



Expository Writing: Cause and Effect

Writing Workshop 6

SUGGESTED LEARNING STRATEGIES: Quickwrite, Marking the Text, Graphic Organizer, Think-Pair-Share, Notetaking, Think Aloud, Rearranging, Deleting, Brainstorming, Webbing, Outlining, Drafting, Sharing and Responding

Focus:

The purpose of an expository essay is to communicate ideas and information to specific audiences for specific purposes.

Goal:

Write a multi-paragraph expository essay that:

- Presents effective introductory and concluding paragraphs.
- Contains a controlling idea or thesis.
- Includes relevant information and valid inferences.
- Uses an organizing structure appropriate to purpose, audience, and context.
- Uses a variety of rhetorical devices.
- Uses transitions between paragraphs.
- Uses a variety of sentence structures.

To achieve this goal, you will practice writing in the expository genre of **cause and effect**. You will engage in a series of activities in which you work with your teacher and with your classmates to construct two model cause-and-effect essays. You will use these models to write your own cause-and-effect essay.

Activity 1: Discovering Elements of a Multi-Paragraph Cause-and-Effect Essay

1. **Quickwrite:** What do you know about expository writing? How does a cause-and-effect essay fit with the purpose of expository writing?
2. Brainstorm possible organizational elements of a cause-and-effect essay.

Writing Workshop 6

Expository Writing

Focus: Cause and Effect

This sequence of activities is designed to provide direct writing instruction. Students will create three separate essays through this process: one that is co-constructed as a class with direct guidance from the teacher; one that is peer constructed, and one that is written independently.

Steps:

Activity 1: Discovering Elements of a Multi-Paragraph Cause-and-Effect Essay

- 1 To access **students' prior knowledge**, have them respond to the **quickwrite**. Solicit responses and chart them on the board. Preview the goal of this writing workshop.

Steps:

2 Use a **guided reading** as you read aloud the sample text. Ask students to **mark the text** to underline the thesis statement and have them identify the organization being set up in this essay. Students should identify the topic sentences and the supporting information (details and examples).

3 **Chunk the text** by asking students to number each paragraph and then work with a partner to discuss the purpose of each chunk. Encourage students to **mark the text** by writing responses in the margin. Students should note the kinds of examples that are being used as the writer explores causes and effects. Be sure they notice the use of outside sources as part of the supporting information.

Sample Text

The Desired Look:
NOTHING BUT BONES

by Rebecca Patton

It seems like every little girl dreams of becoming a model. They want to be thin and pretty like the models they see on television and in magazines. Often the desire becomes an obsession and young girls see “thinness” as being a needed characteristic. For most girls, the teenage years are spent trying to acquire this look. Females are trying diets and are exercising like it is a competition to see who can lose the most weight the quickest. The obsession of many young girls over their appearance or weight has led to a growing number of people who have developed an eating disorder to try to deal with their lack of self-esteem or other related problems.

Eating disorders are a serious health problem. Personal Counseling & Resources says that eating disorders “are characterized by a focus on body shape, weight, fat, food, and perfectionism and by feelings of powerlessness and low self-esteem.” Three of the most common eating disorders are anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and binge eating or compulsive eating disorder. According to Anorexia Nervosa and Related Eating Disorders, a person with anorexia “refuses to maintain normal body weight for age and height” and “weighs 85 percent or less than what is what is expected for age and height.” A person diagnosed with bulimia has several ways of getting rid of the calories such as binge eating, vomiting, laxative misuse, exercising, or fasting. The person might have a normal weight for their age and height unless anorexia is present. The signs of a compulsive eater include eating meals frequently, rapidly, and secretly. This person might also snack and nibble all day long. The compulsive eater tends to have a history of diet failures and may be depressed or obese (Anred.com).

There are many reasons that can contribute to the cause of eating disorders. One of the main reasons seems to be the obsession over every little pound a person is wearing. Sometimes low self-esteem or depression from any number of causes can usher in the eating disorder. Other times compulsive exercising can help shed the pounds but leave the exerciser unhealthy looking.

There are other possible causes to this widely known health problem. The media bestows a great deal of beauty and thinness on television and magazines that are viewed by many people daily. Everyone has the desire to look like the actors and actresses do but, in reality, it just will not happen for most of us. Abuse, whether it be physical, emotional, or sexual, can also contribute to the development of an eating disorder (Something-Fishy.com). Such abuse to victims can leave them with a lack of trust and low self-esteem. An unfavorable relationship a person has with others is also a contributing factor to disordered eating habits. The world is so competitive that any mention from parents, siblings, peers, significant others, or co-workers about a person’s weight or appearance can lead to the onset of an eating disorder.

There really is no single reason that a person acquires an eating disorder. Many factors are considered when making a diagnosis for a person with this problem. Causes like the ones mentioned above play such an important role in eating disorders. Is it really so important that in order to look like the super models people are willing to give up food and starve themselves to death for a little satisfaction on the outside? The look of a person on the inside is what really matters.

Works Cited

- Anorexia Nervosa and Related Eating Disorders, Inc. "Definitions." *Welcome*. 17 Sept. 2000. <<http://anred.com/defs.html>> 19 Sept. 2000.
- Personal Counseling and Resources. "Eating Disorders." Personal Counseling and Resources. 22 Nov. 1997. <<http://www.coun.uvic.ca/personal/eating.html>> 13 Sept. 2000.
- Something Fishy. "Abuse." Website on Eating Disorders. 5 Sept. 2000. <<http://www.something-fishy.org/prevention/abuse.php>> 13 Sept. 2000.
- Something Fishy. "Anorexia Nervosa." Website on Eating Disorders. 5 Sept. 2000. <<http://www.something-fishy.org/whatarethey/anorexia.php>> 13 Sept. 2000.

3. Revisit the sample text, and number each paragraph to help you analyze the organizational structure of the essay. Work with a partner to discuss the purpose of each paragraph, and note your thoughts in the margin.
4. Create a graphic organizer of the components and characteristics of a multi-paragraph cause-and-effect essay. This organizer will serve as a model for you during the writing process as you generate and refine your own essay.

Activity 2: Writing a Class Essay

Prompt: Write an essay analyzing the cause (or causes) and the effect (effects) of a timely situation that is relevant to your school. Be sure the essay meets the requirements listed in the goal statement for writing an effective multi-paragraph expository essay.

1. With your class, choose a topic for the essay, and write it here.

Prewriting

2. Write notes on separate paper about ideas for the essay.
3. In addition to your initial prewriting brainstorming, look at the resources your teacher has provided about the topic. What information about causes and effects can you gather from these resources that will be helpful in writing your essay? Are there experts to be consulted?

Steps:

4. Bring closure to this task by asking students to generate a list of the organizational components (introduction, thesis, body, topic sentences, supporting details, conclusion, and transitions) of an essay. Chart responses on the board. Co-construct a **graphic organizer** of the components and characteristics of a multi-paragraph cause-and-effect essay that can be used to plan during the writing process of their own essay.
5. Revisit the initial quick write to allow students to refine their response.

Activity 2: Writing a Class Essay

6. Use a **think-pair-share** to review the prompt and determine what is required for the class essay.
7. Begin the writing process by **brainstorming** a variety of prewriting strategies (e.g., **free writing**, **webbing**, **outlining**, etc.) used to generate ideas and supporting facts, evidence, details, and/or examples. School-related topics may be the addition/removal of certain elective classes, the installation of a school rule, the interest or lack of interest in a sport or extra-curricular activity, or even an analysis of social habits such as gossiping. Settle on one and explore the selected topic with students.
8. **Brainstorm** with students the types of sources that may be helpful in expanding ideas. Supply students with several resources to gather more facts and details or assign students to gather them independently. These resources may include asking another person who has interesting information or experiences, asking an expert, and accessing magazines, newspapers, books, and the Internet. Ask students to **take notes** on the facts and details they learned from a variety of sources and use **think-pair-share** to add them to their prewriting notes.

Steps:

9 Show students how to move from the prewriting stage to the draft stage by linking like ideas, **rearranging** ideas, and/or **deleting** extraneous information. You may want to use an outline to arrange and organize ideas.

10 Review the components of a thesis. Remind students to look to the prompt for guidance in developing their thesis statement. **Think aloud** the process of constructing a working thesis from the key ideas generated in prewriting and co-construct a working thesis for the class essay. Review and revise the working thesis to ensure coherence; use **guided writing** as necessary.

11 Before drafting the body paragraphs, return to the prewriting and model synthesizing and organizing ideas. Create a T-chart **graphic organizer** to organize and elaborate ideas around cause and effect. **Think aloud** the process of deleting extraneous information that does not support the thesis.

12 Co-construct an outline to model writing effective body paragraphs. Use **guided writing** to co-construct appropriate topic sentences. While there is no set organizational pattern for a cause/effect essay, you may consider keeping ideas organized by presenting the cause first and then the effect. Guide students to evaluate their ideas and refine the outline.

13 Ask students to **brainstorm** relevant commentary and note ideas on the outline. Co-construct a draft of the body paragraph. Review and revise the draft to make sure it guides the reader's understanding.

4. To create an effective draft, you will need a thesis to give focus to the essay. A thesis statement has two purposes: to express a central opinion to be proven and to provide direction as to how the writer intends to show or develop the opinion. An effective thesis should include an opinion to be proven; it is not a fact. Consider a three-part process when developing a working thesis:

- Define or identify the **task** set by the prompt.
- Consider **what** needs to be addressed in the response.
- Decide **how** to best respond.

Generate a working thesis statement, a one-sentence statement that expresses the point you will make about the subject of your essay.

5. Successful cause-and-effect essays explore the connections and relationships between the cause and the effect. Some writers organize their writing by first exploring the cause and then the effect, while others explore the effect and then the cause. Consider an effective order for presenting your ideas that is appropriate to the purpose, audience, and context of your topic.

Drafting the Essay

Next, you will draft a body paragraph. A body paragraph consists of these elements:

- **Topic sentence:** A sentence which consists of a subject and opinion that works directly to support the thesis.
 - **Transition:** Words or phrases used to connect ideas (e.g., *for example, for instance*).
 - **Supporting information:** Relevant facts and details that are appropriate for the topic, support valid inferences, and are synthesized from a variety of sources. Extraneous details should not be included, and the supporting information should not have inconsistencies.
 - **Commentary:** Sentences that explain how the information is relevant to the thesis/topic sentence. These sentences are vital as they serve to reflect, analyze, explain, and interpret. Sentences of commentary also bring a sense of closure to the paragraph.
- 6.** With your class, generate an outline for the body paragraphs. Draft your body paragraphs on separate paper.

Introducing and Concluding the Essay

Now that you have co-constructed a thesis statement and one body paragraph, you are ready to create the introduction and conclusion of the essay. Introduction paragraphs include the following:

- A hook or lead: Consider using a quote, question, anecdote, or statement of intrigue to create your hook or lead.
- A connection between the hook/lead and the thesis.
- Thesis statement describing the subject and opinion.

14 Ask students to review the sample text to identify and discuss elements of an effective introduction. Use **guided writing** to co-construct an introductory paragraph that incorporates the refined thesis and demonstrates an engaging lead. Review and model revision strategies to create an effective organizational structure.

The conclusion brings a sense of closure to the essay. Use the following levels of questions to guide your thinking in crafting a conclusion:

- What did you say? (literal)
- What does it mean? (interpretive)
- Why does it matter? (universal)

7. Now write the introduction and conclusion for your cause-and-effect essay.

Revising

Now that the class essay is fully drafted, consider the language used to convey your ideas. A writer makes stylistic choices in language for effect, variety, and coherence.

Rhetorical devices serve to communicate a particular purpose to an intended audience and to help ideas have a lasting effect on the reader. Some examples of rhetorical devices are anaphora and hypophora. Incorporate rhetorical devices into the class essay.

- **Anaphora** is the repetition of the same word or group of words at the beginnings of two or more successive clauses or lines. Example: "***We shall not flag or fail. We shall go on to the end.***" Winston Churchill
- **Hypophora** occurs when the writer poses one or more questions and then proceeds to answer them, usually at some length. The purpose of using hypophora can be to maintain the reader's curiosity and interest. It can also serve to raise an obvious question the reader may have, which then allows the writer to intentionally answer it to fit his or her purpose. Example: "*What kind of peace do I mean and what kind of a peace do we seek? Not a Pax Americana enforced on the world by American weapons of war. Not the peace of the grave or the security of the slave. I am talking about genuine peace, the kind of peace that makes life on earth worth living, and the kind that enables men and nations to grow, and to hope, and build a better life for their children.*" John F. Kennedy, commencement address at American University, 1963

Varying sentence structure can be achieved by using different sentence types. This can also bring interest, emphasis, and balance to your writing.

- A **compound sentence** consists of two or more independent clauses, usually joined by a conjunction (*and, but, for, nor, or, so, yet*). Use a semicolon between parts of a compound sentence if they are not joined by a conjunction. Example: *The house is beautiful, and its lawn seems to stretch for miles.*
- A **complex sentence** contains one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses. Example: *Although the house is small, its charm is grand.*
- A **compound-complex sentence** contains two or more independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses. Example: *The house is beautiful, and although its roof was replaced last summer, it maintains its original charm.*

Steps:

15 Revisit the sample text to review the elements of an effective concluding paragraph. Use levels of questions to analyze and co-construct a draft of a concluding paragraph. **Think aloud** how to craft ideas into a cohesive conclusion. Review and revise the draft to bring a sense of closure to the essay.

Steps:

16 Use **guided writing** to model revision of language and for overall coherence (using rhetorical devices, varying sentence structures, and transitions). For further support, use the sample text to identify and analyze these components. Model **sharing and responding** while revising for coherence.

TEACHER TO TEACHER To support beginning writers in establishing coherence, consider teaching the concept of the three-fold topic sentence. This sentence provides transition from one paragraph to the next by:

- Referring subtly to the idea discussed in the previous paragraph.
- Referring briefly to the overall thesis.
- Referring more specifically to any new ideas to be discussed in the next paragraph.

Also note that the rhetorical devices of parallelism, analogy, and rhetorical question were taught in Writing Workshops Level 2 and 3.

17 Use the reflection to check for understanding and perhaps plan mini-lessons to address common questions and concerns as needed.

Activity 3: Writing an Essay with Peers

18 Organize students into writing groups of two to four. As students write their next essay, direct writing groups to follow a process similar to the one modeled in the class-constructed essay writing. As the groups work collaboratively, facilitate and monitor their progress. Clarify students' understanding as needed.

Coherence: A coherent essay is one that presents ideas that tie together and flow smoothly, making the essay easy to follow for the reader. Revise for coherence by using transitional words within and between paragraphs that serve the purpose of cause and effect. **Transitional words** to show **cause and effect** include the following: *therefore, for that reason, because, due to, thus, as a result, consequently, so, since, for.*

8. Revise the class-constructed essay for rhetorical devices, sentence structure, coherence, and effective transitions.
9. Reflection: What additional support might you need to write a cause-and-effect essay?

Activity 3: Writing an Essay with Peers

Prompt: Write an essay analyzing the cause (causes) and the effect (effects) of a situation relevant to a topic from one of your classes (e.g., a recent development in science, a milestone in history or politics, or a minor invention). Be sure the essay meets the requirements listed in the goal statement for writing an effective multi-paragraph expository essay.

Generating Content

1. In your writing group, review and mark the prompt to highlight major elements of the task you're being asked to do. Use a prewriting strategy to explore ideas that may address the prompt.
2. Select the best ideas from your prewriting to construct a working thesis for your essay.

Drafting

3. Review and organize the ideas from your prewriting as you draft your body paragraphs. Use an outline to organize the ideas in your body paragraphs. Be sure to brainstorm topic sentences that support the thesis, along with relevant information and valid inferences that develop and support the topic sentences. Draft your body paragraphs, and include meaningful and relevant commentary.
4. Read your body paragraphs and discuss an effective way to introduce and conclude your key ideas. Use a prewriting strategy to generate a draft that demonstrates the parts of an effective introduction (e.g., hook/lead, connection, and thesis) and conclusion (response to the levels of questions).

Revising

5. Reread the goal statement at the beginning of the workshop, and use the bullet points as a writer's checklist. Read aloud your draft in your writing group to gather feedback based on the criteria of an effective expository cause-and-effect essay.

TEACHER TO TEACHER This peer-constructed essay encourages students to make cross-curricular connections if they write about a topic from one of their classes. You may want to alert other subject area teachers in order to confer and collaborate on potential topics

6. Review your draft for language use:
 - Select ideas to emphasize by incorporating appropriate rhetorical devices such as anaphora and hypophora.
 - If your draft contains too many simple, short sentences, revise sentences that could be expanded for clarity or description. Revise at least three sentences to make a compound, a complex, and a compound-complex sentence.
7. Review your draft for coherence. Discuss which transitions can be used effectively to link ideas within and between your body paragraphs. Incorporate at least two into your draft.

Editing for Publication

8. Read your draft and peer edit to correct errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
9. Discuss the key ideas present in your essay, and generate a list of potentially creative titles for your essay. Rank them and select one. Place a title at the top of your essay.

Activity 4: Independent Writing

Prompt: Write an essay analyzing the cause (causes) and the effect (effects) of a situation related to the world around you. Consider selecting a problem that reaches outside of school and exists in your community, state, country, or the world. Be sure the essay meets the requirements listed in the goal statement for writing an effective multi-paragraph expository essay.

Writing Workshop 6

Continued

Steps:

- 19 During the revision stage, conduct mini-lessons according to group needs.
- 20 Invite students to reflect on their experience and to set individual writing goals in preparation for composing an essay independently.

Activity 4: Independent Writing

- 21 Assign the independent writing prompt, monitoring and responding to students' needs during the writing process.

Writing Workshop 6 Expository Writing

SCORING GUIDE

Scoring Criteria	Exemplary	Proficient	Emerging
Development of Ideas	<p>The composition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> asserts a focused, clearly stated thesis statement makes valid inferences to make important connections and distinctions develops and supports the thesis with relevant, well-chosen facts, extended definitions, concrete details, or quotations appropriate to the audience. 	<p>The composition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> asserts a topic with a thesis statement makes inferences to make connections and distinctions develops and supports the thesis with facts, extended definitions, concrete details, or quotations appropriate to the audience. 	<p>The composition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> presents a topic with an unfocused or limited thesis statement makes few inferences about ideas, concepts, and information making limited connections and distinctions contains insufficient or inappropriate facts, definitions, details, or quotations for the intended audience.
Organizational Structure	<p>The composition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> organizes complex ideas effectively using a structure appropriate for the purpose, audience, and context leads with an effective and engaging introduction and concludes by insightfully articulating the significance of the thesis sequences ideas effectively and uses a variety of meaningful transitions to create coherence. 	<p>The composition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> organizes ideas using a structure appropriate for the purpose, audience, and context presents a clear and focused introduction and conclusion sequences ideas and uses transitions to create coherence. 	<p>The composition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> organizes ideas using a structure that is inappropriate for the purpose, audience, and context; expected parts may be missing contains underdeveloped and/or unfocused introduction presents disconnected ideas and limited use of transitions contains underdeveloped or unfocused conclusion.
Use of Language	<p>The composition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses precise and purposeful diction and a variety of sentence types and structures to enhance the effectiveness uses rhetorical devices effectively to accomplish the purpose demonstrates skillful command of standard English conventions. 	<p>The composition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses appropriate diction for the topic and a variety of sentence types or structures uses rhetorical devices demonstrates general command of conventions; minor errors in punctuation, grammar, capitalization, or spelling do not affect meaning. 	<p>The composition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses diction that is inappropriate for the topic shows little or no variety in sentence structure uses few or no rhetorical devices demonstrates limited command of conventions; errors in grammar, punctuation, capitalization, or spelling interfere with meaning.
Writing Process	<p>The composition reflects skillful revision and editing to produce a draft ready for publication.</p>	<p>The composition reflects revision and editing to produce an essay ready for publication.</p>	<p>The composition demonstrates minimal evidence of revision and editing; the essay is not ready for publication.</p>