

ACADEMIC ENGLISH We can use *there* + a passive reporting verb (e.g. *is/are said to be*, *is/are thought to be*) + an indefinite noun phrase to describe a general feeling or belief.

There are thought to be several contributory factors in genetic mutation.

According to reliable sources, there are believed to be a million sufferers of the disease.

4 *it* as an empty object

We use *it* as an 'empty' object after certain verbs to introduce a following clause:

<i>like/hate/love</i> + <i>it</i> + <i>when/that</i> clause (This is used to describe likes and dislikes.)	<i>I hate it when people stare at me.</i> <i>We love it when the grandchildren come over.</i>
<i>would appreciate it</i> + <i>if</i> clause (This is used to make a polite request.)	<i>I would appreciate it if you would keep your seat belts fastened until I switch off the seat belt signs.</i>
<i>owe/leave it to somebody</i> + infinitive clause	<i>We owe it to him to try and find a resolution.</i> <i>We leave it to you to suggest a suitable date.</i>
<i>think/find/consider/feel</i> + <i>it</i> + adjective/ noun/preposition phrase + <i>that</i> clause*	<i>I find it intolerable that we have no recourse in law.</i> <i>He thought it a pity that they hadn't qualified.</i>
<i>accept/regard/see/take/view</i> + <i>it</i> + <i>as</i> + noun/adjective + clause	<i>We regard it as inevitable that some participants will not complete the course.</i>

* We don't usually use *it* as an 'empty' object when the main verb is not followed by an adjective or by a noun or preposition phrase:

~~X She thought it that he had resigned.~~ ✓ *She thought that he had resigned.*

5 Impersonal *it*

We can use *it + be* with adjectives and nouns that describe our attitudes, feelings and opinions, e.g. *a pity*, *wonderful*, *surprising*. This allows us to describe our feelings and opinions in an impersonal way. Compare:

I'm not surprised (that) she left you. (speaker's opinion)

It isn't surprising that she left you. (impersonal statement)

There are several patterns we use:

<i>it + be</i> + adjective + <i>-ing</i> form (We use this in informal English.)	<i>It was lovely meeting you at last.</i> <i>It's wonderful sitting out here in the sun.</i>
<i>it + be</i> + adjective/noun + infinitive clause	<i>It's lovely to meet you. It's wonderful to sit out here in the sun.</i> <i>It would be a shame to miss this opportunity.</i>
<i>it + be</i> + adjective + <i>that</i> clause	<i>It isn't surprising that she left you.</i>
<i>it + be</i> + adjective + <i>wh-</i> clause	<i>It was amazing how she recovered so quickly.</i>

ACADEMIC ENGLISH The following patterns with *it* are common in academic and scientific English because they allow us to present information in an impersonal way.

• *it + be* + adjective/noun + infinitive clause:

It was possible to recognise regularities in the patterns of soil distribution.

It is difficult not to be influenced by the work of these early philosophers.

• *it + be* + adjective + *that/wh-* clause:

It is significant that so few of the patients suffered side effects.

It isn't clear how this process begins.

• *it + verb phrase* (usually passive) + *that* clause:

It has been shown that most of the patients improved noticeably.

It should be noted that the majority of the responses were positive.

It is said that economic factors were significant in a majority of the cases.

It has been argued that many of the cases are the result of faulty diagnosis.

Pronoun *it* ► Unit 4 *it* to introduce cleft sentences ► Unit 75.2

More expressions with *there* and *it* ► Unit 44