

Cause/Effect Essays



Athenian silver tetra drachma, 4th century B.C.E.

Another common pattern of essay organization is called cause and effect. In a **cause/effect essay**, you discuss the causes (reasons) for something, the effects (results), or both causes and effects. You might use cause/effect organization to answer typical test questions such as these:

EDUCATION

Explain the decline in reading ability among schoolchildren.

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

Discuss the effects of global warming on the environment.

BUSINESS, ECONOMICS

Discuss NAFTA¹ and its effects on the U.S. economy.

HISTORY

Discuss the causes of the U.S. Civil War.

PSYCHOLOGY

Explain the causes and effects of the "Stockholm syndrome."

¹NAFTA: North American Free Trade Agreement, a trade agreement among Canada, Mexico, and the United States

Organization for Cause/Effect Order

You can organize a cause/effect essay in two main ways: “block” organization and “chain” organization. In block organization, you first discuss all the causes as a block (in one, two, three, or more paragraphs, depending on the number of causes). Then you discuss all the effects together as a block. You can discuss either causes or effects first. Of course, you can also discuss *only* causes or *only* effects.

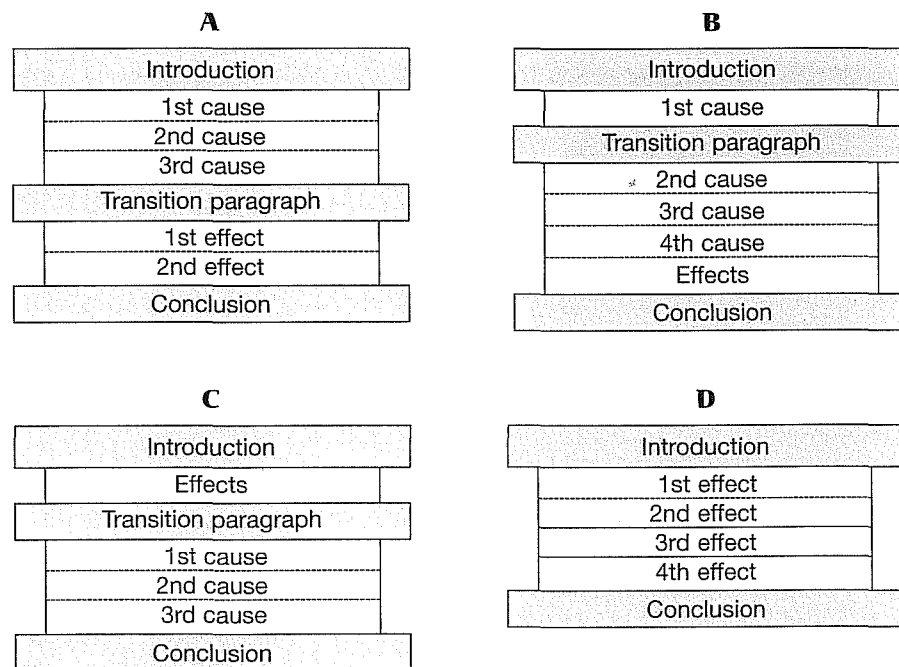
Block Organization

In block organization, a short paragraph often separates one major section from another major section. This paragraph is called a transition paragraph. Its purpose is to conclude one section and introduce another section. You do not always have to write a transition paragraph, but it is helpful when your topic is long and complex. For example, an essay about global warming might include several paragraphs about the causes and several paragraphs about the effects, with a transition paragraph between the two blocks.

Essays that discuss mainly (or only) causes or mainly (or only) effects might have a transition paragraph between blocks of different kinds of causes or between blocks of different kinds of effects. For example, you might use a transition paragraph to separate the personal effects of our increased life expectancy from its many effects on the economy.

In short, a block-style cause/effect essay could have many different patterns. Some possibilities are shown below.

Block Organization



As you read the following model essay, try to determine which of the patterns the model essay follows: A, B, C, or D.

MODEL**Cause/Effect
Essay (Block
Organization)****Shyness**

1 If you suffer from shyness, you are not alone, for shyness is a universal phenomenon.¹ According to recent research, “close to 50 percent of the general population report that they currently experience some degree of shyness in their lives. In addition, close to 80 percent of people report having felt shy at some point in their lives” (Payne, par. 3).² As shyness is so prevalent in the world, it is not surprising that social scientists are learning more about its causes. They have found that shyness in an individual can result from both biological and environmental factors.

2 Recent research reveals that some individuals are genetically predisposed to³ shyness. In other words, some people are born shy. Researchers say that between 15 and 20 percent of newborn babies show signs of shyness: they are quieter and more vigilant. Researchers have identified physiological differences between sociable and shy babies that show up as early as two months. In one study, two-month-olds who were later identified as shy children reacted with signs of stress to stimuli such as moving mobiles⁴ and tape recordings of human voices: increased heart rates, jerky movements of arms and legs, and excessive crying. Further evidence of the genetic basis of shyness is the fact that parents and grandparents of shy children more often say that they were shy as children than parents and grandparents of non-shy children (Henderson and Zimbardo 6).⁵

3 However, environment can, at least in some cases, triumph over biology. A shy child may lose much of his or her shyness. On the other hand, many people who were not shy as children become shy as adults, a fact that points to environmental or experiential causes.

4 The first environmental cause of shyness may be a child’s home and family life. Children who grew up with a difficult relationship with parents or a dominating older sibling are more likely to be inhibited⁶ in social interactions. Another factor is the fact that today’s children are growing up in smaller and smaller families, with fewer and fewer relatives living nearby. Growing up in single-parent homes or in homes in which both parents work full time, children may not have the socializing experience of frequent visits by neighbors and friends. Because of their lack of social skills, they may begin to feel socially inhibited, or shy, when they start school (7).

5 A second environmental cause of shyness in an individual may be one’s culture. In a large study conducted in several nations, 40 percent of participants in the United States rated themselves as shy, compared to 57 percent in Japan and 55 percent in Taiwan. Of the countries participating in the study, the lowest percentage of shyness was found in Israel, where the rate was 31 percent.

¹**phenomenon:** occurrence or fact (plural: *phenomena*)

²Payne, Karen S. “Understanding and Overcoming Shyness.” California Institute of Technology Counseling Center. 7 Nov. 2004 <<http://www.counseling.caltech.edu/articles/shyness.html>>.

³**predisposed to:** likely to get

⁴**mobiles:** a toy that hangs over a baby’s bed with moving shapes

⁵Henderson, Lynne, and Philip Zimbardo. “Shyness.” *Encyclopedia of Mental Health*. 8 Oct. 2004 <<http://www.shyness.com/encyclopedia.html>>.

⁶**inhibited:** self-conscious, shy

Researchers Henderson and Zimbardo say, "One explanation of the cultural difference between Japanese and Israelis lies in the way each culture deals with attributing credit for success and blame for failure. In Japan, an individual's performance success is credited externally to parents, grandparents, teachers, coaches, and others, while failure is entirely blamed on the person." Therefore, Japanese learn not to take risks in public and rely instead on group-shared decisions. "In Israel, the situation is entirely reversed," according to Henderson and Zimbardo. "Failure is externally attributed to parents, teachers, coaches, friends, anti-Semitism, and other sources, while all performance success is credited to the individual's enterprise." The consequence is that Israelis are free to take risks since there is nothing to lose by trying and everything to gain (10).

⁶ In addition to family and culture, technology may play a role as well. In the United States, the number of young people who report being shy has risen from 40 percent to 50 percent in recent years (10). The rising numbers of shy young people may be "due in part to the growing dependence on non-human forms of communication, coming about as a result of our huge advances in technology" (Payne, par. 4). Watching television, playing video games, and surfing the Web have displaced recreational activities that involve social interaction for many young people. Adults, too, are becoming more isolated as a result of technology. Face-to-face interactions with bank tellers, gas station attendants, and store clerks are no longer necessary because people can use machines to do their banking, fill their gas tanks, and order merchandise. College students take online telecourses. Telecommuters work at home, giving up daily contact with coworkers. Everyone texts, e-mails, and converses anonymously⁷ in online chat rooms. As a result, people have less opportunity to socialize in person, become increasingly awkward at it, and eventually start avoiding it altogether. In short, they become shy.

⁷ While being shy has some negative consequences, it has positive aspects, too. For one thing, it has been mentioned that shy people are good listeners ("Shyness").⁸ Furthermore, a university professor writing about his own shyness says, "Because of their tendency toward self-criticism, shy people are often high achievers, and not just in solitary activities like research and writing. Perhaps even more than the drive toward independent achievement, shy people long to make connections to others, often through altruistic⁹ behavior" (Benton).¹⁰

⁸ To sum up, shyness has both genetic and environmental causes. Some people come into the world shy, while others become shy as a result of their experiences in life. It appears that most people have experienced shyness at some time in their lives, and recent research indicates that the number of shy people is increasing. Therefore, if you are shy, you have lots of company.

⁷**anonymously:** without telling one's name

⁸"Shyness." [Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shyness). 7 Nov. 2004 <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shyness>>.

⁹**altruistic:** unselfish, benevolent

¹⁰Benton, Thomas H. "Shyness and Academe." [San Francisco Chronicle](http://chronicle.com/jobs/2004/05/2004052401c.htm): Chronicle of Higher Education Careers Section 24 May 2004. 7 Nov. 2004 <<http://chronicle.com/jobs/2004/05/2004052401c.htm>>.

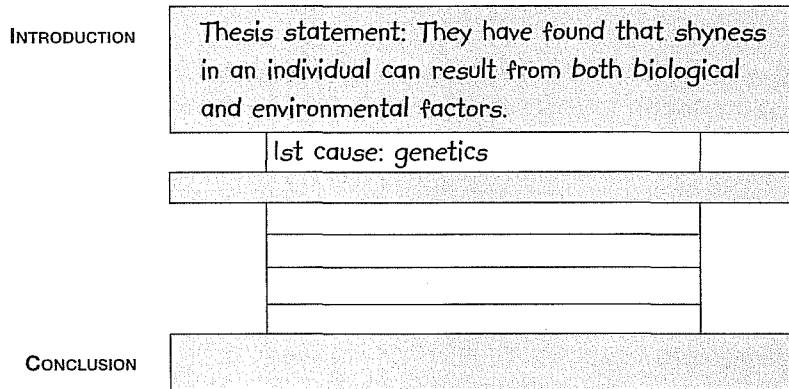
Writing Technique Questions

1. Is the topic of this essay primarily the causes or the effects of shyness?
2. Which paragraph(s) discuss(es) the causes?
3. Which paragraph(s) discuss(es) the effects?
4. What two subtopics are named in the thesis statement?
5. Which paragraph(s) discuss(es) the first subtopic?
6. Which paragraph(s) discuss(es) the second subtopic?
7. What is the function of paragraph 3?
8. Which pattern (A, B, C, or D) does the model follow?

PRACTICE 1

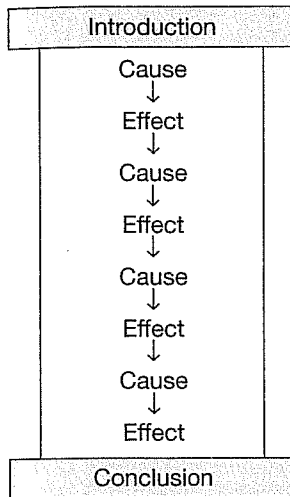
Block Organization

Fill in the boxes to show the block organizational pattern of the essay. Write in the topic of each paragraph and tell whether it is a cause or an effect. The first two boxes have been filled in for you.



Chain Organization

The other organizational pattern you can use to write about causes and effects is chain organization. In this pattern, causes and effects are linked to each other in a chain. One event causes a second event, which in turn causes a third event, which in turn causes a fourth event, and so on. Each new cause and its effect are links in a chain. Depending on the complexity of the ideas in each link, you can devote an entire paragraph to one link, or you may include several links in one paragraph, or you may describe the entire chain in one paragraph. Chain organization usually works better than block organization when the causes and effects are too closely linked to be separated. Notice the chain pattern in the following diagram.



How Fertile Land Becomes Desert

People move into new areas and clear land for agriculture by cutting down trees.

The tree roots no longer hold the soil in place.

The tree roots do not hold the soil in place.

The topsoil washes away during heavy rains.

The topsoil washes away during heavy rains.

There is no good soil to grow crops in.

There is no good soil to grow crops in.

People move to new areas and clear land for agriculture by cutting down trees.

The following short essay describes a simple chain reaction.

MODEL

Cause/Effect Essay (Chain Organization)

SAD

1 Years ago, medical researchers identified a psychological disorder that they appropriately named **Seasonal Affective Disorder**, or SAD. People who suffer from SAD become very depressed during the winter months. Doctors now understand the causes of this condition, which affects millions of people, particularly in areas of the far north where winter nights are long and the hours of daylight are few.

2 SAD results from a decrease in the amount of sunlight sufferers receive. Doctors know that decreased sunlight increases the production of melatonin, a sleep-related hormone that is produced at increased levels in the dark. Therefore, when the days are shorter and darker, the production of this hormone increases. Shorter, darker days also decrease production of serotonin, a chemical that helps transmit nerve impulses. Lack of serotonin is known to be a cause of depression (“Seasonal” HH, par. 1).¹ Depression may result from the resulting imbalance of these two substances in the body. Also, doctors believe that a decrease in the amount of sunlight the body receives may cause a disturbance in the body’s natural clock (“Seasonal” NMHA, par. 2).² Doctors believe that the combination of chemical imbalance and biological clock disturbance results in symptoms such as lethargy,³ oversleeping, weight gain, anxiety, and irritability—all signs of depression.

3 Since absence of light seems to be the cause of this disorder, a daily dose of light appears to be the cure. Doctors advise patients to sit in front

¹“Seasonal Affective Disorder.” The Healthy House Ltd. 30 Nov. 2004 <http://www.healthy-house.co.uk/allergy/information.php?allergy_id=11>.

²“Seasonal Affective Disorder.” National Mental Health Association. 30 Nov. 2004 <<http://www.nmha.org/infoctr/factsheets/27.cfm>>.

³**lethargy**: inactivity; tiredness

of a special light box that simulates¹ natural light for a few hours every day. An hour's walk outside in winter sunlight may also help (par. 4).

4 In conclusion, the depressive effect of low sunlight levels may help explain the high suicide rate in the Scandinavian countries; more important, it may suggest a remedy: When the days grow short, turn on the lights.

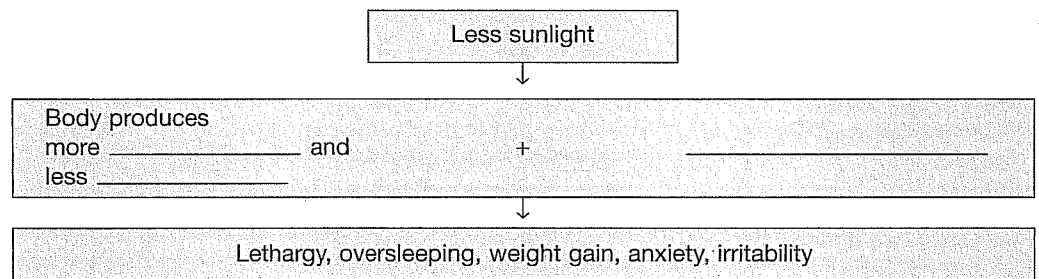
Writing Technique Questions

1. Which paragraph contains the chain of causes and effects?
2. What is the effect of decreased sunlight in winter?
3. What other change results from a decrease in the amount of sunlight?
4. What is the final result?

PRACTICE 2

Chain Organization

Fill in the boxes to complete the flowchart, which illustrates the cause/effect chain described in the model essay "SAD."



The type of cause/effect organization you choose depends on your topic.

- A chain pattern is usually easier if the causes and effects are very closely interrelated. You might use a chain pattern to write about the causes of a particular disease or phenomenon in nature such as a thunderstorm or a rainbow.
- The block pattern is usually easier with larger, complex topics such as global warming or homelessness.
- Sometimes you will want to use a combination of block and chain organization. The model essay on pages 96–97 uses block organization, but in paragraphs 4, 5, and 6, you will find chain organization.

¹simulates: imitates

Cause/Effect Signal Words and Phrases

Just as certain transition signals show time order and logical division, certain words and phrases signal cause/effect relationships. You probably know many of them already.

Cause Signal Words

Coordinators	
for	Bison were indispensable to the Native American tribes, for this one animal provided them with nearly everything they needed for survival: meat, clothing, shelter, tools, and weapons. <i>Note:</i> When used in this way, <i>for</i> has the same meaning as <i>because</i> . However, you MUST use a comma in front of <i>for</i> , and you MUST NOT use a comma in front of <i>because</i> .
Subordinators	
because since as	Bison were indispensable to the Native American tribes because/since/as this one animal provided them with nearly everything they needed for survival: meat, clothing, shelter, tools, and weapons.
Others	
to result from to be the result of	The bison's near extinction resulted from/was the result of loss of habitat and overhunting.
due to because of	Bison nearly became extinct due to/because of loss of habitat and overhunting.
the effect of the consequence of	One effect of/consequence of westward expansion was the destruction of habitat for the bison.
as a result of as a consequence of	The areas in which bison could roam freely shrank as a result of/as a consequence of the westward expansion of the 1800s.

PRACTICE 3

Recognizing Cause Signal Words

Step 1 Underline the part of the sentence that states a cause.

Step 2 Circle the word or words that introduce the cause.

Step 3 Be able to discuss the use of each word or phrase you have circled.

What kind of grammatical structure follows each one? Notice especially the difference between the use of *because* and *because of*.

The first one has been done for you as an example.

1. The computer is a learning tool (since) it helps children to master math and language skills. (After *since*, we must use a clause with a subject and a verb.)
2. Due to the ability of computers to keep records of sales and inventory, many big department stores rely on them.
3. A medical computer system is an aid to physicians because of its ability to interpret data from a patient's history and provide a diagnosis. (How would you rewrite this sentence using *because* instead of *because of*?)
4. War, famine, and ethnic violence have caused a flood of refugees in the past 50 years.

5. Hollywood movies are known for their special effects because U.S. audiences seem to demand them.
6. Since European audiences seem to prefer movies that explore psychological or philosophical issues, European movies are generally quieter and more thought-provoking.
7. Smog results from chemical air pollutants being trapped under a layer of warm air.
8. John's promotion is the result of his brilliant management skills and company loyalty.
9. Little is known about life on the ocean floor, for scientists have only recently developed the technology to explore it.
10. Holes are created in the protective ozone layer of the stratosphere as a result of the burning of fossil fuels.

Effect Signal Words

Transition Words and Phrases	
<p>as a result as a consequence therefore thus consequently hence</p>	<p>Workers building the new transcontinental railroad needed meat; as a result/as a consequence/therefore/thus/consequently/hence, hunters killed bison by the thousands.</p> <p><i>Note:</i> Notice the difference between <i>as a result</i> and <i>as a result of</i>. <i>As a result</i> is followed by a full sentence (independent clause) and introduces an effect. <i>As a result of</i> is followed by a noun phrase and introduces a clause.</p>
Coordinators	
<p>so</p>	<p>Native Americans began trading bison skins to the settlers for steel knives and guns, so they began killing bison in larger numbers.</p>
Others	
<p>to result in to cause</p> <p>to have an effect on to affect</p> <p>the cause of the reason for</p> <p>thereby</p>	<p>Loss of habitat and overhunting resulted in/caused the near extinction of bison.</p> <p>The reduced numbers of bison had a terrible effect on/affected the lives of the Native Americans who had depended on them for survival.</p> <p>The rescue of the bison from near extinction is a cause of/a reason for celebration.</p> <p>The 85 bison that survived were given refuge in Yellowstone National Park in 1892, thereby saving this species from total extinction.</p> <p><i>Note:</i> <i>Thereby</i> is most frequently used in front of <i>-ing</i> phrases.</p>

PRACTICE 4

Recognizing Effect Signal Words

- Step 1** Underline the part of the sentence that states an effect.
- Step 2** Circle the word or words that introduce the effect.
- Step 3** Be able to discuss the use of each word or phrase that you have circled. What kind of grammatical structure follows each one? How is the sentence punctuated?

1. The performance of electric cars is inferior to the performance of cars with conventional internal combustion engines; consequently, some improvements must be made in them if they are to become popular.
2. However, electric cars are reliable, economical, and nonpolluting; therefore, the government is spending millions of dollars to improve their technology.
3. Electric cars use relatively inexpensive electricity for power; thus, they cost less to operate than cars that use gasoline.
4. The cost of gasoline is rising; as a result, some automobile manufacturers have begun to produce electric models.
5. His patient diplomacy resulted in the successful negotiation of a peace treaty.
6. It has been documented that lack of sleep affects a person's ability to think clearly.
7. Cold water is denser than warm water and will therefore sink.
8. Freshwater is less dense than salt water, so it tends to float on the surface of a body of salt water.
9. Air pollution creates holes in the protective ozone layer of the stratosphere, thereby allowing harmful ultraviolet radiation to reach Earth's surface.
10. The cause of the patient's rapid recovery was the excellent care he received from his doctor.

PRACTICE 5

**Using Cause/
Effect Signal
Words**

Step 1 Decide which sentence in each item is a cause and which is an effect. Write *C* for cause or *E* for effect next to each sentence.

Step 2 Combine the sentences in each item into a new sentence that shows a cause/effect relationship. Use the cause or effect signal word or phrase given to form your new sentence, and circle the word. You will have to add, delete, or change words in most sentences.

The first one has been done for you as an example.

1. E There are fewer hours of daylight.
C In winter, the sun is lower in the sky.
 (thus) In winter, the sun is lower in the sky; (thus) there are fewer hours of daylight.

2. _____ Some breeds of dogs have a stronger desire to perform a service than other breeds.
 _____ They are more suitable as search-and-rescue animals.
 (since) _____

3. _____ Seals and other aquatic mammals can see when they are hunting for food in the dark ocean depths at night.
 _____ They have very large eyes.
 (due to) _____

4. ____ Metals have many free-moving electrons.
____ Metals are good conductors of heat.
(consequently) _____

5. ____ My company began offering employees flexible working hours.
____ Productivity has increased.
____ Absenteeism has declined.
(as a result) _____

6. ____ Radiation could escape into the atmosphere.
____ The Chernobyl nuclear power plant had no confinement shell.
(hence) _____

7. ____ Operators had disregarded safety rules.
____ The nuclear reactor at Chernobyl underwent a meltdown.
(because of) _____

8. ____ During a weather phenomenon known as El Niño, a mass of warm water flows eastward across the Pacific Ocean toward South America.
____ The temperature of the water off the coast of Peru rises as much as 10°F.
(thereby) *Note: You must change the verb rise to raise.* _____

9. ____ Weather around the world changes.
____ During an El Niño, the jet stream blows in a different pattern.
(therefore) _____

10. ____ In some areas of the world, heavy rains fall.
____ Devastating floods and mudslides happen.
(cause—*verb*) _____

11. ____ In other parts of the world thousands of people suffer starvation.
____ Drought happens.
(as a result of) _____

Review

These are the important points you should have learned from this chapter.

1. Cause/effect organization is a common pattern in academic writing to write about causes (or reasons) and effects (or results).
2. There are two common cause/effect patterns of organization.
 - In block organization, the causes (or reasons) are grouped together in one block, and the effects (or results) are grouped together in another block. There may be a transition paragraph between blocks.
 - In chain organization, the causes and effects are too closely linked to be separated. One cause leads to an effect, which is the cause of the next effect.
3. Use a variety of cause/effect signal words to help your reader follow your ideas.

Writing Practice

PRACTICE 6

Writing a Cause-and-Effect Essay

Choose one of the suggested topics and write an essay that discusses it in terms of cause and effect. Use either block or chain organization or a combination of both.

Choose a topic that interests you or that is related to your major field of study. For example, if you plan to study medicine or nursing, write on a topic related to those subjects. If you are interested in the environment, write about El Niño or global warming. Follow the steps in the writing process described in Appendix A. When you have finished, use the Self-Editing and Peer-Editing Worksheets on pages 325 and 326.

Topic Suggestions

Education

- Effects of reducing class size
- Head Start programs
- Tutoring programs for college students
- Falling reading scores among schoolchildren
- High school dropouts

Environmental issues

- El Niño *or* La Niña
- Global warming
- Benefits of recycling
- Neighborhood cleanup days

Health sciences

- Increased life expectancy
- Eradication of a particular disease or health problem (*Examples*: polio, malnutrition)
- Eating disorders
- Benefits of health education programs (*Examples*: dental hygiene, nutrition, infectious disease immunization)

Social issues

Homelessness

Rising divorce rate

Americans with Disabilities Act

Family and Medical Leave Act

Political/economic issues

Globalization

Refugees

Inflation

Topics on the Lighter Side

- What if your school decided not to give any more quizzes, tests, or grades to students? What could be the reasons for such a decision? What would be the effects?
- What would be the effects if children and parents in a family reversed roles, that is, if the children took on the role of parents, and the parents took on the role of children?

PRACTICE 7**Writing under
Pressure**

Note: These topics are intended to elicit a single paragraph, not an essay.

Choose one of the topics suggested and write a well-organized paragraph. Your instructor will give you a time limit.

- Spend 1 or 2 minutes at the beginning brainstorming and organizing your ideas.
- Spend 1 minute at the end checking your work.
- Spend the remaining time writing.

Causes of stress

Effects of stress

Effects of cell phones on society

Reasons for the popularity of television

game shows/reality shows/soap operas

Effects of an unreasonable fear

(for example, fear of flying)

Benefits of daily exercise

Consequences of eating an

unbalanced diet

Applying What You Have Learned

Cause/Effect Order

Background: Wolves are predators. They kill cattle, sheep, chickens, and other animals that are farmers' and ranchers' source of income. In 1914, the United States Congress provided money to eradicate wolves. The government paid hunters to help ranchers protect their livestock by killing the wolves. Sixty years later, wolves had disappeared from the western United States. Then in 1973, Congress enacted the Endangered Species Act, and the Wolf Recovery Program was started to reintroduce wolves in some areas. Currently about 160 wolves have been reintroduced to central Idaho and Yellowstone National Park. Farmers and ranchers are strongly opposed to this program and have filed lawsuits to stop it.

The author of the following essay favors the program. As you read, look for the reasons she gives for supporting the wolves' return. The model essay at the beginning of this chapter focused on causes, but this essay focuses on effects: What were the effects of the wolves' absence? What are the effects of the wolves' return?

Welcoming Back the Top Dog¹

1 In our homes, on our beds, and deep within our hearts lie creatures for whom the wild is more than a whisper—domesticated versions of animals long reviled by humankind. Forebears of our beloved dogs and cats, wolves and mountain lions have shared a fate far removed from that of their tamer cousins. Feared for their intelligence and physical prowess, wolves and mountain lions were nearly eradicated. It is only recently that we have begun to understand the vital role these predators play in keeping nature in balance. Only recently have we stopped persecuting and started appreciating the wonders of these wild beings.

2 Just in the nick of time. Luckily, when given political protection from trigger-happy humans and habitat with sufficient prey, wolves and mountain lions thrive and their populations quickly revive. While mountain lions have always eked out an existence in California, wolves were exterminated decades ago. But now, the potential exists for wolves to move naturally into the far reaches of northern California and Oregon from the northern Rockies.

3 Wolves were extinct in the lower 48 states for more than half a century. Their restoration to the wildlands of Montana, Idaho, and Yellowstone National Park in the mid-1990s created virtual laboratories for wildlife biologists—and people like you and me—to observe the species in its natural element. We began to see almost immediately that wolves generate a ripple effect throughout the ecosystem for which many other species, some endangered themselves, benefit.

4 Making a living in the wild is hard. As a top predator, wolves make life easier by putting food on the ground for scavengers. Grizzly bears, bald eagles, gold eagles, ravens, coyotes, mountain lions, magpies, wolverines, and beetles all enjoy feasting on wolf kills. Thanks to the wolves, the endangered grizzly bear is enjoying a renaissance and its numbers have taken a turn for the better in parts of the West. In Yellowstone, individual grizzly bears are taking advantage of a good thing: They've been seen following wolf packs, waiting for them to make a kill and then stealing the carcass before the hard-working wolves have had a chance to take even a bite! Ninety-pound wolves are no match for one-thousand-pound grizzlies.

5 The dance of life and death between predator and prey makes many of us uncomfortable, yet prey species are also benefiting from the return of the wolf. Unlike human hunters, who target healthy adult animals, wolves cull the sick and elderly from elk, deer, moose, and bison herds, reducing the spread of disease and keeping the prey population healthier.

6 "It's important to remember that predators and prey evolved in lockstep together over millions of years," says Amaroq Weiss, BS, MS, JD, western director of species conservation for Defenders of Wildlife. "They make each other work."

¹Cardo, Sheri. "Welcoming Back the Top Dog." *Animal Chronicles* 15.1 (Spring 2004): 1+. A Marin Humane Society Publication.

7 “As an example of how a keystone predator like the wolf keeps a prey population healthier, we have only to look at what’s happening in Wisconsin,” says Weiss. “Chronic wasting disease (CWD) in deer is an enormous problem in the southern part of the state, where there are no wolves. However, in northern Wisconsin, to which wolves have returned in recent years, CWD in deer is unknown. While no studies have been completed to confirm this relationship, the evidence on the ground is extremely compelling.

8 Plant life also gains where this high-ranking carnivore is around. Prior to wolves being reintroduced into Yellowstone, the ungulates (hooved mammals) had it easy. With no hunters or predators around, they could do as they pleased—and what pleased them was hanging out on river banks, browsing on the young willow and aspen. But with wolves back in the picture, the elk and moose have had to move around a lot more; as a result, the compromised vegetation is flourishing once again.

9 The beneficial impacts of this change are numerous. The willow and aspen can now mature, thereby creating habitat for migratory songbirds. The increased vegetation reduces erosion and cools the rivers and ponds, thus making them more hospitable to fish. Beavers are back building dams.

10 Environmentalism is all about relationships, and the trickle-down effects . . . that wolves have on other species, and the ecosystem in general, is significant. It is easy to see why wolves are called an umbrella species: An entire web of life is protected by the existence of this top carnivore. Imagine what the ecological impact would be if wolves were allowed to return to more of their historical homeland.

Questions

About the Introduction and Conclusion

1. The thesis statement for this essay is the last sentence of paragraph
 - a. 1.
 - b. 2.
 - c. 3.
 - d. There is no thesis statement.

Hint: Rereading the conclusion will help you answer this question.

2. The conclusion of this essay
 - a. summarizes the main ideas.
 - b. repeats the thesis statement in different words.

About the Organization

3. This essay is a cause/effect essay that discusses mainly
 - a. the causes of the wolves’ return to certain areas of the United States.
 - b. effects of the return of wolves to certain areas of the United States.
 - c. both the causes and the effects.
4. This essay uses block organization to make three main points about the return of wolves.

- (1) _____
- (2) _____
- (3) _____

5. Two paragraphs, when added together, use the chain pattern. These two paragraphs are
 - a. 5 and 6.
 - b. 8 and 9.

About the Support

6. The topic sentence for paragraph 4 is the
 - a. first sentence.
 - b. second sentence.
 - c. There is no topic sentence.
7. The topic sentence for paragraph 5 is the
 - a. first half of the first sentence (up to the word *yet*).
 - b. second half of the first sentence (after the word *yet*).
8. Which two paragraphs do not have topic sentences?
 - a. 4 and 5
 - b. 6 and 7
 - c. 7 and 8
 - d. 8 and 9
 - e. 9 and 10
9. Paragraph 7 supports the point made in paragraph
 - a. 4.
 - b. 5.

About Coherence

10. What cause/effect signal word is used in the
 - a. last sentence of paragraph 3? _____
 - b. last sentence of paragraph 8? _____
 - c. second sentence of paragraph 9? _____
 - d. third sentence of paragraph 9? _____
11. What key noun appears in every paragraph except paragraphs 6 and 9?

12. What two synonyms in the first paragraph substitute for the key noun?
_____ and _____
13. What transition signal in the topic sentence of paragraph 8 tells the reader that an additional main point will be discussed? _____

**Suggestions
for
Discussion
or Writing**

1. The author says that wolves are necessary to keep nature in balance. Why are they necessary? In other words, what positive effects do wolves have on the ecosystem?
2. Take the side of the farmers and ranchers. Why should wolves not be reintroduced into the environment? What effects will their reintroduction have?
3. As a class, choose another endangered species or a different environmental issue. Form groups to research your chosen topic. Gather the following information:

three interesting facts about the species
two statistics
two quotations

Share your information in a group or class discussion.

Topic Suggestions

California condors	blue whales
American bald eagles	American bison
manatees	African elephants
giant pandas	tigers