_\_ a strong leader.  
a) was  
b) has  
c) is  
d) are
- The place \_\_\_\_ we first met was a small café in Paris.  
a) where  
b) which  
c) what  
d) when
- \_\_\_\_ happened next was completely unexpected.  
a) What  
b) It  
c) All  
d) The thing
- It was because of the fog \_\_\_\_ all flights were grounded.  
a) why  
b) which  
c) what  
d) that
- What surprised us at yesterday's meeting \_\_\_\_ the CEO's sudden resignation.  
a) is  
b) has  
c) was  
d) had
- \_\_\_\_ that remains is to sign the contract.  
a) What  
b) It  
c) Which  
d) All





## Answers

1. a) was
2. b) What
3. c) All
4. d) It
5. b) who
6. c) is
7. a) where
8. a) What
9. d) that
10. c) was
11. d) All
12. b) It
13. a) is
14. c) that
15. a) that
16. d) What
17. b) that
18. c) was
19. b) All
20. d) was



# Explanations

## 1. “was” (a)

This is an it-cleft emphasising a time phrase. The structure 'It was ... that ...' requires 'was' to link the focused element 'in 1969' to the rest of the clause.

## 2. “What” (b)

This is a wh-cleft (pseudo-cleft). Only 'What' can directly begin a noun clause before a verb like 'frightens' without an additional relative pronoun. 'All' and 'The thing' would each need 'that' after them.

## 3. “All” (c)

This is an all-cleft. The word 'ever' in affirmative sentences is licensed by universal quantifiers like 'all,' making 'All she ever talks about' the correct collocation. 'What she ever talks about' is not standard English.

## 4. “It” (d)

This is an it-cleft with the structure 'It was ... who ...' for emphasising a person. Only 'It' can begin this pattern; the other options would require a completely different sentence structure.

## 5. “who” (b)

This is an it-cleft focusing on a person. Use 'who' as the connector for people in subject position. 'Whom' is only for object position, and 'which' cannot refer to people.

## 6. “is” (c)

This is a wh-cleft where 'What the team needs most' is a singular noun clause in the present tense. The linking verb must be 'is' to match the present tense of 'needs' and the singular complement 'a strong leader.'

## 7. “where” (a)

This is a cleft-like structure using 'The place where ...' to emphasise a location. 'Where' is the correct relative adverb for places. 'Which' would require a preposition (e.g., 'at which'), and 'when' refers to time, not place.

## 8. “What” (a)

This is a wh-cleft. Only 'What' can directly precede a verb like 'happened' to form a noun clause. 'All' and 'The thing' would each require 'that' after them (e.g., 'All that happened next').

## 9. “that” (d)

This is an it-cleft emphasising a reason phrase. In it-clefts, the connector is always 'that,' even when the focused element expresses a reason. 'Why' is not used as a connector in it-cleft structures.

## 10. “was” (c)

This is a wh-cleft. The linking verb must be 'was' to match the past tense context established by 'surprised' and 'yesterday's meeting.' Present tense 'is' would create a tense mismatch.

## 11. “All” (d)

This is an all-cleft meaning 'the only thing left.' The word 'that' immediately follows the blank, and only 'All' can precede 'that' in this structure. 'What that' and 'It that' are ungrammatical combinations.

## 12. “It” (b)

This is an it-cleft emphasising a time expression. The structure 'It was ... that ...' is the correct pattern. None of the other options can begin a sentence followed by 'was during ... that' in this way.

## 13. “is” (a)

This is a wh-cleft. The noun clause 'What we should focus on' is singular and in the present tense (signalled by 'should'), so the linking verb must be 'is.' 'Was' would create a tense mismatch with the modal 'should.'

**14. “that” (c)**

This is an it-cleft emphasising 'your attitude.' In it-cleft sentences, 'that' is the standard connector for non-human focused elements. 'Who' is only for people, and 'where' and 'what' do not function as connectors in it-clefts.

**15. “that” (a)**

This is a cleft-like structure using 'The thing that ...' to emphasise a quality. After 'The thing,' a relative pronoun 'that' is needed to introduce the relative clause. 'What' cannot follow a noun as a relative pronoun.

**16. “What” (d)**

This is a wh-cleft. Only 'What' can directly precede a verb like 'annoys' to form a noun clause without needing an additional word. 'All' and 'The thing' would each require 'that' (e.g., 'All that annoys me').

**17. “that” (b)**

This is an it-cleft emphasising a place phrase. Even though the focused element is a location, it-clefts use 'that' as the connector, not 'where' or 'when.' 'Who' is only for people.

**18. “was” (c)**

This is a wh-cleft. The linking verb must be 'was' to match the past tense of 'enjoyed.' The noun clause 'What the children enjoyed most' is singular, so 'were' is also incorrect.

**19. “All” (b)**

This is an all-cleft meaning 'the only thing that saved them.' Because 'that' immediately follows the blank, only 'All' fits. 'What that,' 'It that,' and 'Which that' are all ungrammatical combinations in English.

**20. “was” (d)**

This is an it-cleft with the fixed expression 'It was not until ...' used to emphasise a time point. The past tense 'was' is required to match the past tense verb 'found' in the that-clause.