

Explanations

Changing word order to change focus

- **Passive**
Passive constructions vary the way information is given in a sentence, putting more emphasis on what comes first. See Grammar 6 and 7.
All roads to the north have been blocked by snow.
- **Fronting and inversion**
Inversion here refers to changing the normal word order in the sentence so that a prepositional phrase is emphasised before the verb. This also involves putting the verb before the subject.
Suddenly down came the rain!
Up in the air went the balloon.
Fronting involves changing the order of clauses in a sentence and putting first for emphasis a clause that would usually not be first.
/ don't know where the money is coming from.
Where the money is coming from, I don't know.
Time phrases can vary in position, and are often put first because the time reference is important.
At six o'clock Monica decided to phone the police.
May clauses
There is a type of *may* clause introduced by *although* which can be inverted. It is a highly formal expression.
Although it may seem/be difficult, it is not impossible.
Difficult although it may seem/be, it is not impossible.
- **Cleft and pseudo cleft sentences**
These are sentences introduced by *it is/it was* or by a clause beginning *what*. Different parts of the sentence can be emphasised in this way.
In speech, stress and intonation also identify the emphasis.
With it is/was
Sue borrowed my bike last night.
It was Sue who borrowed my bike.
It was last night that Sue borrowed my bike.
It was my bike that Sue borrowed.
Sentences with *because* are also possible.
It was because I felt ill that I left.
Modal auxiliaries are also possible.
You can't have read the same book.
It can't have been the same book that you read.

What clauses

These are common with verbs such as *need, want, like, hate*.
I hate rainy weather.

What I hate is rainy weather.

You need a holiday.

What you need is a holiday.

It is also possible to emphasise events, using auxiliary *do/did*.
Peter left the windows unlocked.

What Peter did was (to) leave the windows unlocked.

They are destroying the environment.

What they are doing is destroying the environment.

Clauses beginning *all* emphasise 'the only thing'.

/ only need another £15.

All I need is another £15.

Adding words for emphasis

• *Own*

This intensifies possessive adjectives.

It was my own idea.

• *Very and indeed*

Very can be used emphatically to mean *exactly/precisely*.

At the very same moment, the telephone rang.

Very ... indeed is another way of intensifying adjectives.

It was very cold indeed.

• Emphasising negatives

Ways of emphasising *not* include: *at all, in the least, really*.

It was not at all cold. It was not cold at all.

In the least/slightest usually adds *bit* if used before an adjective.

/ wasn't interested in the slightest.

I wasn't the least bit interested.

No and *none* can be emphasised by *at all* and *whatsoever*.

There were none left at all.

There were no tickets left whatsoever.

• *The*

The can emphasise uniqueness. It is heavily stressed in speech.

Surely you are not the Elizabeth Taylor, are you?

• Question words ending in *-ever*

These add an air of disbelief to the question.

Whatever are you doing? Whoever told you that?

- Auxiliary *do*
This can emphasise the verb, and is stressed in speech.
/ do like this film! It's really great!
It is also used in polite forms.
/ do hope you'll come again! Do sit down!
- Adverbs and adjectives
A large number of adverbs and adjectives are used to add emphasis.
Common examples are:
/ actually went inside one of the Pyramids.
*It is **by no means** certain that the match will take place.*
*Some people were **even** wearing pullovers, it was **so** cold.*
*Her performance was **sheer** magic!*
*This book is **utter** nonsense!*
The following examples are only possible with adjectives which express an absolute opinion (non-gradable adjectives).
*It was **absolutely** fantastic!*
*The third exam question was **quite** (completely) impossible.*
*This guide book is **utterly** useless.*
*You were **simply** wonderful!*
*Don't cook the meat any more. It's **just** right!*
- Echoing phrases with *so*
These express agreement.
A: *This is the book you are looking for.* B: *So it is!*
- Time phrases
Common examples are: *day after day; time and time again; over and over again; day in, day out*
David reads the same book over and over again!
- Repetition of main verb
/ tried and tried, but it was no use.
- In the repetition of a phrase with a possessive it is possible to omit the first mention of the noun and use a possessive pronoun.
Their marriage was a successful marriage.
Theirs was a successful marriage.

- 7 Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. Do not change the word given.
- Please never ever interrupt me when I'm in a meeting.
am
On no account *am I (ever) to be interrupted* when I'm in a meeting.
 - Nobody from this school has ever written a better composition.
anyone
Never.....written a better composition.
 - Such was the demand for tickets that people queued day and night.
great
The demand for tickets.....that people queued day and night.
 - The money is not to be paid under any circumstances.
no
Under.....to be paid.
 - Three days passed before we arrived at the first oasis.
had
Not until.....at the first oasis.
 - Little did Brenda know what she was letting herself in for.
no
Brenda.....what she was letting herself in for.
 - It was only when I stopped that I realised something was wrong.
did
Only.....that something was wrong.
 - The accused never expressed regret for what he had done.
time
At.....regret for what he had done.
 - Exhaustion prevented any of the runners from finishing the race.
were
So.....of them finished the race.
 - It's not common for there to be so much rain in March.
see
Seldom.....so much rain in March.



SEE ALSO

Grammar 14: Emphasis
Grammar 15: Consolidation 3

- 3 Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. Do not change the word given.
- a) The car doesn't need anything else except new tyres.
needs
All **the car needs is** new tyres.
- b) Brenda didn't worry at all about her exams.
bit
Brenda wasn't the about her exams.
- c) The person who told me about the hotel was Keith.
who
It told me about the hotel.
- d) I had spent every last penny of my money.
absolutely
I had whatsoever.
- e) Although the ticket may seem expensive, it is good value for money.
though
Expensive the ticket is good value for money.
- f) I really hate lukewarm food.
stand
What I lukewarm food.
- g) In the end Martha went to the police.
was
In the end what Martha to the police.
- h) I think you must have seen a ghost.
that
It you saw.
- i) Her car was the last car you'd expect to be stolen.
very
Hers you'd expect to be stolen.
- j) The accident happened because someone was very careless.
caused
Sheer happen.

- Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. Do not change the word given.
- a) You are not to leave the hospital under any circumstances.
are
Under **no circumstances are you to** leave the hospital.
- b) Two weeks passed before the letter arrived.
did
Not until the letter arrive.
- c) She was so popular that everyone voted for her.
her
Such that everyone voted for her.
- d) Luckily it wasn't necessary for Jim to take the exam again.
need
Luckily Jim the exam.
- e) In the end I had no choice but to get a lift with a colleague.
could
In the end all get a lift with a colleague.
- f) The guests didn't finally leave until after midnight.
before
It the guests finally left.
- g) Paul smashed a window and damaged the television too.
but
Not only damaged the television.
- h) By law, all rear-seat passengers are obliged to wear seat-belts.
have
By law, seat-belts all rear-seat passengers.
- i) Harry tells the same joke all the time!
over
Harry tells the same joke again!
- j) It may seem strange but I like stale cake!
as
Strange I like stale cake!
- k) It was very kind of you to bring me chocolates.
shouldn't
You me chocolates.
- l) There's nothing better to do, so go home.
may
You go home.