

Cause and Effect Paragraph

Cause and effect is a common way to organize information in a text. Paragraphs structured as cause and effect explain reasons why something happened or the effects of something. These paragraphs can be ordered as causes and effects or as effects and then causes. The cause and effect text structure is generally used in expository and persuasive writing modes.

The Purpose of Cause and Effect in Writing

It is often considered human nature to ask, “why?” and “how?” We want to know how our child got sick so we can better prevent it from happening in the future, or why a colleague received a pay raise because we want one as well. We want to know how much money we will save over the long term if we buy a hybrid car, or how long we will live if we exercise daily. These examples identify only a few of the relationships we think about in our lives, but each shows the importance of understanding cause and effect.

A cause is something that produces an event or condition; an effect is what results from an event or condition. The purpose of the cause-and-effect essay is to determine how various phenomena relate in terms of origins and results. Sometimes the connection between cause and effect is clear, but often determining the exact relationship between the two is very difficult. For example, the following effects of a cold may be easily identifiable: a sore throat, runny nose, and a cough. But determining the cause of the sickness can be far more difficult. A number of causes are possible, and to complicate matters, these possible causes could have combined to cause the sickness. That is, more than one cause may be responsible for any given effect. Therefore, cause-and-effect discussions are often complicated and frequently lead to debates and arguments.

Structure

Organization 1: Writing about Causes

- ▶ **Topic sentence:** statement of the effect and overview of the causes
- ▶ **Body:** causes, arranged in chronological or logical order
 - ▶ Cause 1
 - ▶ Cause 2
 - ▶ Cause 3
- ▶ **Conclusion:** restatement of effect, summary of causes – call for action



N.B/ The same structure is applied to the effect paragraph

Example 1:

Many people think that they can get sick by going into cold weather improperly dressed; however, illnesses are not caused by temperature- they are caused by germs. So while shivering outside in the cold probably won't strengthen your immune system, you're more likely to contract an illness indoors because you will have a greater exposure to germs.

In the above example, the paragraph explains how germs cause illnesses. The germs are the cause in the paragraph and the illness is the effect.

Another Example:

Students are not allowed to chew gum in my class. While some students think that I am just being mean, there are many good reasons for this rule. First, some irresponsible students make messes with their gum. They may leave it on the bottoms of desks, drop it on the floor, or put it on other people's property. Another reason why I don't allow students to chew gum is because it is a distraction. When they are allowed to chew gum, students are more worried about having it, popping it, chewing it, and snapping it then they are in listening, writing, reading, and learning. This is why I don't allow students to chew gum in my class.

Identifying a text written using the cause and effect pattern of organization can be tricky. In most stories, events in the plot occur for various reasons. This can be mistaken for the cause and effect text structure; however, stories are organized chronologically, and the information in each passage is more likely to be organized by the time in which each event occurred. Contrarily, cause and effect passages usually focus on explaining the reason why something occurs or occurred, and time will usually not pass in these paragraphs.

Exsample 3

Causes of Child Obesity

"Many of today's kids are engaged in sedentary pursuits made possible by a level of technology unthinkable as recently as 25 to 30 years ago. Computer, video, and other virtual games, the ready availability of feature films and games on DVD, plus high-tech advancements in music-listening technology have come down into the range of affordability for parents and even for the kids themselves. These passive pursuits have produced a downside of reduced physical activity for the kids, often with the explicit or implicit consent of the parents. . . .

"Other fairly recent developments have also contributed to the alarming rise in child obesity rates. Fast food outlets offering consumables that are both low in price and low in nutritional content

have exploded all over the American landscape since the 1960s, especially in suburban areas close to major highway interchanges. Kids on their lunch breaks or after school often congregate in these fast food outlets, consuming food and soft drinks that are high in sugar, carbohydrates, and fat. Many parents, themselves, frequently take their children to these fast food places, thus setting an example the kids can find justification to emulate."

(MacKie Shilstone, Mackie Shilstone's Body Plan for Kids. Basic Health Publications, 2009)

Here are some signal words that may indicate that information in a paragraph is organized as cause and effect: *because, as a result, resulted, caused, affected, since, due to, effect.*

Practice 1

Cause and Effect Worksheet

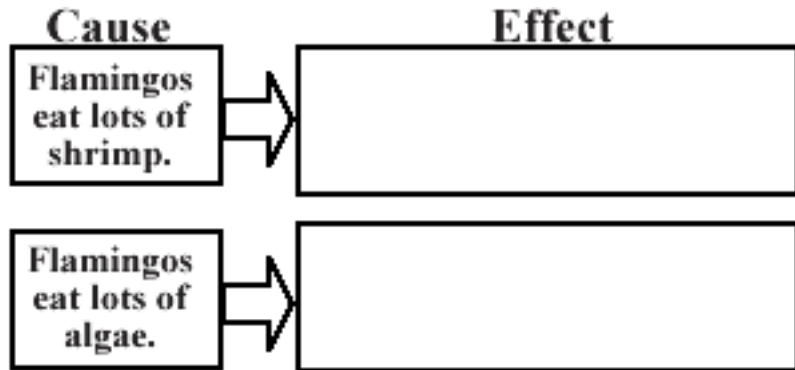
Everything Pink

Overview: *Cause and effect* is one type of text structure. When a writer is using the *cause and effect* text structure, he or she is usually explaining reasons why something happened.

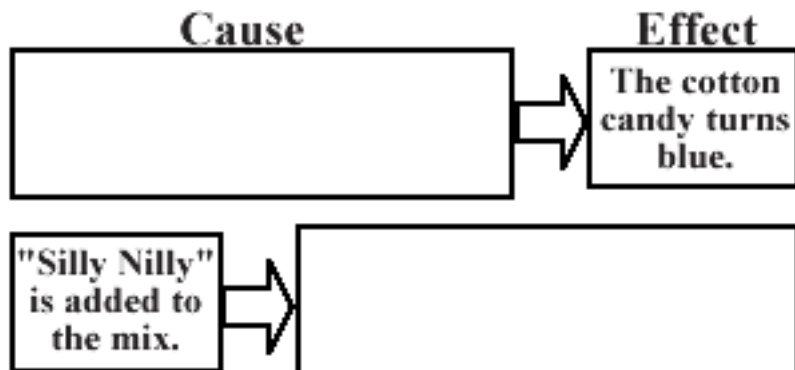
Directions: read each paragraph. A graphic organizer is used to show the structure of the text. Fill in the missing boxes with the appropriate info.



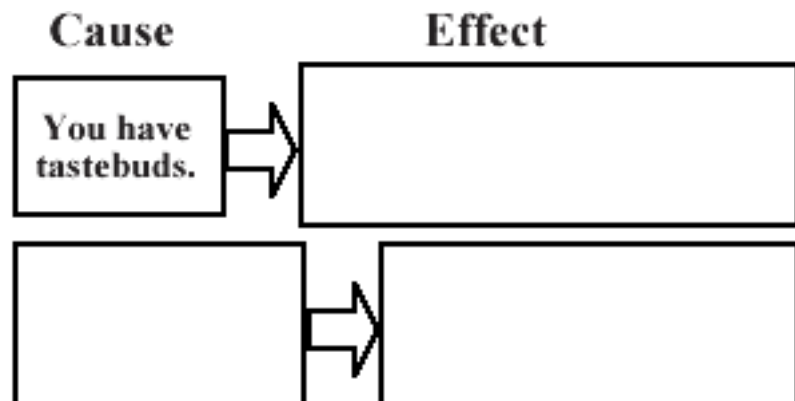
1. Some flamingos are pink. Not all flamingos are pink. The pink color comes from their diet. Flamingos that eat lots of shrimp will be pink. Flamingos that eat lots of algae will be pale or white.



2. Cotton candy is made from sugar. Its natural color is white. The color is added. "Boo Blue" is used to make blue cotton candy. "Silly Nilly" is added to make pink cotton candy, which has a vanilla flavor.



3. Did you know that your tongue is a muscle? It is. And it's the only muscle you have that's covered in saliva and taste buds. Having taste buds stops you from eating rotten food. Having saliva protects you from some germs and bacteria. Gross, but helpful.



Practice 2

Write two paragraph from the following topics :

- 1. Smoking cigarettes' effects on health.*
- 2. Causes of failed love relationships*
- 3. Causes of high rates of divorce in Algeria*
- 3. Regular workout or sport's effects.*
- 4. Social media effects on children.*