The Cause & Effect Essay

- The cause and effect essay explores the **reasons for** or **results of** things or events.

- This type of essay can include both causes and effects, but **generally contains only one of the two.**

- When choosing your topic, make sure that the topic is not too large or too small.

Thesis Statement

- Make sure your thesis statement indicates whether the essay will discuss causes or effects (or both).

- Examples of thesis statements

  a) The chief causes of dissatisfaction among the workers in the office where I spent my placement are low wages, sexual harassment and boredom.

  b) The beneficial effects of my annual canoe trip include reduced stress, increased fitness, and improved family relationships.

Organization

- What is the order of the causes/effects you are writing about?
  - Least important to the most important, or vice versa
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- Hint: You may want to save your most important cause or effect until last. There is often one major cause or effect that is the most important. By saving it until last, you leave your reader with a very strong impression. Also, if you put your most important cause or effect first, your reader may not feel it is necessary to continue reading.

Support

- Fully and adequately support all your statements. Back up main points with clear examples and facts (statistics or quotations may also be used).
- Avoid faulty logic. Make sure that there is an actual link between the causes and effects being presented. (i.e. ask yourself if you have assumed a cause/effect relationship where there is none.)
- Specific logical fallacy to watch out for:
  - **Faulty cause and effect**: This suggests that because B follows A, A must be the cause of B. Remember that just because two events or sets of data are related, that doesn't mean that one cause the other to happen.
  - Eg. It was observed that people who went out at night often developed malaria. (No, night air doesn't cause malaria, mosquitos transmit it.)

Transitions

- Transitions for Causes:
  - is a result of, results from, the reason for, since, because (of), due to, leads to, is caused by

- Transitions for Effects:
  - so, so that, so then, a consequence of, consequently, therefore, thus, then, for this reason, as a result

Degrees of Certainty & Levels of Importance

- You also may want to use words to indicate the certainty of your statements. Be sure not to overstate or understate the strength of your arguments.
- **Signal Words for Cause & Effect Essays Degrees of Certainty**: certainly, may, necessarily, perhaps, probably, undoubtedly, unquestionably

- You also want to use words to indicate the level of importance of your points.
- **Signal Words for Levels of Importance:** above all, equally important, finally, first, initially, last, primarily, second, third

Topics

1. The breakup of a romantic relationship
2. Teenage depression
3. Stress
4. Lying
5. Marrying as a teenager