**Essay Type 1: Cause and effect essay**

**The Purpose of Cause and Effect in Writing**

It is often considered human nature to ask, “why?” and “how?” We want to know how our child got sick so we can better prevent it from happening in the future, or why a colleague received a pay raise because we want one as well. We want to know how much money we will save over the long term if we buy a hybrid car, or how long we will live if we exercise daily. These examples identify only a few of the relationships we think about in our lives, but each shows the importance of understanding cause and effect.

A cause is something that produces an event or condition; an effect is what results from an event or condition. The purpose of the cause-and-effect essay is to determine how various phenomena relate in terms of origins and results. Sometimes the connection between cause and effect is clear, but often determining the exact relationship between the two is very difficult. For example, the following effects of a cold may be easily identifiable: a sore throat, runny nose, and a cough. But determining the cause of the sickness can be far more difficult. A number of causes are possible, and to complicate matters, these possible causes could have combined to cause the sickness. That is, more than one cause may be responsible for any given effect. Therefore, cause-and-effect discussions are often complicated and frequently lead to debates and arguments.

Use the complex nature of cause and effect to your advantage. Often it is not necessary, or even possible, to find the exact cause of an event or to name the exact effect. So, when formulating a thesis, you can claim one of a number of causes or effects to be the primary, or main, cause or effect. As soon as you claim that one cause or one effect is more crucial than the others, you have developed a thesis.

**The Structure of a Cause and Effect Essay**

The cause-and-effect essay opens with a general introduction to the topic, which then leads to a thesis that states the main cause, main effect, or various causes and effects of a condition or event.

The cause-and-effect essay can be organized in one of the following two primary ways:

* Start with the cause and then talk about the effects.
* Start with the effect and then talk about the causes.

For example, if your essay were on childhood obesity, you could start by talking about the effect of childhood obesity and then discuss the cause or you could start the same essay by talking about the cause of childhood obesity and then move to the effect.

Regardless of which structure you choose, be sure to explain each element of the essay fully and completely. Explaining complex relationships requires the full use of evidence, such as scientific studies, expert testimony, statistics, and anecdotes.

Because cause-and-effect essays determine how phenomena are linked, they make frequent use of certain words and phrases that denote such linkage.  Certain transitional words and phrases aid in keeping the reader oriented in the sequencing of a story. Some of these phrases are listed here:

**Phrases of Causation**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| as a result | consequently |
| because | due to |
| hence | since |
| thus | therefore |

The conclusion should wrap up the discussion and reinforce the thesis, leaving the reader with a clear understanding of the relationship that was analyzed.

Be careful of resorting to empty speculation. In writing, speculation amounts to unsubstantiated guessing. Writers are particularly prone to such trappings in cause-and-effect arguments due to the complex nature of finding links between phenomena. Be sure to have clear evidence to support the claims that you make.

**Writing a Cause and Effect Essay**

Choose an event or condition that you think has an interesting cause-and-effect relationship. Introduce your topic in an engaging way. End your introduction with a thesis that states the main cause, the main effect, or both.

Organize your essay by starting with either the cause-then-effect structure or the effect-then-cause structure. Within each section, you should clearly explain and support the causes and effects using a full range of evidence. If you are writing about multiple causes or multiple effects, you may choose to sequence either in terms of order of importance. In other words, order the causes from least to most important (or vice versa), or order the effects from least important to most important (or vice versa).

Use the phrases of causation when trying to forge connections between various events or conditions. This will help organize your ideas and orient the reader. End your essay with a conclusion that summarizes your main points and reinforces your thesis.

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

**Sample Topic 1:**

Some students work while studying. This often results in lacking time for education and constantly feeling under pressure.

What do you think are the causes of this? What solutions can you suggest?  
Write at least 250 words

**How to answer this task?**

1. **Introduce the topic.**  
   Just restate your topic and write that the given problem has causes and can be solved.
2. **Write main causes and explain them.**In the second paragraph, describe each cause of the given problem, shortly explaining it. Use linking structures, and academic vocabulary to write essays.
3. **Suggest solutions**  
   Propose some solutions and say why they should work.
4. **Write a short conclusion.**  
   Briefly summarize what you have written.

**Model answer**

Nowadays, there are a lot of students who work while studying. Although this tendency may lead to negative results, the number of young people who sacrifice education for work is growing. I believe that this problem has certain causes and can be solved by taking special measures.

It is apparent that most of the students who work have many financial expenses to meet. One common cause is high cost of education. As many colleges and universities set high tuition fees, some families cannot fully afford the higher education for their children. Consequently, these students have to work to pay university and college fees. The other cause is living expenses. Many students study away from hometown, and have to pay for accommodation, food, entertainment etc. As it is often hard to cover these expenses, students are forced to earn money to afford their living. I think that the problem of students working during their studies results in lower quality of education and has no benefits at all. Thus, it should be solved on the governmental level.

I can suggest two possible solutions to this problem. Firstly, the government could make higher education free. For instance, this result can be achieved by financing educational establishments from the country’s budget. Not only will it make universities and colleges accessible for everyone, but it will also reduce the number of working students. The second solution is promoting unpaid e-learning. Such form of distance education doesn’t require a lot of resources to be maintained. What’s more, students don’t have to leave their homes and can plan their schedules the way they prefer.

In conclusion, I believe that mainly lack of financial resources causes students to work, but this problem can be solved by lowering the amount of financial expenses students have to meet.

(298 words)

**Sample Essay Written by Student:**

**Cause & Effect of Students’ Depression**

Depression has numerous causes and effects which affect not only the person but the people around them. Depression doesn’t have a specific cause; in most cases, it’s different for everyone. It is a common, treatable mental illness that can be experienced at any time in life. In student life, depression can be caused by difficulty in transitioning as well as by different stressors and as a result, this affects their academic performance.

To begin with, moving and acclimating to a new environment or academic system can be disruptive and can lead to severe depression. For example, a student getting admitted into a new institution leaving a familiar one. Teen depression is a serious mental health problem that affects how your teenager thinks, feels, and behaves, and it can cause emotional, functional, and physical problems. New surroundings, overwhelming classes, and bad decisions made in the wake of newfound freedom can be what pushes students past the breaking point.

Moreover, student stressors can take countless forms including grades, deadlines, work, and finances. A student might be having a bad time when a deadline could add more to his stress leading to mental health issues. As an example, a student having a tough time due to other issues, and a deadline for an assignment may cause mental stress. If a student could arrive at college with unaddressed mental health issues, they could find themselves struggling with a lack of a support system. Furthermore, being a victim of bullying can immensely affect a student’s mental health.

As a result of this, students cannot concentrate on their studies leading to complicated interpersonal relationships, poor academic performance, and suicidal thoughts. Navigating relationships in college — platonic or romantic — can lead to problems for a generation that relies heavily on technology as a means of communicating. A depressed mind ends up in a complicated peer relationship which may take a way towards suicidal thoughts at a point.

In conclusion, depression in student life is a serious issue caused by new surroundings and certain stressors which results in poor academic performance along with complicated peer relationships.

**Sample Topics for Practice:**

1. For a long time art has been considered an essential part of all cultures in the world. However, nowadays people’s values have changed, and we tend to consider science, technology and business more important than arts.

What do you think are the causes of this?  
What can be done to draw people’s attention to art?

2. Despite a variety of sport facilities and gyms, people are less fit nowadays than ever before.

What do you think are the main causes of this problem?  
What solutions can you suggest?