

Cause and Effect Essay

APSU Writing Center Handout

A cause-and-effect essay explains why things happen (causes) and what results from them (effects).

Cause: The reason an event or situation occurs.

Effect: The result or outcome of an event or situation.

- **Example:** Excessive use of antibiotics (cause) leads to antibiotic resistance, and makes infections harder to treat (effect).
- **Example:** Deforestation (cause) leads to loss of wildlife habitat, ecosystem disruption, and increased CO₂ levels (effect).

Steps to Write a Cause-and-Effect Essay

Choose a Topic

Select a topic with a clear cause-and-effect relationship.

Research & Outline

Gather evidence and examples to support your causes and effects.

Create an outline.

Focus one paragraph on one cause or effect.

Example Outline: Introduction, Cause 1, Cause 2, Effect 1, Effect 2, Conclusion

Use 3rd Person

Focus on factual evidence and analysis, not opinions.

Avoid using personal pronouns like "I" or "you."

- **Example:** The issue of climate change has been a topic of concern for many years.
- **Example:** Deforestation is widely recognized as a major cause of habitat loss.

Questions to Ask While Writing

What are the main causes of the event?

What are the immediate effects?

How do the causes directly lead to the effects?

Are there secondary or indirect causes to consider?

What is the overall impact on individuals, communities, or systems?

What would happen if a cause were removed?

What broader lessons or implications can be drawn?

Introduction: Briefly introduce the topic and state a thesis showing the cause and effects.

Body Paragraph 1: Present your first cause and support it with evidence and examples.

Body Paragraph 2: Present your second cause and support it with evidence and examples.

Body Paragraph 3: Present your first effect and support it with evidence and examples.

Body Paragraph 4: Present your second effect and support it with evidence and examples.

Conclusion: Restate your thesis in new words, summarize causes, effects, and explain significance.

References

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