

# PUT IMPORTANT THINGS AT THE FRONT

## About the language

The **broken cups**, did you throw them away?

In conversation, we can sometimes change the regular order of words to put emphasis on particular parts of the sentence. We focus on this aspect of spoken English in the last two units of this book. First, we look at 'heads': things we take from their normal place and put at the front of sentences.

### 1 Recognising 'heads'

We often use heads in questions. Here is a question using normal word order:

Did you wear your new pink dress to Jo's party?

And here is the same question, with *your new pink dress* at the front as a head:

**Your new pink dress**, did you wear it to Jo's party?

Find three questions with heads in the dialogue below, and underline the heads. Rewrite them in the normal word order. Check your answers on page 81.



- Amy: Thank goodness they've finally gone! It's two in the morning.  
 Tom: What a mess! That red bag in the corner, is it yours?  
 Amy: Oh no! Someone's left it. The girl with the tall boyfriend, do you know her name? I think it's her bag. They left at midnight.  
 Tom: She'll ring us, won't she? Anyway, we'd better start clearing up. Those bottles on the table, are they all empty?  
 Amy: Yes. They can be recycled.



Listen to the dialogue and notice the intonation speakers use for the head, and the pause after it.

► Practice: Exercises 1, 4 and 5 pages 82–83.

### 2 The purpose of heads

Try using a head to ask the question below. Check your answer on page 81.

Is that table by the window free?

Taking something from its normal place and putting it at the front is a way of saying 'This is what I'm talking about':

- A: **My new trainers**, I can't find them anywhere.  
 B: Have you looked under the sofa?

In a shop, it's a bit like pointing your finger:

- A: **This DVD player**, is it the cheapest one you've got?  
 B: No, madam. But it's one of the most popular.

It is also a useful way of breaking a long or more complex sentence into two parts:

Are the people you work with nice? → **The people you work with**, are they nice?

And when we're talking about friends of friends, or the family of people we know, it can be easier to understand what we're saying if we use heads:

- 1 Sal's new teacher's husband is a footballer. → **Sal's new teacher**, her husband is a footballer.
- 2 My friend Jack's parents are both doctors. → **My friend Jack**, his parents are both doctors.

► Practice: Exercises 2, 4 and 5 pages 82–83.

### 3 'Repeating' the head

Apart from the change in word order, there is another grammatical difference between a regular sentence and a sentence with a head.

Look at the two examples below. What is the other grammatical difference? (If you're not sure, count the words in both questions.) Check your answer below.

- 1 Are those mountains in the distance the Alps?
- 2 Those mountains in the distance, are they the Alps?

After putting a head at the front, we must 'repeat' it later on with a pronoun:

- 1 A: That new French restaurant on Park Street, does **it** look any good?  
 B: The menu's interesting, but it's very pricey.
- 2 A: The CDs you bought this morning, can I have a look at **them**?  
 B: Of course. I put them on the kitchen table.
- 3 A: The house opposite the cinema, is **that** where you live?  
 B: That's right. I see all the latest films.
- 4 A: My mum, **she's** always shouting at me!  
 B: I'm not surprised. You never do anything to help around the house.

► Practice: Exercises 3 and 4 pages 82–83.

### 4 The variety of types of head

The examples below show how you can use subjects, objects and clauses as heads:

- 1 **Denise** is the person you need to speak to. → **Denise** (subject), she's the person you need to speak to.
- 2 Tom's sold those two old computers, you know. → **Those two old computers** (object), Tom's sold them, you know.
- 3 I've lost the phone number of **the man who repaired our fridge!** → **The man who repaired our fridge** (clause), I've lost his phone number!
- 4 Did **the woman in the corner** tell you her name? → **The woman in the corner** (clause), did she tell you her name?

#### Answers

- 1 That red bag in the corner, is it yours? (Is that red bag in the corner yours?); The girl with the tall boyfriend, do you know her name? (Do you know the name of the girl with the tall boyfriend?); Those bottles on the table, are they all empty? (Are those bottles on the table all empty?)
- 2 That table by the window, is it free?
- 3 When we use a head, we need to use a pronoun in the second part of a sentence to refer back to it.

### Practice

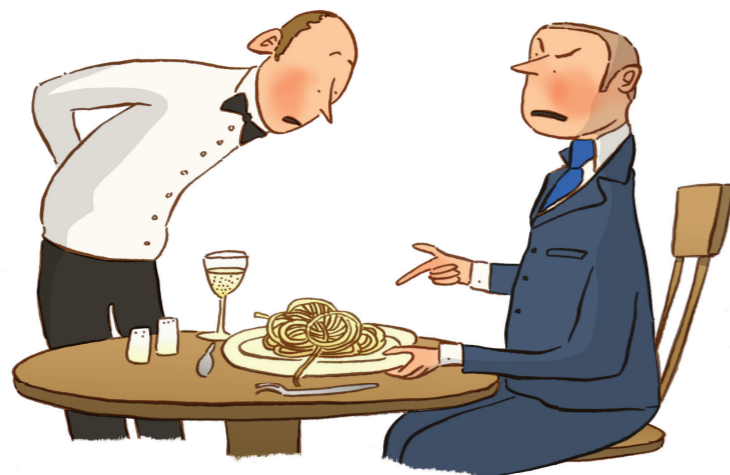
**1a Match 1–6 with a–f to make sentences.**

- |                                  |                                  |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 Your new shoes,                | a it really hurts!               |
| 2 That woman by the window,      | b have you met them yet?         |
| 3 My foot,                       | c where did you get them?        |
| 4 The new neighbours,            | d have you still got the recipe? |
| 5 That delicious chocolate cake, | e what was the score?            |
| 6 The match last night,          | f is she a relative of yours?    |



Listen and check your answers. Then listen again and mark the stressed words and pauses.

**2 Complete the dialogues 1–6 with the questions/statements a–f.**



- 1 A: This spaghetti, it's cold!  
 B: I'm very sorry. We'll change it right away
- 2 A: \_\_\_\_\_  
 B: It does. Would you prefer it without?
- 3 A: \_\_\_\_\_  
 B: Oh, it's on special offer, £599.
- 4 A: \_\_\_\_\_  
 B: Sure, anything else?
- 5 A: \_\_\_\_\_  
 B: Oh dear, I'll go and change them for you.
- 6 A: \_\_\_\_\_  
 B: No, sorry, that's the last one I'm afraid.
- a The French cheese, I'll have 300g please.  
 b These apples, they're bruised!  
 c That red coat, have you got it in a size 10?  
 d The computer in the window, how much is it?  
 e The salad, does it come with a dressing?  
 f This spaghetti, it's cold!

**3 Choose the correct pronoun (it, him, etc.) to complete the questions.**

- These papers on the table, are \_\_\_\_\_ yours?
- Your new black boots, can I borrow \_\_\_\_\_ tonight?
- The new Turkish restaurant, have you been to \_\_\_\_\_ yet?
- The actress in that film, I can't stand \_\_\_\_\_!
- The woman over there in the fur coat, what's \_\_\_\_\_ name?
- The tickets you bought, are \_\_\_\_\_ really the best you could get?
- That blue bike over there, is \_\_\_\_\_ his?
- The bus stop at the end of the road, is \_\_\_\_\_ where we have to go?

**4 Rewrite the sentences in two parts using the underlined heads and pronouns in brackets.**

- Could you pass me the jug of water please? (it)  
That jug of water could you pass me it please?
- Is the book you're reading at the moment any good? (it)
- Are the swimming baths far from the school? (they)
- Did you see those amazing documentaries on Africa? (them)
- Do you remember the name of the Russian girl in your evening class? (her)
- I can't find my memory stick anywhere. (it)

**5a Complete the dialogues with the phrases in the box.**

My bike • That man • Michelle Thomas • My mum's birthday •  
 The phone bill • His e-mail

- A: My mum's birthday, it's today! I forgot to send her a card.  
 B: Why don't you ring her, then?
- A: \_\_\_\_\_, I forgot to pay it!  
 B: But it was due weeks ago. We'll get cut off!
- A: \_\_\_\_\_, he's so rude!  
 B: Why? What did he do?  
 A: He never looks at you when he's serving you, never says hello and just throws your change at you.
- A: Can I speak to somebody about my account please?  
 B: \_\_\_\_\_, she's the person you need to speak to. She's at the desk over there.
- A: \_\_\_\_\_, that guy's just stolen it!  
 B: Don't worry, I'll go after him.
- A: \_\_\_\_\_, it wasn't very clear.  
 B: I know what you mean, it didn't answer any of our questions did it?

**b Add lines a–f to the dialogues 1–6 above.**

- Thanks, I'll go and speak to her now.
- I will! As soon as I get a spare minute.
- No; he's really not a very good communicator.
- Don't worry; I'll ring them straight away.
- Be careful! He might get nasty.
- He obviously needs to go on a training course!

### Extension

- Imagine you're staying in a foreign country. Write a dialogue using headers to ask about the local area. Look out of the window to get ideas (e.g. *That white building, is it a sports stadium?*)
- Record the dialogue. Remember to stress the correct words and pause, as in Exercise 1.