

A GUIDE ON HOW TO WRITE AN EFFECTIVE CAUSE-EFFECT ESSAY

Here is a helpful guide on how to write a 4-paragraph cause /effect essay.

WHAT IS A CAUSE/EFFECT ESSAY?

In a cause/effect essay, writers focus on what **causes** something (why it happens) or what the **effects** are (the results). The focus of your essay should be sharp so that your reader will be able to clearly see the relationship between the causes and effects you are presenting.

METHODS OF ORGANIZATION

You can organize a cause/effect essay according to the information that you want to present.

- You can focus on only the **causes** of something leading to one effect.
- You can focus on the **effects** resulting from one cause.

PREWRITING

The first step is to carefully consider the assigned topic. You have to identify the cause and effects for a focus-on-effect essay and the effect and the causes for a focus-on-cause essay. Before you start writing, you need to brainstorm ideas for your body paragraphs. You can use the following charts as ways to organize your thoughts.

Focus-on-Cause chart:

<u>Causes</u>		<u>Effect</u>
1. _____		
2. _____	→	_____
3. _____		

- After you have listed all of the causes you can think of in 5-10 minutes, select the two general causes that you want to develop in your essay.

Focus-on-Effect chart:

<u>Cause</u>		<u>Effects</u>
_____	→	1. _____
		2. _____
		3. _____

- After you have listed all of the effects you can think of in 5-10 minutes, select the two general effects that you want to develop in your essay.

THESIS

For a **focus-on-cause essay**, you should state that you are going to write a cause essay and the effect that results from those causes. You may choose to mention the causes, but that is optional. The thesis can be implied or stated.

Implied Example: Young people join the military for many reasons.

Stated Example: Young people join the military for many reasons, such as getting away from home and serving their country.

For a **focus-on-effects essay**, you should state that you are going to write an effect essay and the cause that lead to the effects. You may choose to mention the effects, but that is optional. The thesis can be implied or stated.

Implied Example: Unemployment t can have terrible effects on individuals.

Stated Example: Unemployment can have terrible effects on individuals, including financial and psychological difficulties.

THE BODY PARAGRAPHS

Focus-on-cause essay: Each body paragraph should discuss one of the causes you selected in your prewriting or in your stated thesis. You need to have a topic sentence as the first sentence of your paragraph that states the effect and the cause you are going to develop in the body.

Example Topic Sentence: One major reason young people join the military is to get away from home.

Focus-on-effect essay: Each body paragraph should discuss one of the effects you selected in your prewriting or in your stated thesis. You need to have a topic sentence as the first sentence of your paragraph that states the cause and the effect you are going to develop in the body.

Example Topic Sentence: One of the major effects of unemployment on individuals is financial difficulties.

To sum Up: The following is a brief summary of the steps for writing this essay.

Prewriting: Make a chart and choose the causes or effects you are going to develop in your essay. Be sure to attach your prewriting to the last page of your essay.

Essay:

- **Introduction:** Hook, Connecting Sentences, Thesis
- **Body:** Topic sentence, 2 supporting ideas with examples, concluding sentence
- **Conclusion:** Concluding signal, restatement of the thesis, summary of the main points, and a final comment about the topic

Note: You will have 90 minutes to write every essay except for the practice final and the final essay. For these, you will have 2 hours.

- Spend about 10 minutes on prewriting
- 70 minutes writing your essay
- 10 minutes to proofread your essay for errors and make corrections.