

## Composition

### Second Year

### Second Semester

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#### The Cause-and-Effect Analysis Essay

##### *Organizing the Effect Analysis Essay*

The principles for organizing an effect paper are much the same as those for organizing a causal analysis. Like causes, effects can be unrelated (causally) to each other, though they all stem from the same cause. For instance, when a killer hurricane hits, several effects result: death, property damage, energy failures, and so on. These effects are not necessarily related causally; they were all just caused by the same thing—the killer hurricane. Although effects can be of equal value or importance, usually some are more important than others. In this case, like causes, organize the paragraphs dealing with effects according to order of importance (though focus should be on the more important—or major—ones).

Effects, too, like causes, can be immediate or remote. In the example of excessive sugar consumption, an immediate effect of eating sugar is a boost in energy, but more remote are the blood sugar problems and tooth decay. In this case, the remote effects happen to be the most important. An immediate effect of the earthquake in El Asnam, Algeria, in 1980 was the death of thousands of people; a more remote effect will be, perhaps, buildings constructed under a safer and more stringent building code. In this case, although the immediate effect is the most important, the remote effect is still worth discussing.

If an analysis, then, is of effects that occur relatively in the same time relationship with the cause—in other words, they are all basically immediate or remote—it is a good idea to order the effects according to importance. On the other hand, if the discussion is of immediate and remote effects, it is a good idea to begin with the immediate and continue to the remote. Reminder: Identify the quality of the effect (immediate, major, and so on) to the reader to clarify the type of effect being discussed.

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##### EXERCISE 10 - 7

Following are two sets of effects in no particular order. For each set, decide which are immediate and which are remote effects. Then organize them into an outline for an essay.

A. The Effects of Watching TV

1. More people get eyestrain.
2. There is more violent crime in our cities.
3. People get fat.
4. There are more divorces.
5. Husbands and wives do not talk to each other anymore.
6. People do not enjoy reading anymore.
7. People are more afraid of each other.
8. People are lonely.

B. The citizens of this city have passed legislation to lower property taxes. (First divide effects into negative and positive.)

1. Many city employees will lose their jobs.
  2. Police patrols in the suburbs and downtown area will be reduced.
  3. Citizens will have more money to spend on consumer items.
  4. There will not be money for street repair.
  5. The school budget will be reduced.
  6. New business will be attracted to the city.
  7. The park service will not be able to plant new trees along the highways.
  8. The garbage will be picked up only once a week instead of twice a week.
  9. More jobs will open up.
  10. The local high schools will no longer have football teams.
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*The Thesis Statement for the Effect Analysis Essay*

Just as in a causal analysis essay, in an effect analysis essay the thesis statement does not have to be persuasive. The thesis statement can have a more simply stated central idea:

The tax increase will bring benefits to our city.

Here, of course, the topic is *tax increase* and the central idea is that it will *bring benefits* to the city.

Now read the following essay, which analyzes effects. Try to find the thesis and see if the writer has clarified the type of effects being discussed

FOR THE LOVE OF WINNING

[1] I am an avid contest enterer. From childhood I could never resist entering contests on cereal boxes, in bubble gum packages, in newspapers, magazines, or on television. I have tried to win everything from a pet turtle to a yacht to a home in the mountains to large sums of money. Well, imagine my surprise after years of entering and losing at being notified last year that I was a winner! What had I won for the four-line jingle that I had sent in to a cigarette company? The special delivery letter informed me that I had been awarded the grand prize of \$500,000. After my immediate excitement. I made great plans to

spend the money, and indeed, I have spent a great deal of it. But perhaps more interesting than my purchases, now six months after that memorable day, are the effects on my life of winning a great sum of money. Through this experience, I have come to know other people and myself better.

[2] The most obvious and immediate effect of winning \$500,000 has been material. I made a list of things I had always dreamed of having but could never before afford, and I went on the greatest shopping spree of my life. Within a month I had bought a new stereo system, an expensive sports car, lots of new clothes, and a cabin in the woods. And I must say, I am very pleased with my new purchases. I enjoy listening to records on my stereo and driving my Porsche to the cabin on weekends. I have found that I very much appreciate the pleasures of having a lot of money.

[3] Another effect, and less enjoyable, has been the change in other people toward me. Within the first month, I found that people who had hardly spoken to me before were suddenly "friendly." I was invited to parties by people I hardly knew and was expected to return the invitations. Even with some of my oldest friends, I was expected to foot the bill on our nights out together, because I had "all that money." After a while, I became suspicious of people and their motives, thinking that they only wanted to be with me for my money. Then, I came to evaluate my friends more carefully. I found only a handful of my oldest friends were still true friends, not caring about the money. Through it all, I have become a better judge of character.

[4] Perhaps the most significant effect has been the new understanding I acquired about myself. I think I know who I am better than I did before I won the money. As I said before, I am happy with my purchases; however, I do not feel that all my dreams have been fulfilled. In fact, I have learned that the money is not all that important to me and that I did not enter that contest in order to get the money. I have realized that I love the challenge of a good contest and the possibility that with skill and luck I could win. In short, I simply love winning. I will enter a contest just for the challenge. For example, the other day as I was reading a magazine, I saw a contest advertised which asked for a fifty-word summary of a challenging physical experience. Without thinking, I rushed to my desk, put some paper in the typewriter, and began writing. When I thought about what I was doing, I laughed out loud. I did not particularly want a seven-day trip to Hawaii; I just wanted to see if I could win!

[5] Winning \$500,000 has resulted in a more comfortable life style for me, it is true. But more importantly, I now understand other people and myself a little better. I am quite happy with my trusted friends, and I know that for every television ad or contest letter that promises riches, I will send off my lucky number or jingle, not so much for the prize, but for the love of winning.

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### EXERCISE 10 - 8

Answer the following questions about "For the Love of Winning."

1. What is the thesis?
2. Does the writer establish a need or purpose for writing this paper?

3. Which kind of effect does the writer begin with?
4. What is the controlling idea in the third paragraph?
5. What verb tense are the topic sentences in paragraphs 2, 3, and 4 expressed in? Why is that verb tense appropriate?
6. Why did the writer discuss the "new understanding" last?
7. Make an outline of this essay.

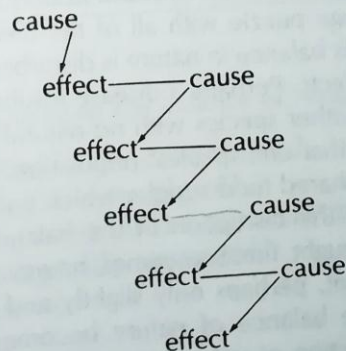
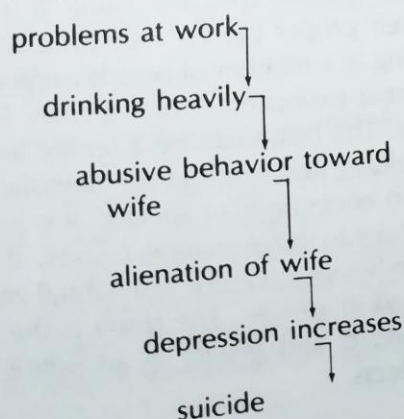
### WRITING ASSIGNMENT 10-7

The following topics are for a writing assignment for an essay analyzing effects. Be sure to distinguish between major and minor causes and between immediate and remote, whichever is appropriate.

1. Finish the essay that you started in Writing Assignment 10-6.
2. Choose another of the topics in Writing Assignment 10-5.
3. Analyze the effects of a change in your life. For instance, how has living away from home for the first time affected you?
4. What if you were to receive a large sum of money, say \$1,000,000—how do you think your life would change?
5. Discuss the effects of a political or social change in your country.

## The Causal Chain

Another type of cause-and-effect analysis is the *causal chain*. Unlike the multiple cause-and-effect analyses, the causes and effects in a causal chain are always directly related; in fact, they are linked. In the causal chain, one effect can become a cause of another effect, which in turn becomes a cause of another effect, and so on. For example, let us say that a man had problems at work; as a result, he started to drink heavily. His heavy drinking eventually caused him to behave in an abusive way to his wife; his wife then alienated herself from him. His wife's alienation caused him to feel even more alone and more of a failure; his depression caused him to commit suicide. This domino-like chain might be diagrammed as follows:



There are two major uses of the causal chain. First, it is sometimes useful for explaining one of the causes in a multiple cause essay. For instance, in the example of obesity, the cause of overeating could be explained thus:

The most obvious cause of obesity is overeating. But why do people overeat? One reason is emotional problems. For example, consider the case of Debbie. When Debbie was a child, her parents rewarded her for good behavior with candy and other sweet things. As she grew older, she began to reward herself quite regularly. As a result, she began to gain weight. By the time she was a teenager, Debbie had become rather heavy. Her weight then became a target for the other young people at school. They teased her unmercifully, as youngsters will do. She was teased so much that she started feeling sorry for herself and consoled herself by eating more and more. She gained more weight, and the vicious cycle continued until her self-image was so bad that she could not really perceive herself as anything but fat; therefore, diets were unsuccessful because she would inevitably get depressed during or after a diet and go on an eating binge to soothe her feelings.

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#### EXERCISE 10 - 9

Make a causal chain diagram of this paragraph.

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The other major use of the causal chain is in science to analyze various kinds of cycles, biological or chemical chains, for example. Study the following essay, which analyzes a causal chain. See if the cause-effect relationship are clarified and explained.

#### UPSETTING THE BALANCE OF NATURE

The members of a living community exist together in a particular, balanced relationship, or ecosystem. One animal species eats another animal species which in turn eats another. Over years, a balance is worked out among the plants and animals in a community and it remains basically stable. It is like a huge puzzle with all of the pieces in their proper places. However, at times this balance in nature is disturbed, resulting in a number of possibly unforeseen effects. Perhaps a disease results in the near extinction of one species, leaving another species with no natural predator. The result can be a terrific increase in that one species' population. This could further result in the devastation of a shared food supply, which could in turn affect another species. It is possible for the disruption in the balance of nature to have natural causes: disease, drought, fire. Sometimes, however, human beings intervene in a natural environment, perhaps only slightly and with good intentions. The result is the same. The balance of nature becomes unbalanced and results in an entire chain reaction of unforeseen and unwanted effects.

A good example of this occurred in the Antilles in the 1870's. Sugar cane was a major crop there, but rats were eating and nesting in the cane, causing a great deal of damage. The mongoose, a one-and-a-half-foot-long mammal of the East Indies, was known to be an excellent rat hunter. Several males and females were imported in 1872, and laws were established that forbade the killing of them or their offspring. The mongoose flourished in the Antilles. After ten years it had multiplied abundantly and had significantly reduced the rat population. Consequently, damage to the cane fields was greatly reduced. It seemed that the scheme to add another piece to the ecological puzzle in the Antilles had been successful.

However, that is not the end of the story. The influence of the mongoose did not stop there. As the rat population decreased and the mongoose population increased, the mongoose needed to enlarge its menu. It attacked young pigs and goats, game, poultry, and began to destroy bananas, maize, and pineapples. Because the mongoose could not be hunted, its numbers increased rapidly, and it became a terrible pest. All of the indigenous animals suffered damage. The mongoose learned to enjoy the native birds, snakes, lizards, and turtles and their eggs. Now, it was specifically these animals that kept the local insect population in check. There were in the ecosystem of the Antilles a number of beetles, borers, and other insects that lived on and in the sugar cane. Until that time, they had not caused significant damage to the cane, because they were the natural food of so many local animals that kept their numbers down. However, as the birds, snakes, lizards, and turtles disappeared, the insect population began to increase. With no natural predators to keep them in check, the insects began to do more and more damage to the cane fields.

Finally, the people of the Antilles realized that the introduction of the mongoose had caused a finely and delicately balanced system to go awry. The law against killing the mongoose was rescinded, and the mongoose population was reduced. Gradually, the different members of the plant and animal community came back into balance with each other and equilibrium was reestablished. However, the human members of the community would not soon forget that a single change in an ecosystem can cause a chain reaction that results in completely unforeseen and sometimes unwanted effects.

—Adapted from Karl von Frisch, *Biology: The Science of Life* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1964).

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## EXERCISE 10 - 10

Answer the following questions about "Upsetting the Balance of Nature."

1. What is the topic of the essay? What is the central idea?
2. What is the incident in the Antilles an example of?
3. Is this causal chain logical; in other words, is the relationship among the causes and effects clearly and logically presented?
4. Does the conclusion logically follow?
5. Make an outline of this essay.