

Unit 6 : Cause and Effect.

Contents:

1. Definition and purposes of cause and effect
2. Organization of cause and effect paragraphs
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Objectives:

After studying this Unit, a student

- knows what a cause and effect paragraph and its purposes are.
- can make an outline and write effective topic sentences for cause and effects paragraphs.
- knows how to make cause and effect paragraphs coherent.
- can do the exercises effectively.

1. Definition and purposes of cause and effect

The second kind of argumentative writing required in this course is using the method of paragraph development Cause and Effect. A cause and effect paragraph is a paragraph that indicates the cause (or reason) that produces an effect (or result), or the paragraph that points out the effect (or result) produced by a cause. The function of cause/effect is usually to answer the questions "Why", such as "Why did it happen?" or "What", such as "What are its causes?" or "What are its effects?" In short, the cause/effect paragraph explains why a condition occurs or the effect that this condition brings about.

Cause/effect models can be found in many kinds of writing and can be used for any of the writer's purposes: to justify or condemn some action, to prove or disprove an idea, belief or assertion, to explain or to give an account of something or situation, to convince, or to draw a conclusion.

The following example paragraph provides three reasons to prove that Bangkok today is not suitable to live in.

Other than for opportunities for education and jobs, Bangkok today is a poor city to live in because of three reasons. The first reason is the traffic problem which is getting worse and worse. It is not only at certain hours or certain places, but all the time everywhere. The environmental problem

is the second reason for Bangkok's not being suitable to live in. At present, Bangkok is facing many kinds of pollution - such as, air, water and noise pollution - all of which can make people unhealthy. The final reason concerns the crime problem which threatens Bangkokians everyday. People and their property are unsafe at every moment.

Again, in the following paragraph, the writer's purpose is to convince the reader that the political crisis may produce some effects on children in some aspects or conditions.

The political crisis called "Black May" may have at least two impacts on children. Firstly, in living conditions, the children whose fathers or mothers were killed in the event became fatherless or motherless immediately. As a result, they have no supporters who take care of them and provide them with both living necessities and education. This problem will certainly lead to social problems now and in the future. Secondly, in mental state, this crisis may firmly cultivate aggressiveness in the children's minds. They may think that the way to deal with this same crisis is to use bodily power, killing those who have opposing opinions to theirs. Consequently, when these children grow up they may become aggressive.

2. Organization of a cause and effect paragraph

The cause/effect paragraph is based on a formula "X (cause) produces Y (effect) or "Y (effect) is produced by X (cause)." In other words, "Because X has taken place, Y has occurred" or "Y has occurred because of X." Based on that formula, the organization of a cause and effect paragraph or essay falls into two basic pattern outlines: the cause-to-effect pattern and the effect-to-cause pattern, each of which is determined by the topic sentence that gives both the cause and the effect.

The cause-to-effect pattern

In the cause-to-effect pattern, the topic sentence of a paragraph states the main idea in such a way that some cause produces some effects. Consider the following paragraph in which the topic sentence indicates the cause first, then the discussion of the paragraph concerns the effects resulting from that cause.

A copper industry depression in Arizona has caused great losses. One effect of the copper industry depression is the loss of more than 46 million dollars in wages last year alone. Another is that Arizona business lost more than 39 million dollars in copper industry purchases. The third is that state and local governments lost more than 9 million dollars in taxes. The fourth effect is that one out

of every four Arizona copper workers is unemployed. (1)

In the above paragraph, the topic sentence (the first sentence) indicates clearly that the cause (A copper industry depression) produces effects (great losses). The other sentences of the paragraph concern the effects produced by that cause.

The above paragraph can be outlined in this way:

Cause: A copper industry depression

Effects:

1. Loss of more than 46 million dollars in wages
2. Loss of more than 39 million dollars in copper industry purchases
3. Loss of more than 9 million dollars in taxes
4. Unemployment

The effect-to-cause pattern

Similarly, in the effect-to-cause pattern, the topic sentence of a paragraph will also clearly state that some effect or result comes from some cause. Consider the following paragraph in which the topic sentence announces that a copper industry depression (effect) has occurred because of two main causes.

(1) Adapted from D'Angelo, Frank J., Process and Thought in Composition. 2nd.ed., Winthrop Publishers, Inc., Cambridge, 1977, p.176.

There are two main causes that have brought about a copper industry depression in Arizona. The first is that foreign copper is cheaper than Arizona copper because of lower wages and lower environmental standards. Thus, American industry is buying copper from Chile, Peru and other nations. The second cause is our governmental policy. That is, America should maintain a copper stockpile for defence purposes. But it is not doing so, even though its purchases would help. (1)

The topic sentence (the first sentence) indicates clearly that a copper industry depression (effect) has occurred due to two certain causes.

The outline of the above paragraph can be drawn in this way:

- | | |
|---------|-------------------------------|
| Effect: | A copper industry depression |
| Causes: | [|
| | 1. Cheaper foreign copper |
| | 1.1. additional detail |
| | 1.2. additional detail |
| | 2. American government policy |
| | 2.1. additional detail |
| | 2.2. additional detail |

(1) Adapted from D'Angelo, *ibid*, p.277.

3. Language useful for the topic sentences of cause and effect paragraphs

In order to write successful cause and effect paragraphs, you must first be able to write an effective topic sentence to clarify and limit the point of discussion. As mentioned before, there are no specific rules for writing a topic sentence. However, topic sentences for cause and effect paragraphs can be written in the following ways:

First way: Making a statement showing that X is the cause of Y. In this way, the cause is stated in the subject part of a sentence, and the effect in the predicate part of a sentence. The following expressions can be used.

	cause ----->	effect	
Laziness	causes	failure	in study and work.
	leads to	failure	
	results in	failure	
	brings about	failure	
	creates	failure	
	is the cause of	failure	

The second way: Making a statement showing that Y is the result of X. In this way, the effect will be stated in the subject part, and the cause in the predicate part of a sentence. The following expressions can be helpful.

effect -----> cause

One's failure in study and work	[may be due to may be caused by may result from may come from may arise from]	laziness.
------------------------------------	---	-----------

The third way: Making a statement showing that X is the cause of Y or Y is the result of X by using a "There are" expression. For example:

There are many causes (reasons) for one's failure in study and work.

OR, There are many results (effects) of laziness.

Keep in mind that a topic sentence of a paragraph is the determinative, paving the way for you to discuss either the cause or the effect in the paragraph as in the two example paragraphs above. The topic sentence of the first paragraph defines that the cause brings about the effect, then you have to discuss the effects. On the other hand, the topic sentence of the second paragraph defines that the effect has taken place because of the causes, so you have to discuss the causes. Note also that some cause that brings about some effect may become the effect resulting from another cause as in two paragraphs above. In the first paragraph, the cause "A copper industry depression" brings about four effects. In the same way, the effect "A copper industry depression" in the second paragraph comes from two causes.

However, you must always remember that a topic sentence can be written in a variety of ways, depending on your topic. The expressions provided above can be used as guidelines. It would be better for you to practice writing a topic sentence in different ways than to copy those given.

4. Coherence in cause and effect paragraphs

Like all kinds of writing, coherence in cause/effect paragraph can be achieved by arranging all details (support sentences) in a clear logical order, and by using transitional markers.

4.1. The common way to achieve coherence in cause/effect paragraphs or essays is to arrange the details (support sentences or paragraphs) in chronological order by using the words indicating numerical order such as "first, second, third, finally, etc." (see also the list of such words on page 68 to enumerate causes or effects.

However, to arrange details of cause/effect paragraph in logical order, you must also consider the following aspects. Firstly, in the case that causes or effects have equal importance, you must consider which cause or effect is more obvious than the others, then arrange your details from the most obvious to the least obvious. Secondly, in the case that causes or effects have unequal importance, you must consider which cause or effect is more important than the other, then arrange your

details from the most important to the least important.

Look back at the example paragraph of this unit on page 120 which discusses three reasons or causes for Bangkok's not being suitable to live in. These three reasons are the traffic problem, the environmental problem and the crime problem, all of which have equal significance. So the writer arranges the details from the most obvious to the least obvious: the traffic problem, the environmental problem and the crime problem respectively.

Once again, look also back at the example paragraph on page 122 which discusses four effects of a copper industry depression in Arizona, all of which have unequal significance. So the writer arranges the details from the most important effect to the least important effect, that is, the loss of more than 46 million dollars in wages until the fourth effect--unemployed workers.

4.2. Another way to achieve coherence in cause/effect paragraphs or essays is to use transition markers or expressions to show clear relationships among sentences. Here are transition markers and expressions which can be useful in writing cause/-effect paragraphs or essays. (See also the list of transition markers on page 66)

Transition phrases: Because of, As a result of. These phrases are used to indicate cause and usually followed by a noun or noun phrase and separated from the other part of a sentence by a comma (,).

Examples: Because of his diligence (cause), he succeeded in his studies and work (effect).

As a result of her overweight (cause), she cannot run very fast (effect).

Coordinate conjunctions used as transitions markers: So and For. So indicates a result, but it is rather colloquial and is often avoided in formal writing. For indicates a cause and is quite formal. Study the following examples and note how to use the punctuation.

Examples : Bangkok is full of many kinds of pollution, (cause) so it is not suitable to live in (effect).

We are forced to cancel your subscription to our magazine (effect) for we have not received your payment for the last six months (cause).

Transition markers between sentences: Thus, Therefore, Consequently, As a result, For this reason. These expressions indicate effect or result. They are used to link ideas between two complete sentences. They must be preceded by either a period (.) or a semicolon (;) and followed by a comma (,). Examine the following examples.

Examples: Most human beings are under the power of Desire and Ignorance; therefore, they are entangled in the circle of birth and death. [preceded by semicolon (;), and followed by a comma (,)]

OR

All human beings are under the power of Desire and Ignorance. Therefore, they are entangled in the circle of birth and death. [preceded by a period (.), and followed by a comma (,)]

Most Buddhists believe in the results of actions (Karma); as a result, they always do good and avoid doing bad. [preceded by a semicolon (;), followed by a comma (,)]

OR

Most Buddhists believe in the results of actions (Karma). As a result, they always do good and avoid doing bad. [preceded by a period(.), and followed by a comma (,)]

Subordinators used as transitions showing cause include: **Because** and **Since**. These words are used to introduce dependent clauses showing cause. These dependent clauses can appear either at the beginning or at the end of a sentence. When they appear at the beginning of a sentence, the clauses must be separated by a comma (,), and when they appear at the end of a sentence, there need be no punctuation at all. Study the following examples and consider the use of punctuation.

Examples: **Because human beings are under the power of Desire and Ignorance,** they cannot be released from the circle of birth and death. [separated by a comma (,)]

OR

Human beings cannot be released from the circle of birth and death because they are under the power of Desire and Ignorance. (no punctuation)

Because the government has failed to create jobs to keep pace with the increasing population, most people in our country are unemployed. [separated by a comma(,)]

OR

Most people in our country are unemployed because the government has failed to create jobs to keep pace with the increasing population. (no punctuation)

Note: The underlined words are dependent clauses showing cause.

Subordinators used as transitions introducing effects (results) include: So ... that ..., or Such ... that These two subordinators are used to connect two simple sentences into one sentence in such a way that one part of a sentence is the cause and another part is the effect of that cause. Study the structure in the examples:

So ... that...

- Structure
1. so + adj. + that
 2. so + adv. + that
 3. so + adj. + a/an + count noun + that
 4. so + (adv.) + adj. + a/an + count noun + that ...

Examples: He runs very fast (cause). I cannot catch him (effect).

cause -----> effect

= He runs so fast that I cannot catch him.

The weather was very hot last night (cause).

I could not sleep well (effect).

cause -----> effect

= The weather was so hot last night that I could not sleep well.

It was a very difficult examination (cause).

I could not do it (effect).

cause -----> effect

= It was so difficult an examination that I could not do it.

Such ... that ...

Structure: [1. such + adj. + plural count noun + that
2. such + adj. + noncount noun + that
3. such + a/an + adj. + singular count noun + that...

Examples: The Himalayas are very high mountains (cause).

No pilot wants to fly over them (effect).

cause -----> effect

= The Himalayas are such high mountains that no pilot wants to fly over them.

He gave me very good advice (cause).

I passed the interview easily (effect).

cause -----> effect

= He gave me such good advice that I passed the interview easily.

Traffic conjection in Bangkok is a very serious problem (cause).

No previous government has been able to solve it (effect).

cause -----> effect

= Traffic conjection in Bangkok is such a serious problem that no previous government has been able to solve it.

Note: The clauses that contain subordinators So ... that or Such ... that are the dependent clauses showing cause, and the clauses that precede "that" are the independent clauses showing effect.

To sum up:

1. A cause/effect paragraph discusses causes or reasons that produce some effect, or points out an effect that comes from some causes, in order to answer the questions "Why" or "What"
2. There are many purposes in writing a cause/-effect paragraph: to justify or condemn some actions, to prove or disprove an idea, belief or assertion, to explain or to give an account of something or situation in order to convince the reader.
3. A cause/effect paragraph can be outlined in two basic patterns, the cause-to-effect pattern and the effect-to-cause pattern.
4. The topic sentence of a cause/effect paragraph should mention both cause and effect showing that X is a cause of Y or Y is the effect of X
5. Coherence in a cause/effect paragraph can be achieved by arranging details (support sentences) in chronological order, ordering from the most important point to the least important point or from the most obvious point to the least obvious point by using the words that indicate numerical order. It can also be achieved by the use of transition markers that indicate cause or effect.

5. Exercises about cause and effect paragraphs

Exercise 1.

Directions: Write topic sentences for cause/effect paragraphs by using the topics given. The topics given can be either cause or effect. Write your effective topic sentence in the space provided. The first one is done as an example.

Topic: Air pollution

effect -----> cause

Topic sentence: Air pollution arises from many sources.

OR cause -----> effect

Air pollution affects our health and the earth's atmosphere.

Topic: Traffic jams in Bangkok

effect -----> cause

Topic sentence: _____

OR cause -----> effect

Topic: Water pollution

effect -----> cause

Topic sentence: _____

OR cause -----> effect

Topic: Migration of rural people to Bangkok

effect -----> cause

Topic sentence: _____

OR cause -----> effect

Topic: Drug addiction among teenagers

effect -----> cause

Topic sentence: _____

OR cause -----> effect

Topic: Accidents on the roads

effect -----> cause

Topic sentence: _____

OR cause -----> effect

Topic: Water shortage

effect -----> cause

Topic sentence: _____

OR cause -----> effect

Exercise 2.

Directions: The following sentences are effective topic sentences for cause/effect paragraphs. Each is accompanied by additional details. Write at least two or more major support sentences for each of them in the

spaces provided by using the additional details given. The first one is done as an example.

Topic sentence: There are two main causes that contribute to skin cancer.

Additional details: 1. excessive exposure to sunlight
2. exposure to toxic substances

Major support sentence 1: The most common cause of skin cancer is excessive exposure to sunlight.

Major support sentence 2: The exposure to toxic substances is another cause that causes this disease.

Topic sentence: Deforestation affects the weather and environment.

Additional details: 1. the high level of carbon dioxide
2. topsoil washed away

Major support sentence 1. _____

Major support sentence 2. _____

Topic sentence: The decline in the number of elephants is due to three main causes.

- Additional details :**
1. illegal hunting of elephants
 2. the destruction of elephants' habitats.
 3. very slow rate of reproduction

Major support sentence 1. _____

Major support sentence 2. _____

Major support sentence 3. _____

Topic sentence: There are several factors that cause my friend Sumaree's poor health.

- Additional details:**
1. eat nonnutritive food
 2. get very little exercise
 3. get insufficient rest

Major support sentence 1. _____

Major support sentence 2. _____

Major support sentence 3. _____

Topic sentence: There are two reasons for me to study English

Additional details: 1. widely spoken

2. useful in many occupation

Major support sentence 1. _____

Major support sentence 2. _____

Topic sentence: Most teenagers turn to addictive drugs because
of three reasons.

Additional details: 1. lack of care from parents

2. lack of self-confidence

3. social conditions

Major support sentence 1. _____

Major support sentence 2. _____

Major support sentence 3. _____

Exercise 3.

Direction: Read the following two paragraphs. Consider their organization and decide which paragraph is based on the Cause-to Effect pattern, and which is based on the Effect-to-Cause pattern. Then write an outline of each paragraph in the space provided.

Paragraph 1.

Drug addiction among teenagers comes from two main causes. The biggest cause is their emotional instability. In this case, some teenagers only want to know what it is like when taking drugs. Some may be persuaded by addicted friends, or some may deceived by drug-sellers. Another cause is the problem of broken homes. This problem can make them depressed, anxious and hopeless. To relieve these depressing conditions, they turn to drugs.

Paragraph 1.

1. Most TV programs have different kinds of commercial advertisements which are full of misleading and exaggerated messages.
2. Watching TV carelessly can also bring about bad effects on one's health.
3. For children, excessive TV watching without care from their parents may be dangerous in many aspects.
4. If children are too close to a television set while watching it, and keep on watching it for a long time, they may get ill because of its radiation.
5. Children may be influenced so much that they bother their parents to buy such products regardless of whether they are proper or not.
6. They may act violently imitating what they have seen in the movies.
7. TV movie programs that show violence also affect children's behaviour.
8. Such movies encourage aggressiveness in children's minds.

The transition markers for this paragraph include: First of all, For this reason, Second, In other words, Third, Because, As a result.

Write your complete paragraph here.

Paragraph 2.

1. *The populations of some countries, particularly less-developed ones, outnumber job opportunities.*
2. *This situation occurs.*
3. *Jobs are available in limited numbers.*
4. *Unemployment problems mostly arise from overpopulation and the government's ineffective labour policy.*
5. *Family planning is not adopted, or adopted but not seriously by those countries.*
6. *The governments of some countries have no clearly-determined policy in connection with their labour force.*

7. *Unemployment is becoming a severe and chronic problem that needs urgent and effective remedial measures.*

8. *They fail to create jobs to keep pace with the increasing population.*

The transition markers for this paragraph include: In the first case, At the same time, Because, Additionally, In other words, As a result.

Write your complete paragraph here.

Exercise 5.

Directions: The following two paragraphs are not coherent because they lack appropriate transition markers. Fill the blanks with the transition marker given below them.

Paragraph 1.

When I think about returning to Buenos Aires, I get very apprehensive _____ I will face many problems there. _____, politically, Buenos Aires, like the entire country of Argentina, is very unstable, and frequent changes of government often result in unemployment and general insecurity of the population. _____ problem is the highly inflationary economy in Buenos Aires which reached 170% last year. _____ inflation means that saving is useless, and the buying power of the people is very limited. Many people cannot even afford to pay the huge rents on their apartments. _____, Buenos Aires has all the problems of most large cities: crowding, noise, pollution, and traffic jams. For all of these reasons, I am dreading my return to Argentina. (1)

From Reid, op.cit., p.168.

The transition markers for the above paragraph include: Because, Another, First, Finally, Such.

Paragraph 2.

Heart disease, that is the decrease or disorder of cardiac output, is the leading cause of death in the U.S. today _____ it has wide-reaching effects on the entire body. _____, when the amount of blood pumped by the heart decreases, the transport of oxygen and nutrients to the body tissues decreases. _____, the body tissues deteriorate. _____, the transport of carbon dioxide and other products of metabolism to the lungs and kidneys becomes less efficient and so less effective in eliminating toxic elements from the body. _____, the body is slowly poisoned by its own toxic wastes. _____, the distribution of hormones and other substances that regulate cell function decreases as the blood from the heart decreases; _____, damage occurs to the cells of the body. Heart disease, _____, is not the simple destruction of one part of the body; rather, it can be considered the death of the whole body. (1)

(1) Reid, *ibid*, pp. 174-175.

The transition markers for the above paragraph include:
For example, Because, Also, Consequently, Finally, Therefore.
Some transition markers are used twice.