



## ***THERE/IT* FILLER SUBJECTS**

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Every English sentence must have a subject. Sometimes *there* and *it* are used as *filler* subjects. These words are called *filler* subjects because they fill the place in a sentence where the subject belongs. The real subject comes after the verb. Filler subjects *don't have any meaning* in the sentence; *there* does not indicate a place and *it* does not refer to anything specific. *There* and *it* filler subjects are used differently.

### **THERE**

Use **there** to show:

- Something exists  
There is a nice breeze outside.  
There's not a cloud in the sky.  
There were 200 guests at the wedding.  
There will be a message telling us when to arrive.
- Something happens  
There will be a concert on Friday night.  
There was an accident on the highway.  
Is there a meeting this morning?

Notes about **there** as a filler subject:

1. Certain verbs follow **there**, usually the verb *be*. Some other verbs are *seem (to be)*, *need (to be)*, *appear (to be)*, and *modals* followed by *be*.

There *seems to be* a problem with the phone.  
There *might be* an easier way to do this.  
There *ought to be* a law against that kind of behavior.

2. **There** is normally used with *indefinite nouns and pronouns*. The noun or pronoun after the verb does not refer to a specific person, place, or thing.

There's *someone* at the door.  
There was *a noise* outside.

3. The verb agrees in number with the noun after the verb.

There was *one person* in the store.  
(*Person* is singular, so the verb is singular—*was*.)  
There were *20 people* in the store.  
(*People* is plural, so the verb is plural—*were*.)

## It

Use **it** as a filler subject to express something about:

- Weather
  - It is chilly outside.
  - It was a dark and stormy night.
  - It rained all day yesterday.
  
- Temperature
  - It was 20 degrees yesterday.
  - It feels like -5 degrees outside with the wind chill factor.
  
- Time and dates
  - It is 4:30.
  - It will be Friday by the time I finish this.
  - It was 20 years ago today when we met.
  - It takes 15 minutes to get from my house to school.
  
- Distance
  - It's 25 miles to their house.
  - It's approximately 300 miles from St. Louis to Chicago.
  
- A situation
  - What was it like at the lake?
  - It was very peaceful. It wasn't noisy at all.
  
- What it's like to do something (Note the *adjective+infinitive/-ing* pattern after the verb.)
  - It feels wonderful to sleep late on weekends.
  - It was great seeing all my old friends again.
  - It will be interesting to hear what they have to say.
  - It was nice meeting you. It was nice to meet you.

Notes about **it** as a filler subject:

1. *Be* is the most common verb after **it**. Instead of *be*, you may also use other perception verbs, such as *seem*, *feel*, *appear*.

It *seems* strange that you didn't hear the news.

It *feels* like Friday even though it's only Wednesday.

2. The verb after **it** is *always singular*.

It *is* 3:00.

It *is* 3 miles from my house to school.

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