



English I

Expository Writing: Cause and Effect

Learning Targets

- Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.
- Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
- Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
- Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

LEARNING STRATEGIES

Brainstorming, Think-Pair-Share, Discussion Groups, Sharing and Responding, Marking the Text, Graphic Organizer, Outlining, Drafting, Adding, Deleting, Rearranging, Substituting, Revising Prior Work, Self-Editing/Peer-Editing

Writing an Expository Essay

The purpose of an expository essay is for the writer to communicate ideas and information about a topic to specific audiences for specific purposes. Expository essays are often written to define or describe a subject, to provide directions for how to do something, to compare subjects by exploring how they are similar and different, and in addition to explore the relationship between causes and effects.

To complete this workshop on effective expository writing, you will work with your teacher and your classmates to construct two model cause-and-effect expository essays. You will then use these models to write your own cause-and-effect expository essay.

ACTIVITY 1

Discovering the Elements of a Cause and Effect Essay

Before Reading

1. Define the terms *cause* and *effect*.
2. Cause-and-effect relationships are characterized by one specific cause leading to a particular effect. For example, if you touch something very hot with your bare hands, you will get burned. List some possible cause-and-effect relationships that you have noticed in your everyday life.

During Reading

3. The following expository essay explores the causes and effects of eating disorders. Read the essay in order to identify the writer’s **purpose** or main idea and make inferences about the writer’s intended **audience**.
4. As you read, evaluate the writer’s use of **evidence** to develop the topic. Evidence includes **relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples**. Underline or highlight the most relevant or effective examples.

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.**

Purpose,
thesis

Eating disorders are a serious health problem. The Web site 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 the site 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).**

Definition,
quotation

Definitions

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.#

After Reading

5. When you have finished reading, respond to the questions below.

- a. **Purpose:** What is the writer's purpose for writing this essay? (Refer to the first paragraph in which the writer introduces the topic.)
- b. **Audience:** Whom do you think the writer had in mind as an audience for this essay? How do you know?

ACTIVITY 2

Writing an Expository Essay

WRITING PROMPT: Write an essay **analyzing the cause** (or causes) and the **effect** (or effects) of **a timely situation that is relevant to your school**. For example, what happens when you are late to class? Don't meet a deadline? Study very hard for an exam? Be sure the essay:

- Presents effective introductions and concluding paragraphs
- Contains a clearly stated purpose or controlling idea
- Is logically organized with appropriate facts and details
- Includes no extraneous information or inconsistencies
- Accurately synthesizes ideas from several sources • Uses a variety of rhetorical devices
- Uses a variety of sentence structures • Uses a variety of transitions to link paragraphs

Prewriting

1. Reread and mark the writing prompt above to clarify the task.
2. Brainstorm ideas for the essay, and create a list of possible topics.
3. Choose a topic for the essay and write it here. **Quality of Cafeteria Food**
4. To create an effective draft, you will need a thesis to focus the essay.

A thesis statement expresses a central opinion to be proven and provides direction as to how the writer intends to show or develop the opinion.

An effective thesis includes 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.

For example: "The growing number of students arriving late to school has led to a variety of consequences that the school administration has developed to discourage tardiness."

Low quality of cafeteria food in schools has led to unforeseen effects on students.

5. Decide how you will organize your body paragraphs to support the thesis. Complete the following graphic organizer by choosing supporting ideas and brainstorming how you will use evidence to develop each one.

Organizing Supporting Ideas and Evidence

Supporting Idea	Evidence: Details, Examples, and Facts
The low quality cafeteria food has led to dissatisfied students.	<p>Students report not liking the food because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poor quality (cold, dry, old, overly processed) • flavor is lacking due to fat, salt, and sugar being severely limited by government • limited offerings (no variety) <p>https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/27/sunday-review/why-students-hate-school-lunches.html</p>
Students rely on other unhealthy snacks to get them through the school day.	<p>Students turn to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fast food they picked up on the way to school • Chips, soda, candy they bring from home • Vending machines
Poor nutrition affects student performance in school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A study done shows that school systems with poorer quality food service providers leads to students performing worse on standardized test. • Conclusion: Quality food is important for quality thinking and learning.

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2017/05/03/how-the-quality-of-school-lunch-affects-students-academic-performance/>

Drafting

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.

6. Working with your teacher and classmates, draft the introduction to your expository essay. Be sure to include the following elements:
- Lead, or “hook” (Consider using a quote, question, anecdote, or statement of intrigue as an attention grabber.)
 - Context (Provide some basic background information on the topic. Consider why this topic warrants the composition of a cause and effect essay. Why is it important?)
 - Thesis (The position of the class on the topic.)

7. Generate an outline for the body paragraphs. Then draft the body paragraphs on separate paper. Be sure to include the following elements:
 - **Topic sentence:** A sentence that states the main idea of the paragraph
 - **Transitions:** Words used to connect ideas (e.g., *as a result, therefore*)
 - **Evidence:** Specific examples, details, quotations, and facts
 - **Commentary:** Sentences that explain how the information is relevant to the topic sentence
8. The conclusion brings a sense of closure to the essay. The conclusion should follow from and support your thesis. Use the following questions to guide your thinking in drafting a conclusion:
 - What did you say? (literal)
 - What does it mean? (interpretive)
 - Why does it matter? (universal)

Check Your Understanding

After you have completed this process, read over the completed expository essay that you created. Refer to the Scoring Guide to help determine how well the essay meets the requirements. Next, consider the following:

- Underline thesis statement and the topic sentence of each paragraph.
- Does the essay have a clear purpose and audience?
- Circle the transitions. Do they connect the ideas being developed?
- How relevant are the examples and details we used for evidence and support?
- Does the essay have a style that is appropriate for the audience?
- Does the essay include precise and vivid language?
- Does the conclusion follow from the information in the essay?

Revising for Language and Writer’s Craft

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*.

Anaphora is the repetition of the same word or group of words at the beginning of two or more successive clauses or lines.

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 that then allows the writer to intentionally answer it to fit his or her purpose.

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

Rhetorical devices are specific techniques used in writing or speaking to create a literary effect or enhance effectiveness.

9. Rewrite at least one sentence from the essay to add a rhetorical device, and then share your proposed revision with the class.

SCORING GUIDE

Scoring Criteria	Exemplary	Proficient	Emerging	Incomplete
Ideas	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • presents a topic with a clearly stated thesis that is focused and well developed throughout the essay • uses strategies of cause and effect to effectively develop and explain ideas • incorporates specific and relevant facts, evidence, details, and examples to guide the reader's understanding 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • presents a topic with a thesis that is focused throughout the essay • uses strategies of cause and effect to develop ideas throughout the essay • uses facts, evidence, details, and examples to guide the reader's understanding of the main ideas 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • presents a topic and thesis that is unfocused and/or minimally developed throughout the essay • uses few strategies of cause and effect to develop ideas throughout the essay • contains insufficient or vague facts, evidence, details, and examples that confuse the reader's understanding 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lacks an appropriate topic and thesis in response to the prompt • lacks strategies of cause and effect to develop ideas throughout the essay • contains minimal or irrelevant facts, evidence, details, and examples
Structure	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leads with an effective and engaging introduction • sequences complex ideas and uses meaningful transitions to clarify relationship among ideas • provides an insightful conclusion that follows from the explanation 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • presents a clear and focused introduction • sequences ideas and uses transitions to create coherence • provides a conclusion that connects the larger ideas presented 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contains an underdeveloped and/or unfocused introduction • presents disconnected ideas and limited use of transitions • contains an underdeveloped or unfocused conclusion 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contains a minimal or incomplete introduction • uses a confusing organization for evidence and ideas and/or few or no transitions • provides a minimal conclusion or none at all
Use of Language	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses a variety of sentence structures to enhance the explanation • uses precise diction that is deliberately chosen for the topic, audience, and purpose • utilizes a variety of rhetorical devices to accomplish the purpose • demonstrates technical command of conventions 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses a variety of sentence structures • uses appropriate diction that is appropriate to the topic, audience, and purpose • uses rhetorical devices • demonstrates general command of standard English conventions; minor errors in punctuation, grammar, capitalization, or spelling do not interfere with meaning 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shows little or no variety in sentence structure • uses diction that is inappropriate at times for the topic, audience, and purpose • uses minimal rhetorical devices • demonstrates limited command of standard English conventions; errors interfere with meaning 	<p>The essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shows incorrect or inconsistent use of sentence structure • uses diction that is inappropriate for the topic, audience, and purpose • uses no rhetorical devices • demonstrates limited command of standard English conventions; serious errors interfere with meaning