

It ... 2

A

We can use a pattern with **it** as the object of a verb where **it** refers forward to a clause. It can sometimes be followed directly by a **that-**, **if-** or **when-**clause after **can't bear**, **hate**, **like**, **love**, **resent** and **can't stand**, and by an **if-** or **when-**clause after **dislike**, **enjoy**, **prefer** and **understand**:

- I **hate it that** you can swim so well and I can't. (*not* I hate that you can swim ...)
- We always **enjoy it when** they stay with us. (*not* We always enjoy when they ...)

Some verbs can be followed by **it** and a **that-**clause, particularly in spoken English, or directly by a **that-**clause without it:

- You've just got to **accept (it) that** Emil's gone and won't be coming back.

Also: **admit**, **deny**, **guarantee**, **mention**

Many other verbs that can be followed by a **that-**clause or **wh-**clause are not used with **it** in this way:

- I can't **remember when** I last saw her. (*not* ... remember it when ...)

Also: **argue**, **discover**, **emphasise**, **notice**, **predict**

B

With other verbs used to indicate how we see a particular event or situation, **it** is followed first by an adjective or noun phrase and then a **that-**clause, **to-**infinitive clause, or clause beginning **when**:

- Officials said they **believe it unlikely that** any lasting damage to the environment has been done. (*or* ... they **believe it is unlikely that** ...; *not* ... they believe unlikely that ...)

Also: **consider**, **feel**, **find** (= discover something from experience), **think**

When we use **leave** and **owe** (= have a responsibility to) with **it** we can use **to somebody + to-**infinitive after it:

- Don't bother to arrange anything. Just **leave it to me to sort out**.
- She **owed it to her parents to do** well at college.

C

With the verbs **accept**, **regard**, **see**, **take** (= interpret something in a particular way), or **view** we use **it + as + noun (or adjective) + clause**:

- We **see it as an insult to have received no reply to our letter**.
- I **take it as encouraging when students attend all my lectures**.

D

It is / was no ... vs There is / was no ...

Here are some common expressions including **It is / was no ...** and **There is / was no ...**:

- It's no secret** that he wants a new job.
- It's no surprise** that his latest film has been so successful.
- It's no use** telling me now. I needed to know a week ago.
- It's no good** getting angry. That won't help solve the problem.
- It's no coincidence (or accident)** that they left the party at the same time.
- It's no longer** necessary to have a visa to visit the country.

- There's no denying** that he's intelligent.
- I'm afraid **there's no alternative (or choice)** but to ask her to leave.
- There's no hope** of getting more money.
- There's no need** to explain how it works; I'll read the manual.
- There's no point** in buying an ice-cream maker unless you plan to use it a lot.
- There's no question** of agreeing to his demands.
- There's no reason** to be pessimistic.
- There's no chance** of finding a cure if we don't fund more research.

The sentences with **It is / was no ...** have alternatives in which the **that-**, **-ing** or **to-**infinitive clause is placed at the front, but the sentences with **There is / was no ...** do not. Compare:

- It's no secret** that he wants a new job. (*or* That he wants a new job is no secret.) *and*
- There's no denying** that he's intelligent. (*but not* That he's intelligent is no denying.)

Exercises

97.1 Complete each sentence with an appropriate form of a verb from the box. If necessary, add it.

A & B

can't bear consider discover enjoy find
leave owe predict prefer remember

- 1 She can't bear it when people criticise her work, and she gets very upset.
- 2 I hard to understand why the film was made in black and white and not colour.
- 3 If you that you can't get to the meeting on the 16th I'll try to rearrange it.
- 4 We to our supporters to play to the best of our ability in the match.
- 5 I that the camera was on the table when I left the house.
- 6 I really when the weather's hot like this. I'd hate to live in a cold climate.
- 7 I can't stop you dismantling your motorbike in the kitchen, but I'd if you didn't.
- 8 I think we should to the children to do the washing up.
- 9 I that Randa will withdraw from the course within a month.
- 10 I a privilege to have known Mark Jennings.

97.2 Here are some notes a managing director made for his first speech to the board of directors. In the speech he expanded the notes beginning I + (verb) + it as ..., using the verbs in brackets. Write what he said. C

- 1 great honour - asked to become - managing director - Rexco (take)
I take it as a great honour to be asked to become managing director of Rexco.
- 2 part of my role - significantly reduce Rexco's carbon footprint - next 5 years (see)
- 3 necessary evil - some people - may redundant - in next year (accept)
- 4 important for relations with workforce - make available information - managers' salaries (view)
- 5 unacceptable - modern company - exclude workforce - major decision-making (regard)
- 6 fundamental principle of company - suppliers of raw materials - given fair price for products (take)

97.3 Complete the sentences with an appropriate it ... or there ... phrase from section D opposite. Suggest alternatives where possible. D

- 1 It's no coincidence that Karlsbad has won the ice hockey tournament for the last three years. It is a very rich club and its training facilities are excellent.
- 2 My contact lens must have fallen out in the snow, so of finding it.
- 3 that Julia and Jakub have split up. Everyone in the office knows.
- 4 I know your exam result wasn't good, but getting depressed about it.
- 5 Your broken arm will take some time to mend, but why you shouldn't be playing tennis again by the summer.
- 6 As the car ferry isn't running because of the high winds, but to drive 100 kilometres around the lake.
- 7 possible to buy tickets at the theatre. You have to buy them online.
- 8 Bungee jumping might be dangerous, but that it's very exciting.