

# How to Write a Cause-Effect Essay

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# What is a Cause-Effect Essay?

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- We all understand cause-effect relationships; for example, lightning can cause a fire. If a student doesn't study for a test, he/she may not perform well. **A cause effect essay tells how one event (the cause) leads to another event (the effect)**

# What is a Cause-Effect Essay?

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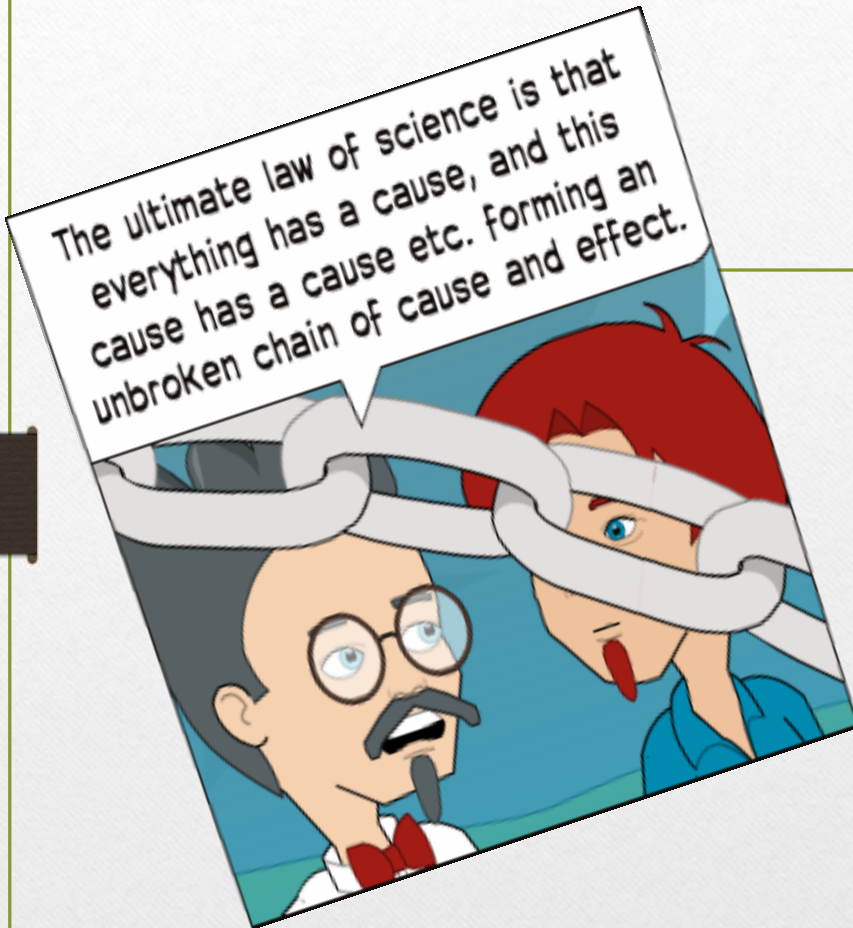
- In five-paragraph essays, we usually focus on the causes or the effects.
- It's not so much a cause and effect essay as a cause or effect essay.
- A thesis statement in the introduction will tell if the essay is about causes or effects.

# What is a Cause-Effect Essay

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- A cause-effect essay can do one of two things:
  - It can analyze the ways in which one or more effects can result from a particular cause (“Focus on Effects” method)
  - Or it can analyze the ways in which one or more causes lead to a particular effect (“Focus on Causes” method)

# Are there kinds of causes?



- There are different types of causes.
- What we first see are often the superficial, ***contributing reasons***.
- Hiding just out of sight are the fundamental causes.
- The single and most important cause is the ***primary cause***.
- For example: Pollution is caused by transportation, manufacturing, and humans.

# Can we Write on Effects?

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What is the effect  
of caffeine?

- Of course, not every cause-effect essay is about the causes.
- In fact, some may center on the effects of a single cause.
- Example Topic:  
What are the effects of air pollution?
- Example Thesis:  
*Air pollution negatively affects plants, animals, and humans.*

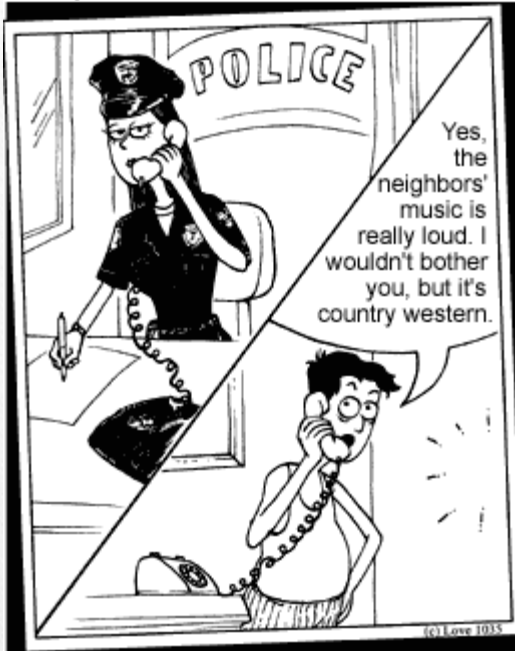
# What makes a great topic?

- When selecting topics for this type of essay, a good writer should consider questions such as:
  - What is the end effect?
  - Is there one primary effect, or are there several effects?
  - Is there one primary cause, or are there several causes?

Focus on Causes	Focus on Effects
The causes of high divorce rates in some countries	The effects of divorce on families
The causes of World War I	The effects of World War I
The causes of a certain type of cancer	The effects of cancer on the body
The causes of pollution	The effects of pollution
The causes of changes in weather over the past century	The effects of changing weather on society

# What should be avoided?

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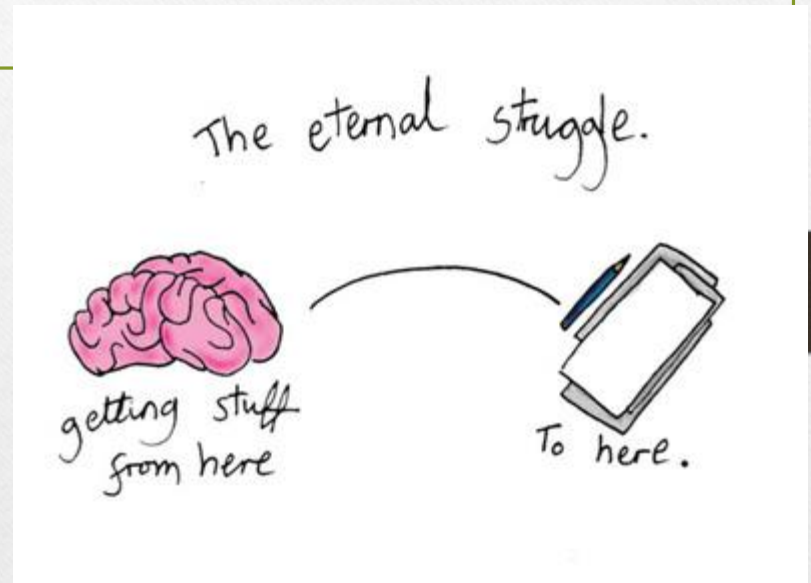
Is there also  
*noise pollution?*

- **Don't lose focus by covering too many parts of an issue.**
- **You can't cover all of the effects of air pollution: just pick three important ones to write about.**
- **For example, use air pollution's effect on plants, animals, and humans.**



# What is in the Introduction?

- The introductory paragraph includes:
  1. Lead (hook, attention grabber)
  2. General background information on the topic.
  3. A thesis statement



# The Body

- Each cause or effect gets its own body paragraph
- First sentence is a topic sentence that states what the cause or effect is
- Give supporting details/facts to support your claim
- Uses transition words to **analyze** the process rather than describe it.
- Remember, we're telling WHY.

# TRANSITIONAL WORDS

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- **Cause and effect transition words**, or **consequence transition words**, describe cause and effect relationships between two ideas. Examples include because, since, thus, **hence**, consequently, **therefore**, accordingly, and as a result.
- **"Because" & "Since"**
- The cause and effect transition words 'because' and 'since' are used to introduce a cause or reason for another idea.
- She quit her job **because** she was tired of being passed over for a promotion.
- **Since** no customers were in the store, the cashier read a book.
- **"Due to" & "Because of"**
- **Due to** several of the restaurant's employees being out sick, customers had to wait longer to get their meals.
- **Because of** the restaurant being understaffed, customers had to wait longer to get their meals.

- **"So" & "Therefore"**

- The cause and effect transition words 'so' and 'therefore' are used to introduce an effect or result of another idea.
- The students did not do well on the quiz, **so** the teacher gave them more practice activities.
- The students did not do well on the quiz. **Therefore**, the teacher gave them more practice activities.

- **"Thus" & "Hence"**

- The cause and effect transition words 'thus' and 'hence' are used to introduce an effect and reason.
- The school's policy is that no cheating is tolerated. **Thus**, the principal will determine your punishment for cheating on the exam.
- You have already used all of your vacation days. **Hence**, you cannot take tomorrow off from work.

- **"As a Result Of"**

- **As a result of** the fight that broke out, the gym was closed to students for the rest of the week.

# The Conclusion

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- Rewords the thesis and basis for the effects
- Summarizes the primary cause or effects
- Speculates on the best solution to the problem