

## Cause and Effect

Many times one event causes something else to happen. The cause comes first, and then the result or effect can be seen. The cause leads to the effect.

Example: The tornado caused a lot of damage.

Without thinking about it, you connect causes with effects every day. You might drive to school very early so that you can find a good place to park. Your thinking about how hard it will be to find a parking place is the cause. Your driving to school early to get a parking place is the effect.

A larger example may help. In certain winters the U.S. had such extremely low temperatures in some southern states that the frost line reached Florida, damaging the state's orange crop. Many oranges were lost. On the television news, it was predicted that consumers would soon be forced to pay more for orange products at the store.

A number of results came from this single cause – sudden cold temperatures. A couple of them are listed below:

Cause	Effect
1. freezing temperatures	damaged orange crop
2. damaged orange crop	fewer oranges harvested

What effect might come from the cause shown below? Write one.

Cause	Effect
3. fewer oranges harvested	_____

You may have written, “higher prices for orange products,” since a short supply of a commodity leads to higher prices. You can probably think of other causes and effects stemming from this event. For example, *higher prices for orange products* (cause) might mean that *fewer orange products will be bought* (effect). Also, *a damaged Florida orange crop* (cause) might mean the *sale of more California oranges* (effect).

As you see, events can sometimes lead to a chain of cause-and-effect relationships. Analyzing cause and effect can help you understand what you read and also help you write about cause and effect clearly so that your readers will understand what caused what.

In writing, cause and effect is frequently signaled by key words such as

because	the reason was
since	led to
therefore	brought about
as a result	the outcome was
consequently	the end result was
accordingly	was responsible for

Examples:

I hurried to get ready for school because I got up late.

The outcome of my talk with my son's teacher was a better understanding of my son's difficulty in school.

Although causes normally come before their effects, in some sentences the effects may be stated before the cause. You could write

I drove to school very early so that I could find a good place to park.  
(cause before effect)

Or you could write

In order to find a good place to park, I drove to school very early.  
(effect before cause)

Notice in the sentence below that the effect comes before the cause even though in reality the cause happened before the effect:

America finally turned its attention to the exploration of space largely because of the Soviet Union's launching of Sputnik in the late 1950s.

### Exercise 1

Directions: Underline the cause and the effect in each sentence below and write a *c* above the cause and an *e* above the effect. Some sentences may include more than one cause or effect.

1. In addition to extreme overpopulation, extended drought has contributed to severe famine in Ethiopia and other parts of Africa.
2. Population growth in the Sunbelt States has come from many companies relocating to that area.

3. The emigration of the first pilgrims from England to the New World was prompted by religious persecution in their homeland.
4. Unfair employer practices brought about the establishment of labor unions.

### Exercise 2

Directions: Frequently you will be asked to trace causes and their effects in an article or a passage. Read the passage below. Match the effects listed in the column on the right with their causes listed on the left by writing the appropriate letter in the space provided.

Tornadoes, or “twisters,” are among the smallest but most violent storms. They are caused by air masses that reach rotational speeds of about 300 miles per hour. Tornadoes often occur in series, like the ones in April of 1965 that caused havoc in Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio, killing 271 people and damaging \$300,000,000 worth of property. Forty years earlier, in March of 1925, another series had killed 740 persons in Missouri, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, and Tennessee.

“Tornado Alley” is a belt that runs through the Great Plains and southeastern portion of the United States. The Chicago area holds the greatest potential for tornado damage because of the combination of its location, its density of population, and its development. However, less populated southwestern Oklahoma has the highest incidence of tornadoes. Though Chicago has only half the incidence of tornadoes as Oklahoma, the need for disaster aid in Chicago is greater than anywhere else.

Cause	Effect
_____ 1. tornado series of 1965	(a) 740 people killed in 5 states
_____ 2. plains location, population density, and development in the Chicago area	(b) small violent storms
_____ 3. rotating air masses of about 300 mph	(c) the greatest potential for tornado damage
_____ 4. tornado series of 1925	(d) \$300,000;000 property damage

### Exercise 3

Directions: Read the two passages below. Circle the letter of the choice that best completes the statements that follow each passage.

A troublesome problem in the American economy is reduced competitiveness with other industrial nations. This is especially true regarding automobile production and sales between the United States and Japan.

Japanese auto makers can produce smaller cars more cheaply than many of the American Big Four auto makers. Also, for many years, the American market has been open to Japanese car manufacturers. Because of this, car sales for GM, Chrysler, Ford, and American Motors have suffered.

Because of pressure from American government and business leaders, Japan has voluntarily reduced the number of cars exported to the United States. This self-imposed quota has allowed U.S. auto makers to improve quality, increase automation, and reduce manufacturing costs.

Unfortunately, American car buyers have not significantly increased their purchase of domestic cars. They choose, instead, to pay more for the fewer Japanese imports, and they have responded to the limited export of Japanese cars by buying more European imports.

1. According to the passage, one result of Japan's voluntary restraint on auto exports to the U.S. has been that
  - (1) American cars have become scarce and highly priced.
  - (2) American automobile manufacturers have demanded stronger protectionist policies.
  - (3) Americans have been refusing to buy Japanese automobiles.
  - (4) the Japanese have been buying more American cars.
  - (5) American auto makers have become more competitive.
  
2. According to the passage, an effect of the reduced numbers of Japanese cars exported to the U.S. has been
  - (1) a decreased demand for Japanese imports by Americans.
  - (2) an increase in the number of European imports sold in the U.S.
  - (3) a decrease in the cost of Japanese imports.
  - (4) an increase in the number of American cars sold in Japan.
  - (5) a greater commitment by Americans to "buy American."

In 1978, voters in the state of California revolted against high taxes by passing Proposition 13. This action severely limited revenue from property taxes that is vitally important in supporting public schools. One result of this was that educational programs in the state suffered. However, after 1978, the federal report, "*A Nation at Risk*," was released. This report focused on the "rising tide of mediocrity" engulfing American schools.

Now, California leads states that have raised taxes to enable schools to improve programs.

1. What is suggested as the reason for the change in feeling by the voters of California?
  - (1) Homeowners weren't paying their fair share of taxes.
  - (2) The public recognized the need for money to improve the quality of the schools.
  - (3) Voters decided property taxes were not the proper source of revenue for schools.
  - (4) A federal report convinced citizens that schools misused funds.
  - (5) Taxpayers in California were paying a proportionally lower amount for school support than those in any other state.
  
2. As a result of raising taxes, California
  - (1) had less revenue.
  - (2) had mediocre educational programs.
  - (3) was featured in "A Nation at Risk."
  - (4) had the first tax revolt.
  - (5) will be able to improve educational programs.