

Cañada College
WRITING IV class
CAUSE/EFFECT ESSAYS

Text: *Writing Academic English*, Chapter 6, pp 94-110

Cause signal words: p. 101

Effect signal words: p. 102

Rules for Writers

- parallelisms, p 64; in headings, p. 64; in paragraphs, p. 52; in sentences pp 84-87
- an online exercise/quiz on parallel construction:
http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/GRAMMAR/quizzes/parallelism2_quiz.htm -
- Conditional tenses, pp. 239-39

In writing your **cause/effect essay**: the first thing to remember is:

Don't choose a topic that is TOO broad. If you choose an enormous topic like poverty, or pollution, or racism, you will have to scale it down (= delete some parts of the problem): what ASPECT(s) will you cover in your essay? (You're not going to write an entire encyclopedia on the entire topic!)

Then, decide WHAT comes first (what is the cause or origin?) What is/are the consequence(s)? Look at the example in the chapter about deforestation and the chain of events. Is that the type of essay you want to write?

It is important to decide WHERE you're starting in the chain of events.

EXAMPE: STRESS

Some CAUSES of stress:

financial worries; relationship problems, traffic; working too many hours; working at a job you hate; coming to English class ☺;

Effect: STRESS

STRESS then CAUSES various problems (or EFFECTS), for example:

Sleep disturbances; impaired auto-immune system; eating disorders; depression; anger; irritability (which can then, in turn, cause (further) relationship problems, separation and/or divorce

One of the most difficult aspects of writing a good essay is defining your topic carefully. It is important to decide early, as a cause/effect essay can become VERY complicated. You want your essay to be thorough for the

problems you want to discuss, but not so complicated that you don't cover the subject sufficiently.

What can you write about?

Possible topics:

- Recycling
 - o (POSSIBLE PROBLEM: this cannot only be about "recycling" – it's too big a topic; the essay focus needs to be narrowed: recycling WHAT? Water? Plastic? Metals? Compost?);
- Pollution
 - o SAME POSSIBLE PROBLEM AS "Recycling": the topic is too big; it's better to choose one aspect of it only: air OR water OR soil OR rivers – then explain the factors involved.
- Micro-financing and its Effects
- Choosing a health insurance policy:
 - o There are a lot of things to compare and contrast between health insurance policies:
 - Can you choose your own doctor?
 - What is the deductible?
 - Is there a dental policy?
 - Is there a vision policy?
 - Is there a co-payment when you go to the doctor's office?
 - What prescriptions are covered?
 - Etc.
- Causes AND/ OR Effects of Stress;
- Choosing the Type of Garden You Want to Grow
 - o what type: flower garden? Vegetable garden? where? Type of soil needed? Water or drought-resistant? organic or chemical in fertilizers and pest control?;
- The El Niño Phenomenon; Causes + Effects of Obesity;
- Global Warming (CAREFUL!);
- How Head Start Programs Benefit Children's Education;
- How People Become Homeless and Effects on Society
- Health/unhealthy Choices;
- Effects of Organic vs Non-organic Food;
- Effects of Different Types of Education;
- Advantages and Disadvantages of Illegal Immigration in this Country;
- The Main Causes of Emigration;
- The Effects of the Internet on Society;
- The Effects of HIV/AIDS on Society or on the Individual and his/her Family
- The Physical Effects of Anger;

- Alcoholism
 - o What are some of the *causes* of alcoholism? What are the *effects* of alcoholism on the alcoholic (himself or herself), on his/her family; on work? What is the cost to society in health issues, accidents, psychological issues of their children, etc.?
- Why High School Students Drop Out of School;
- Diabetes (causes OR effects of diabetes)
- Eating Disorders (in general, or specific: bulimia or anorexia)
 - o What *causes* eating disorders? What health *effects* are there from having an eating disorder? How does it affect family and friends? What price does society pay (effect) for the millions of women who have eating disorders?

Elements of a cause/effect essay:

1. Who is your audience? What do you ASSUME they already know? What do you need to define or explain in detail?
2. What came first? What results or effects happened because of something else?
3. What transition words can you use?
4. Do you have a “working title”? (Make sure it reflects your content.)
5. Give it to someone else to proofread it. Does it make sense? Have you forgotten anything?
6. Did you give examples?
7. Are your instructions thorough? (Is your paper too short?)
8. Do you have an introduction? A thesis statement? A conclusion?
9. Did you quote anyone?
10. Do you have a bibliography or “Resources” page? (Where did you get the information for your essay?)

Other things to remember:

- Keep your “voice” formal (avoid informal language).
- Keep it in ONE verb tense. (For this cause/effect essay, you may use past, conditional and future.)
- Watch punctuation, spelling, and grammar. Use “spell check” and “grammar check” on your computer.

To look at the structure of a cause/effect essay:

Cause and Effect graphic organizers:

http://www.educationoasis.com/curriculum/GO/cause_effect.htm

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/graphicorganizers/causeandeffect/>

(Scroll down to see their graphic organizers for a cause/effect essay)

A video series that talks about essay-writing (these are pretty general, not very specific, but you may find them helpful):

http://www.ehow.com/video_4987169_write-cause-effect-essay.html

This includes “how to write an essay,” “How to write a conclusion,” “How to write a 5-paragraph essay”