**Course: Written expression Level: Second year LMD**

**Lesson: CAUSE AND EFFECT PRAGRAPH**

Cause and effect explain why an event happened or how the consequences of such event were. A cause effect paragraph can focus on causes, effects, or both.

You often analyze the causes or effects of something. At home, you may worry about what causes your siblings or to behave in a certain manner, or you may wonder about the effects of a certain food on your health. In a history course, you might analyze the causes of the Great Depression, or you might write about the consequences of the Industrial Revolution. At work, you may wonder about the causes or effects of a promotion or a pay cut.

The topic sentence expresses the main idea

|  |
| --- |
| Cause and Effect at Work  Mark frequently expresses his dislike for school and reading. He continues to read at a second-grade level and is behind his classmates in the acquisition of knowledge expected from fourth-grade students. In interviews with the child, he has stated that he never reads at home and spends most of his time watching television. Because he is so far behind his peers in the classroom, he is embarrassed to show in front of his peers his lack of reading skills for fear of ridiculous. It is easier for him to “act out”; thus distracting others from his deficiency in reading. He displays a low level of self confidence and appears to have given up trying. |

The concluding sentence brings the paragraph to a satisfying close

Supporting sentences details and examples

**The cause and effect paragraph**

When writing the cause and effect paragraph focus on two main points.

1. **Indicate whether you are focusing on causes, effects, or both.** Because a paragraph is not very long, it is often easier to focus on either causes or effects. If you decide to focus on both cause and effects, make sure that your topic sentence announces your purpose to the reader.
2. **Ensure that your causes and effects are valid.** Determine real causes and effects, and do not simply list things that happened before and after the event. Also verify that your assumptions are logical.

* **Illogical:** The product does not work because it is inexpensive.

**(**This statement is illogical because quality is not always dictated by price)

* Better: the product does not work because it is constructed with poor quality material.

**EXPLORE TOPICS**

Imagine that you had to write a cause effect paragraph about employee absenteeism. You might brainstorm and think of as many causes and effect as possible

**Employee absenteeism**

**Grammar Hint ‘Do not confuse affect and effect’**

Generally *affect* is used as a verb and *effect* is used as a noun. Affect (verb) means “to influence or change”, and “effect” (noun” means the result.

* How will your new job affect (v) your family
* What effect (n) will moving to a new city have on your spouse’s career?

Effect can also be used a s a verb that means to “cause or bring about”. It is generally used in the following phrases: “to effect a change” or “to effect” a plan”

*The union members demonstrated to effect change in their working conditions*

* **Write some possible causes and effects to the following topics. Then decide your topic will focus on causes or effects.**

**EXAMPLE:**

Smoke-free work zones

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Causes**   * Workers complain about smoke new legislations * Lobby groups asking for smoke-free   zones   * lack of ventilation in the offices | **Effects**   * employees smoke in entrances * cigarette litter outside buildings * smokers influence non smokers * smokers take long breaks |

**Focus on:** Effects

1. **Cheating**

……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….

**Focus:** ……………………………………………………………………………….

1. **Popularity of fast food**

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

**Focus:** …………………………………………………………………………………

1. **Teenage rebellion**

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

**Focus:** …………………………………………………………………………………….

**The topic sentence in the cause effect paragraph**

The topic sentence in a cause effect paragraph must clearly state whether the focus is on causes, effects, or both. Also make sure that you have clearly indicated your controlling idea. **Read the following examples of topic sentences. Notice that the controlling idea is underlined:**

**Topic controlling idea (causes)**

* **The Great Depression** was caused by many factors

**Topic controlling idea (effects)**

* **The Great Depression** changed the values of the Canadian society in a profound way.

**Topic controlling idea (causes and effects)**

* **The Great Depression**, which was caused by many factors, changed the Canadian society in a profound way.

**Practice:** Read the following topic sentences and then decide whether each sentence focuses causes, effects, or both. Circle the best answer.

1. People become homeless due to difficult life circumstances.

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….

1. Homeless people have to deal with difficult situations in their day-to-day lives.

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

1. Because of many problems at Chernobyl nuclear site, the environment in Ukraine has changed forever.

……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….

1. Scientists have proposed many theories that explain the disappearance of the dinosaurs.

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Vocabulary boost

Using your thesaurus, come up with three synonyms for cause and three synonyms for effect.

**WRITE TOPIC SENTENCES**

Write a topic sentence for each of the following topics. You can look for ideas in the previous task. Determine whether you will focus on causes, effects, or both in your paragraph.

**EXAMPLE**:

**Topic**: Smoke-free work zones

**Topic sentence**: Smoke-free work zones, implemented for obvious reasons, have had surprising consequences for employees.

1. **Cheating**

**Topic sentence:** …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

1. **Popularity of fast food**

**Topic sentence:** ……...................................................................................................

…………………………….

1. **Teenage rebellion**

**Topic sentence:** ………………………………………………………………………………………………………….

……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

**THE SUPPORTING SENTENCES**

When planning a cause effect paragraph, think of examples that clearly show the causes or effects. Then arrange your examples in emphatic order. **Emphatic order** means that you can place your examples from the most to the least important or from the least to the most important.

HINT

Avoid attributing a simple general cause to a complex issue. When you use expressions such as *it appears that* or *a possible cause is*, you show that you are aware of the complex factors involved in the situation.

**Oversimplification:** the high murder rate in cities is caused by easily obtained firearms.

**Better**  : A possible cause of the high murder rate in cities is the abundance of easily obtained firearms.

a

**Visualizing cause and effect**

**Practice**: **A)** brainstorm supporting ideas for the following topic sentence. Explain how a dam might affect the environment.

**Topic sentence**: A dam has profound effects on the environment.

**B)** Choose one of the topic sentences from the previous task. Then list either causes or effects

**Topic sentence**:

**Supports**: ………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….

……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….

**The paragraph plan**

In many courses instructors ask students to write about the causes and effects of a particular subject. Plan your paragraph before you write your final version. Also think about the order of ideas. Arrange the supporting details in a logical order. As you make your plan, ensure that you focus on cause, effects, or both.

**Topic sentence:** smoke-free work zones, implemented for obvious reasons, have had surprising consequences for employees.

**Support1:** smokers stand at entrances to smoke their cigarettes.

**Details:** drop their cigarettes butts on the ground

Heavy smoke at the entrances

**Support 2**: smokers take long breaks

**Details** Need frequent cigarette breaks

Not fair to others who must do extra work

**Support 3:** Smoking culture influences non smokers

**Details** non smokers take breaks with their non smoking friends

Some non smokers become smokers

**Write a paragraph plan**

**Refer to the information you generated in the previous exercises, and create a paragraph plan. If you think of new details that will explain your point more effectively, include them here.**

**Topic sentence** …………………………………………………………………………………………………………...........

**Support1:** …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

**Details** …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….

**Support 2**: …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

**Details** …………………………………………………………………..

……………………………………………………………………….

**Support 3:** ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

**Details** ……………………………………………………………….

……………………………………………………………….

**The first draft**

After you outline your ideas in a plan, you are ready to write your first draft. Remember to write complete sentences. You might include transitional expressions to help your ideas flow smoothly.

**Transitional expressions**

The following transitional expressions are useful for showing causes and effects

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **To show causes** | **To show effects** |
| For this reason | Accordingly |
| The first cause | As a result |
| The most important cause | Consequently |