Cause-and-Effect Essay

When you hear a tone (TONE), pause the CD and follow the instructions. Pause the CD any time you don’t understand something. You might also ask your teacher or classmates for help.

See How It’s Done

Why did you win the race? Why did the president write a law to protect animals? Writing about why and how things happen is a good way to learn and to share what you know.

Listen to the first paragraph and question of the model on Worksheet A. Then, pause the CD and read the rest of Worksheet A on your own. Discuss the model and the questions with your teacher. (TONE)

Do It Yourself

For this assignment you will write about why and how something happened. You will write about the causes, or reasons for, and event, as well as the effects. Effects are the results of an event.

Prewriting

Begin exploring ideas to write about.

Here are two ways to get started:

1. Make a list of things you have done and are proud of. It could be winning a race, passing an exam, getting a job, or getting in better shape. Next to each thing, write why it happened.
2. Look through newspapers and magazines to find events or ideas that you'd like to understand better. Make a list of those topics.

Now pause the CD and make your lists. (TONE)

Choose a topic for your paper.

Look at the ideas you have written. Which idea interests you the most? Which idea do you know the most about? You might want to ask several friends which idea they would prefer to read about.

Pause the CD and choose a topic. Discuss it with your teacher. (TONE)

Think about your topic.

Remember these facts about causes and effects as you think about your topic: A cause is the reason something happens. An effect is what happens because of the cause. One cause can have more than one effect.

Then, think about your topic. What is its cause? What are its effects? Are the effects the results of the cause you named?

Next, think about your audience, or readers. Who will read your paper? What do your readers already know about your topic? Think about the information you will need to give to your readers.

Now answer the questions on Worksheet B. (TONE)
Find more information about your topic.
You need to learn more about why and how the event happened. You can brainstorm ideas with a friend. You can also ask your teacher or school librarian to help you do research at a library. Write down all the facts, quotations, and details that will help explain the cause and effects of your topic.

◆ Pause the CD and find more information about your topic. (TONE)

2 Drafting

Organize the information you have collected.
You need to clearly identify the cause and effects of your topic. A cause-and-effect chart can help you do this. Fill in the chart on Worksheet C with information about your topic. Write the effects in the order they happened. Then add details to answer questions such as how, why, when, and who.

◆ Now turn to Worksheet C and fill in the chart with information about your topic. (TONE)

Start drafting your cause-and-effect essay.
You have already begun your writing on Worksheets B and C. Now you will turn your information into an essay. Follow these hints to help you organize your work:

1. An easy way to organize a cause-and-effect essay is to describe one cause, and then explain its many effects. For example, in his paper, Jason explains how joining the track club led him to run cross-country, to win gold medals, and to win the state finals.

2. Start by writing the cause and effect of your topic. Next, give background information. See how Jason Nemo does this in the second paragraph of his essay (lines 10–19). Then, write the different effects of the cause you wrote at the beginning. End by summarizing the cause and its effects in one or two sentences. Look at Jason’s ending in lines 60–64 of his paper.

3. Make sure to write the effects in chronological order, that is, in the order in which they happened.

◆ Pause the CD. Talk with your teacher about how your final paper will look. Then begin your draft. (TONE)

3 Revising

Read over what you have written.
Ask a friend to read it too. You might want to ask your friend to explain the cause and its effects to you in his or her own words.

◆ Now turn to Worksheet D. With your friend, discuss the questions about your writing. Then write down the answers. (TONE)

4 Editing and Proofreading

Decide how to make your writing better.
Think about your answers to the questions on Worksheet D. You could also ask your friend or teacher to suggest changes.

◆ Now begin changing your writing. (TONE)
Continue changing your writing until you are happy with it.
You may want to ask your teacher for help on how to proofread your paper for
mistakes. Pay special attention to the verbs. Do they all agree with their subjects?
For help with subject-verb agreement, see page 432 of your book.

◆ Make a final clean copy of your cause-and-effect essay. (TONE)

5 Sharing and Reflecting .................................................................

Think about what you have learned by writing a cause-and-effect essay.
Share your final copy with an audience. You may want to record your essay and
play it for your classmates. You may also copy it and publish it in the school paper.

Think about what you learned while writing the essay. How did you solve any
problems that you had? How was this type of writing different from other writing
you have done? What have you learned about the cause and effect relationship?

◆ Think about these questions and be ready to discuss your answers with your teacher and
your classmates. (TONE)
Moments
by Jason Nemo

I’ve just run in the state championship 3200-meter relay race with three teammates. We won! In the past I usually chalked up our wins to raw talent, but winning this event in a state meet made me realize how far from raw my talent is. I had actually started working out in seventh or eighth grade. The training that began back then made this victory possible. After the race, I jogged around the track to cool off, and I reflected on the stages of training that led me to this moment.

The summer before I entered high school I joined a track club, where I was able to compete against other clubs for the first time. Our team was good enough to participate in a national meet, so we were able to practice our skills against other track clubs from all over the country. We were often pitted against imposing relay teams of 12- and 13-year olds who looked like cousins of the Incredible Hulk. Even though we were just training for the upcoming school year, I felt more inadequate than I have ever felt in my running career. The effect of those competitions was that I learned to overcome whatever doubts I had about myself and just run as well as I knew I could.

What does Jason say is the cause of his victory? (TONE)

Circle one main cause. Then underline one of its effects.
That fall I ran cross-country for my school. If running two or three miles in a cross-country meet across rugged terrain in pouring rain doesn’t build your stamina, I don’t know what will. Daily practices throughout the fall and spring paid off when I was named best freshman in the conference in the 400-meter event. It was the first time I had distinguished myself in my sport. Consequently, my pride and confidence increased, and I was ready to push myself to the next level.

The following summer, I practiced every morning for the fall cross-country season. By steamy August we were pushing six to eight miles a day. It was hard work, but all that cross-country running had prepared me for it. The highlight of my career came in the last meet of the season, on our archrival’s track. I won all three races, including the 400-meter, which I won with my fastest time ever. I left the track with three gold medals. As a result, I knew that expectations would be high for next year. That was fine with me. My expectations for myself had been increasing with each new success.

Because of all our success, everyone was expecting us to go all the way. Our hard work and training paid off and we made it to the big show—the state finals. I was a wreck before the race. I had been nervous about races before, though, so I knew that I could overcome it. I stepped onto that big blue track, looking into the huge crowd with my whole season on the line. If I could excel...
at all the meets before now, I told myself, I could do the
same here at the state championship. My legs felt like lead. When the gun went off the
jitters wouldn’t go away, and I hardly noticed the race. I finished my leg of the race in less than two minutes,
which was a record run for me. Even in my nervous state,
I had exceeded my expectations for myself. A couple of
minutes later my teammate crossed the finish line. I looked up and saw that we had won. Still exhausted, I hobbled over to my teammates to share the victory.
Thanks to four years of training, facing intimidating
opponents, and proving my abilities to myself and others,
my team and I had proven ourselves winners. With sweat still pouring off my face, I was already thinking about
next year’s team.
Write down your topic, then answer the questions about it.

The event I am going to write about is
______________________________________________________________________________________

What caused this to happen?
______________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________

What happened because of it?
______________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________

What details do I know about the cause and effects of my topic?
______________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________

What do I need to learn?
______________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________

Where can I find the information I need?
______________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________
Worksheet C

Writing Workshop

Fill in the chart below with information about your topic. Make sure to write the effects in the order they happened. Use your own paper if you need more space or need to add boxes to the chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Effect 1:
Details:

Cause:
Details:

Effect 2:
Details:

Effect 3:
Details:
Worksheet D  Writing Workshop

Read over the first draft of your writing and share it with a friend. Answer the following questions together. Then write down the answers.

1. Did I clearly write a cause and effect in the beginning? How could I explain it more clearly?

________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

2. How could I make my introduction more interesting?

________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

3. What other details could I add to explain the cause and effects more clearly?

________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

4. Did I write the effects in time order? Is any effect in the wrong place? If so, where should it be in the essay?

________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

5. How could I make the connections between the cause and the effects clearer?

________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

6. What other important effects could I add?

________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________