

Cause and Effect

Grade: K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, UNIV

Type: Read Actively / Develop Language (MLL)

 **< 20** MINUTES

When:

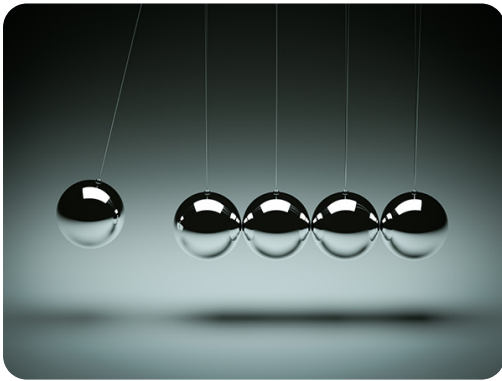
Before, during, and after reading

Materials:

Cause and Effect graphic organizer, whiteboard or display, writing utensils



Description



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The Cause and Effect strategy asks students to analyze texts through cause-and-effect relationships. This enhances students' comprehension, enabling them to make connections between events, actions, or phenomena and their outcomes. It also fosters analytical reasoning, as students use patterns and relationships to draw conclusions.

Understanding cause and effect involves seeking answers to the questions "How does it work?" and "What happens/happened and why?" It also requires students to understand that only by studying the past can we see the full scope of an event, policy, or person's impact.



Procedure

- ① Provide each student with a **Cause and Effect graphic organizer** (or invite students to create one in their notebooks) and introduce the reading by setting a purpose for reading.
- ② Explain that as students read they will look for the causes and/or effects related to the topic of the article or lesson.
- ③ As time allows, ask students to share with a partner, a small group, or the whole class. This fosters metacognition and helps students monitor their own learning. It also develops a classroom where students learn from each other and consider alternative perspectives and ideas.
- ④ Debrief as desired to emphasize a particular relationship or effect, or to make predictions or otherwise deepen student thinking.



Differentiation

Scaffolded Organizer: To scaffold the task and further guide student reading, consider providing a scaffolded organizer in which the causes are labeled. This sets an additional purpose for reading and helps students tune into the key details. Additionally, paragraph numbers can be provided to guide students in locating the effects. This is particularly helpful when the effects are implied and for students who need additional support with syntax and language development. Younger students can also draw their cause-and-effect relationships to further aid their understanding.

Vocabulary Support: Provide students with a list of key words that may signal a cause-and-effect relationship in the text. For example:

because, led to, since, so, that is why, the effect of, therefore, the reason that.

Ongoing Effects: When applicable, ask students to add a third column to their organizer, titled "Ongoing Effects." Invite them to consider how today's world is still impacted by this cause-and-effect relationship.

Possible Solutions and Future Problems: Encourage students to use what they have learned about the cause-and-effect relationship to predict possible solutions to a problem, anticipate future problems that could arise, or explain more complicated concepts or phenomena. This requires students to think more broadly about the topic, making connections to the world around them.

Multilingual Learning Support

Beginning Proficiency: Support cause-and-effect analysis by first teaching a set of universal symbols (e.g., → for "leads to," ← for "happens because of") paired with bilingual labels and visual examples from students' daily lives. Create picture-based cause-and-effect cards showing familiar sequences (e.g., dark clouds → rain, dropping ice cream → crying) to build students' understanding of the relationship. When students use the graphic organizer, allow them to draw their ideas and labels in both languages. Then provide them with simple sentence frames (e.g., "...makes...happen") to begin expressing relationships in English. This builds students' foundational understanding of causation while developing their academic vocabulary in both languages.

Intermediate Proficiency: Deepen analysis skills by creating a bilingual bank of cause-and-effect signal words organized by complexity (e.g., simple: "because/*porque*," "so/*entonces*"; complex: "as a result/*como resultado*," "due to/*debido a*"). Provide two-part sentence frames that

help students express increasingly complex relationships (e.g., “When... occurs, ...happens because...”). During partner discussions, have students first explain cause-and-effect relationships in their preferred language and then practice using English signal words to express the same ideas. This develops academic language while maintaining focus on logical reasoning.

Advanced Proficiency: Enhance analytical thinking by teaching students to identify and express three levels of causation: immediate (direct causes/effects), intermediate (connecting events), and long term (lasting impact). For younger students, focus on clear, direct cause-and-effect relationships using precise academic terms (e.g., *results in*, *leads to*, *causes*). For older students, encourage analysis of multiple causes and effects, using sophisticated academic language to express complex relationships (e.g., *precipitates*, *culminates in*, *generates*). During discussions, have students use evidence-based language (e.g., “This event triggered..., which ultimately led to...”) to explain multi-step cause-and-effect chains. This develops students’ advanced academic vocabulary while building their critical thinking about historical and scientific relationships.

Variations

Short-Term or Long-Term: After reading, ask students to review their list of effects and decide whether each was a short-term or long-term effect. Encourage students to discuss their responses with classmates, providing additional evidence for why they chose short-term or long-term as their answer.