

## Communication Strategies: Emphasis

**USE:** We give emphasis to sentences in order to express different emotions--- anger, frustration, and surprise for example. We also use it to stress or reinforce a point we are making. In writing, emphasis can be shown visually (by using underlining or bold text) or grammatically. Grammatical emphasis depends on the part of speech:

**FORM:** **Verbs** in the affirmative take an emphatic *do, does, or did* (*I study. I do study.*); in the negative, the contraction is opened (*I don't care. I do not care.*).

**Auxiliaries** receive stress when not contracted. Students often avoid using contractions, giving the auxiliary an unintended emphasis. While *I can't go to the airport* is only a fact, *I cannot go to the airport* insists on the speaker's refusal. Compare the neutral *I'll see you later* with the determined *I will see you later*—either a promise or a threat.

**Other parts of speech** (subjects, objects, adverbs) use the following construction:

*It is* + EMPHASIZED WORDS + *that* + REST OF SENTENCE

**EXAMPLES:** *She saw the movie last night.*  
***It's** she (her, ORAL) **that** saw the movie last night.* (and not someone else)  
***It's** the movie **that** she saw last night.* (and not a play)  
***It was** last night **that** she saw the movie.* (and not some other night)

*Emphasize the underlined words, then practise your answers aloud with a partner. Use the form above in your answers.*

1. Yes, I'll be there.

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2. No, she can't come until Wednesday.

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3. He's a good programmer.

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4. You shouldn't have spoken to her so soon.

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5. I think he appreciates your work.

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6. She works hard.

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7. He tries.

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8. I wanted to go to Hollywood.

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9. Jill and Jeff get along with the new boss.

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10. Jill and Jeff like him.

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11. Carole and Martin left early yesterday.

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12. Frank called.

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13. Eric wrote that article about the merger.

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14. Sue told me about Pete's resigning.

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15. Gina recommended this place to me.

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