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# Language Reference

UNIT 5 | Adding emphasis

# Adverbs of degree

Adverbs of degree can add emphasis to most adjectives and adverbs. These include: *very, really, extremely, so, just so, very... indeed.*

*It was just so short-sighted of them to risk upsetting our Japanese distributors.*

Some adjectives and adverbs are ungradable: they express extreme qualities such as perfection. With these words we use adverbs such as *completely, absolutely, utterly* (not *very*).

*It's absolutely vital that you inform me of things like that. (Not: ~~It's very vital that you inform me of things like that.~~)*

# Fronting

In most active sentences, the subject of the verb comes first. However, we can alter the word order to place the information we want to emphasize at the beginning of the sentence. This is called 'fronting'.

*I liked the conference hall, but I thought the accommodation was awful.*  
→ ***The conference hall** I liked. **The accommodation** I thought was awful.*

Note that subject and verb / auxiliary are inverted after negative expressions, after only, and after participles.

***Rarely have** I seen such a confident presentation.*  
***Only in Japan can you** get fish as fresh as this.*  
***Included in the contract was** a job description.*

# It-clefts

## Form

*it + be + emphasized language + relative clause*

## Use

To focus our attention on a noun phrase or adverbial.

*It was the finance director who suggested freezing recruitment.*

*It was earlier this morning that she phoned me.*

# What-clefts

## Form

*what* + noun phrase / clause + *be* + emphasized language

## Use

To move our attention to the end of the sentence.

*What he does is assess proposals.*

*What I want is an evening off.*

# Other phrases

We can also use phrases such as *the person / people who / that, the place where, the reason why, the thing that* to add emphasis.

*Tom is the person that you need to speak to.*

*The place where our 2012 conference will be held is Brighton.*

*The thing that annoys me most is that no one contacted us about the problem.*



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