



Cause/ Effect Checklist

- ⇒ Are you focusing on the main causes/effects?
- ⇒ Have you used the organizational strategy that works best for your topic?
- ⇒ Are you focused on either the causes, the effects, or both, depending on your instructor's requirements?
- ⇒ Have you used effective transitions throughout your essay?
- ⇒ Are you reminding the reader of the significance of these causes/effects in your conclusion?
- ⇒ If necessary, do you refer to relevant causes in your effect essay?

Works Cited

- Fawcett, Susan. *Evergreen: A Guide to Writing with Readings*. 9th ed. Boston: Wadsworth/ Cengage, 2011. Print
- Kirsznner, Laurie and Stephen Mandell. *Patterns for College Writing: A Rhetorical Reader and Guide*. 9th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004. Print.



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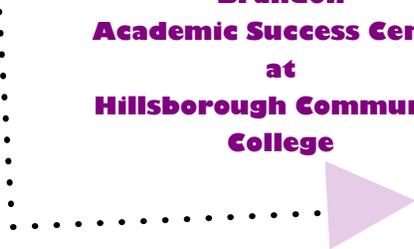


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Cause/ Effect Essay

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Cause/Effect

Cause and effect essays examine either the lead up to or the aftermath of events or situations. While they can be used in literary or science essays, they will most often describe either historical events or social issues. For example, your psychology professor may ask you to write on the causes of poverty, or your American History professor may have you write on the effects of the Civil War.

What Is Cause?

A cause essay describes why a particular thing happens. It can show a series of events or multiple events that build to the same event or situation. Be sure you cover all of the most important causes in your essay.

Often, causes will come in chains—one event creates an effect, which acts as the cause of another event, and so on. For example, bullying may lead to self-esteem issues, which may lead to an eating disorder, which leads to poor health. Be sure to take this into consideration when organizing your paper.

What Is Effect?

Effect essays will describe the things that happened as a result of a specific event or problem.

In a paper that focuses on effect, it may be helpful or even necessary to refer back to the causes of a problem/event, as these often have an impact on the effects. For example, in a paper on the effects of the Civil War, you may want to refer back to the slavery debate as one of the causes.

NOTE: Sometimes the professor will combine cause and effect into one essay. If this is the case, be sure to give equal focus in your paper to both.

Outline for a Cause Essay:

Introduction:

- Thesis: make sure the thesis focuses on the reason why something occurred rather than the effects.

i.e., The American Civil War was brought on by many factors, including the growing cultural divide between North and South, the issue of state versus federal government, and the growing debate concerning slavery.

Body Paragraph:

- Least or weakest point. This is usually whatever cause is least important or relevant.

Body Paragraph:

- Second-most important cause.

Body Paragraph:

- The most important or common cause for whatever your paper is focusing on.

Conclusion:

- Wrap up your paper. Make sure that you remind the reader of why it is important to understand the causes of whatever event you are describing.

Transitions Used in Cause:

before	first
secondly	the beginning
another	most importantly

Outline for an Effect Essay:

Introduction:

- Thesis: make sure your thesis focuses on the outcome of a specific event or problem not the causes.

i.e., Poverty's many negative effects include poorer health, social isolation, and an educational gap that can last a lifetime.

Body Paragraph:

- Least or weakest point. This is usually whatever effect is least important or relevant.

Body Paragraph:

- Second-most important effect.

Body Paragraph:

- The most important or common effect for whatever your paper is focusing on.

Conclusion:

- Wrap up your paper: make sure you let the reader know why understanding these effects is important, or offer ways to offset them.

NOTE: Least-to-most important is only one way to organize a cause or effect essay. Depending on your topic, you may organize chronologically or follow a chain of events.

Transitions Used in Effect:

after	next
first	later
most importantly	last

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