



Cause & Effect Essay

Before starting a rough draft, it is helpful to begin with a diagram that illustrates the causes and effects that will be discussed.

The pattern that goes from effect to causes...

...explores all contributing causes and seeks out the principle cause that produced the effect. The list below illustrates this pattern:

Effect:

Had an auto accident at 2:15 last Friday

Causes:

Slick road; ice
Driving too fast
Brakes went out
Stop sign was down
Other driver did not give signal

In this pattern, first state the effect as the topic sentence. Then explore each possible cause and determine its precise correlation with the stated effect. Do not merely present reasons, assumptions, or speculations. Stick with causes and demonstrate that such causes made the effect inevitable. Toward the end of the essay, assert the major contributing cause and trace its relationship to the effect. ↔

The pattern that goes from a cause to the effects...

...determines the major contributing cause, if there is one that exceeds the rest. Be careful to eliminate all "unreal" causes. The list below illustrates this pattern:

Cause:

Had an auto accident at 2:15 last Friday

Effects:

Injured 4 people
Totaled car
Got a ticket
Insurance went up
Late to work

In this pattern, state the cause in the topic sentence. Then explore the effects coming after it and resulting from it. Be careful not to list an assumed effect which did not result solely from the cause.

