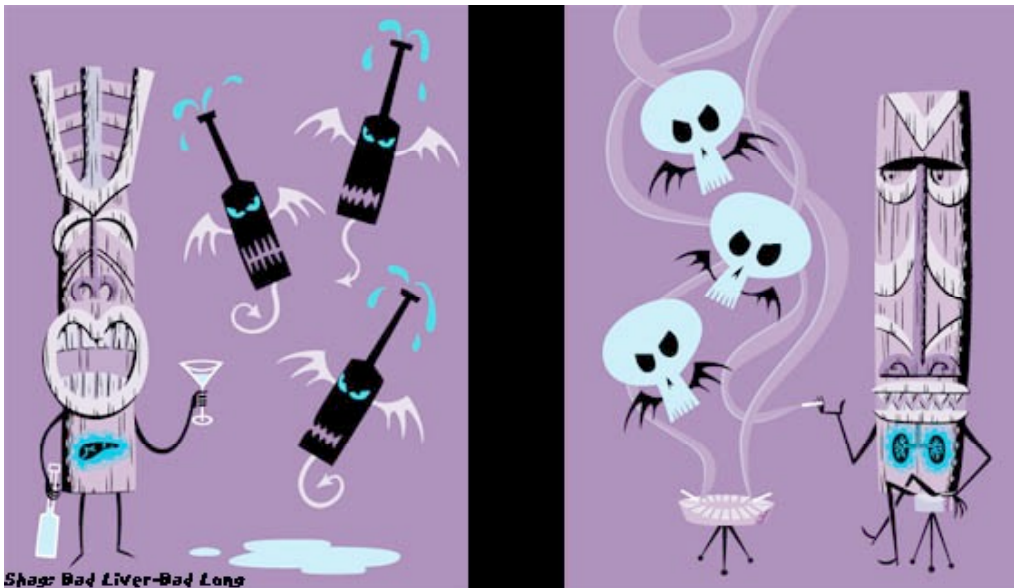


Cause and Effect Essays

OK, now we're getting into something fun, the cause and effect essay. The cause and effect essay will train you to call and respond. For example, if you're arguing about why cigarettes are detrimental to health, you can't just say cigarettes cause lung cancer and move on to the next subject. You must respond to that statement and tell the reader *why* cigarettes cause lung cancer: Call-Response.

That said, with the cause and effect essay, the most important members of the *who, what, when, where, and why* gang are *what* and *why*. The overlying message of your essay will be one huge "why" (cause) followed by one huge "what" (effect). We are in the world of relationships, how one point affects another. By examining causes and effects, we get to understand our lives a little better. You should concentrate on either the effect or the cause, whichever you decide to emphasize, but not both. So we're actually going to work from effect to cause or cause to effect; therefore, we are not dealing mostly with emphatic order, order of importance.



Let's look at a simple example:

By drinking enough martinis, I will soon destroy my liver.

Cause: Drinking martinis

Effect: Destroys my liver

Drinking martinis is your subject. "Will soon destroy my liver" is your opinion or slant.

Thesis: Drinking martinis will destroy your liver.

So sticking to one side, cause or effect, your plan of development or three points of argument might be based on why alcohol destroys the liver (drinking the martinis). Here, you must prove

that that cause leads to the effect. That's where research comes in. You must look up three reasons why alcohol is bad for us. And there you go, your argument is set.

Now don't be fooled by a *post hoc* fallacy. The American Heritage Dictionary defines post hoc as "in or of the form of an argument in which one event is asserted to be the cause of a later event simply by the virtue of having happened earlier." The cause must yield the effect. Because you threw salt over your shoulder before an airplane flight and then had a safe flight, there is no evidence that the salt over the shoulder is the reason your flight was safe. *Capish?* You MUST back up your claim with a good argument and references that back up your argument.

Here are some essential rules for this essay:

Your essay must be typed in proper MLA format (I am grading HEAVILY ON THIS)
The checklists and outline in this packet must be filled out and handed in
You will hand in early rough drafts with your essay
You will read, or have another student read, your opening paragraph to the class.

*Please see the "Checklist for Required Work" for more on this, later in this handout.

Here is your essay prompt: 750 words.

Write about your decision to attend this summer session—What is your main reason for taking this class? By taking the class now, talk about three effects that you envision (positive and negative) on your summer and fall plans?

Essay Review: What is expected in the basic essay.

Introductory Paragraph

Introduction Plan of development: points 1.2.3 Thesis Statement

The *introduction* must attract the reader.

The *plan of development* is a list of points that support the thesis. The points are offered in the order they are given.

Thesis: the main idea in two parts: topic and your opinion.

First Supporting Paragraph

Topic sentence (point 1) Specific evidence

The topic sentence is the first supporting point for your thesis, and the specific evidence delves into you topic sentence

Second Supporting Paragraph

Topic sentence (point 2) Specific evidence

The topic sentence advances the second supporting point for your thesis, and the specific evidence develops that point.

Third Supporting Paragraph

Topic sentence (point 3) Specific evidence

The topic sentence advances the third supporting point for your thesis, and the specific evidence develops that point.

Concluding Paragraph

Summary, conclusion or both

A summary is a broad restatement of the thesis and its main points. A Conclusion is a final thought or tow stemming from the subject of the paper.

Common Methods of Introduction.

1. **Broad Statement:** Using factory work as an example, you might start out by saying the following: Working in a factory might be one of the worst jobs. And then you go into the specific factory that you're writing about, for example, an egg factory.

2. **Contrast:** Start with an idea that is the opposite of the one you will develop: working in an office is a nice, clean job. You have comfortable chairs, a desk, a computer, a cup of coffee nearby, but working in a factory does not have the niceties found in an office.

3. **Relevance:** What makes your topic special? Convince the reader that the topic applies to them or is important. So many of our ancestors, when they first came to this country, found themselves working in factories.

4. **Anecdote:** An interesting short story that coaxes the reader into the world of your essay. The story should be related to your thesis. I once met a man named Victor who was missing two of his fingers. Victor told me that he lost his fingers because of an accident at work. He caught his hand in the wheels of a conveyor belt at the egg factory where he worked.

5. **Quotation:** Quote something from your research, or find a dictionary quote that relates to your topic:

“Perhaps it seemed to me,” Wrote Henry David Thoreau, “that I had several more lives to live, and could not spare any time for that one” (342). This is how I felt after working in an egg factory for two years. I had other lives to live. I had wasted enough of my life here.

Concluding Paragraph

The concluding paragraph should summarize the essay by restating the thesis and even restating the main supporting points. Also, the conclusion brings your paper to a graceful end, leaving the reader with a final thought on the subject. Here is where you get to offer your opinion on the subject.

Three Ways to Conclude Your Paper using La Jolla Shores (a local beach) as an example.

1. End with a summary or final thought:

La Jolla Shores, then, is one of the most inviting beaches in San Diego. The beaches there are wider, cleaner, and safer. It is not surprising that a growing number of San Diegans are traveling to La Jolla Shores to experience this great beach.

2. A thought-provoking question:

Appeal to the reader that your subject is bigger than your essay.

Comment on any one of these:

The future

Which choice should be made

Why is your subject important

Wouldn't La Jolla Shores be the beach of choice for anyone who wants to experience an enjoyable day by the ocean?

3. A prediction or recommendation

Even with its growing popularity, La Jolla Shores will always be the most pleasant beach experiences San Diego has to offer.

Outline Form for Essays

Thesis Statement (paragraph #1)

1st supporting point for paragraph #2 (transition from previous paragraph: First, etc.)

Specific support #1 _____

Specific support #2 _____

Specific support #3 _____

Concluding remark

2nd supporting point for paragraph #3 (transition from previous paragraph)

Specific support #1 _____

Specific support #2 _____

Specific support #3 _____

Concluding remark

3rd supporting point for paragraph #4 (Transition from previous paragraph)

Specific support #1 _____

Specific support #2 _____

Specific support #3 _____

Concluding remark (tie into your next paragraph)

Conclusion: (tie-in 3 points and thesis)

_____ I made it clear in my opening paragraph what cause or effect I will write about.

_____ I offered a good, strong thesis and stuck to this thesis throughout my essay.

_____ I have offered three points (plan of development) in which to explore the cause and effect I chose.

_____ I stuck to my method of development.

_____ I have used transition words as I moved to each subject and from paragraph to paragraph, so my essay reads smoothly like water rolling down a hill. There are no sudden changes of subjects without gracefully transitioning into them.

_____ My concluding paragraph binds my essay together and brings me back to the thesis of my essay.

_____ My simple sentences offer one thought only.

_____ I vary my sentences. I make sure to use compound and complex sentences, so my essay has a musical quality to it, but I do not overdo it.

_____ I have reviewed my essay and removed all redundant words. I avoided wordiness and stuck to concision.

Checklist for Required Work

_____Prewriting

_____Outline

_____Rough draft

_____Two edited drafts (with correction marks)

_____Peer evaluations (if done)

_____at least two works cited

_____at least one quotation from our readings, properly introduced and cited.

_____proper MLA format has been followed

_____outline form filled out to be handed in

_____You will read, or have another student read, your opening paragraph to the class.

Peer Evaluations

- _____ Read the essay once without making any comment
- _____ Draw a line under any awkward wording that is difficult to understand
- _____ Correct spelling or grammar errors that really stick out
- _____ Highlight the thesis statement (or draw a wavy line under it)
- _____ Highlight or wavy line under topic sentences in each paragraph
- _____ Circle transitional words and phrases
- _____ Write the words “vague” or “specific” in the margins next to specific details
- _____ Circle or highlight: slang, clichés, repetition, and misspelled words
- _____ If MLA format is off state at bottom of paper
- _____ Is the focus clear? Which parts lose you? Make comments in side spaces of essay.

Write your last name above the title.

Grade	A	B	C	D
Unity (Purpose)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thesis is not only argumentative, but is also “surprising” or “risky” and responds to assignment clearly. Essay’s purpose is clear, shows strong plan of development and originality. All material on target in support of thesis. Makes one point and sticks to it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thesis is argumentative, responds to assignment clearly and reflects author’s purpose Essay’s purpose is clear, but could use a little more originality and independent thought Good sense of material but point is spread too thin, maybe off Point a bit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thesis is argumentative, but could respond to assignment and reflect author’s purpose more clearly Essay’s purpose is somewhat clear, but lacks originality and independent thought Barely hits the target in support of thesis, but does stick to a point. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thesis not argumentative and does not respond to assignment or reflect author’s purpose clearly Essay’s purpose is unclear Off target, unclear. Not sure what point is.
Support: Do you back up your points?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan of development supported through specific evidence and sound, thorough reasoning Topic sentence identifies paragraph’s content. Strong, vivid specifics that support the topic sentence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan of development is supported with a good amount of evidence and sound reasoning. Topic sentences reflect <i>most</i> paragraphs content but not totally on target. Specific evidence is there but not as strong or vivid as it could be. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan of development is supported with some evidence and reasoning. Topic sentences do not consistently reflect paragraph content Specific evidence is somewhat unclear and a bit ineffective.. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Claims and ideas are underdeveloped and unsupported Topic sentences unclear or non-existent Specific evidence is unclear and ineffective.
Coherence: Organized and connected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall message of paragraphs is logical and purposeful with a clear method of organization. Quotes are synthesized well with text. Transitions and connecting words used to tie material together. Good sense of flow. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall message of paragraphs is mostly logical and purposeful yet organized Quotes are synthesized fairly well with text. Transitions indicate relationships between paragraphs. OK sense of flow. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall message of paragraphs is sometimes illogical with <i>basic</i> organization. Quotes are somewhat synthesized into text, but sometimes random. Transitions sometimes do not indicate relationships between paragraphs. No sense of flow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall message of paragraphs is inadequate. No quotes or quotes are not synthesized into text Transitions fail to indicate relationships between paragraph
Sentence skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The essay is free from grammatical or mechanical errors Word choice is specific, purposeful, dynamic, and varied throughout essay Sentences are clear, active (Subject – Verb – Object), and to the point 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grammatical or mechanical errors exist, but not enough to distract from reading Word choice is specific and purposeful, and somewhat varied throughout essay Sentences are mostly clear, active (SVO), and to the point 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grammatical or mechanical errors distract somewhat from reading Word choice is often unspecific, generic, redundant, and clichéd Sentences are somewhat unclear; excessive use of passive voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper is full of grammatical and mechanical errors Word choice is excessively redundant, clichéd, and unspecific Sentences are very unclear
MLA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conforms to MLA rules for formatting and citation of sources perfectly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conforms to MLA rules for formatting and citation of sources with minor exceptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conforms to MLA rules for formatting and citation of sources with several, somewhat major, exceptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Often fails to conform to MLA rules for formatting and citation of sources

Comments: