

TUTORIAL

Keep in mind that in order for a cause to be *credible*, it needs to be sufficient and necessary to create the effect identified by the writer, which is also true of the reverse (effects need to be necessary and sufficient to be a result of their identified causes). But what does that mean? It means that every time the identified cause occurs the identified effect will follow. In order to effectively connect causes and effects in writing, the writer must first **identify** the causes and effects, and then **emphasize** their connections.

Immediate Cause or Effect: “Immediate” means closest in time, so the immediate cause is going to be the causal action that occurs just before the effect. The immediate effect is then the result or effect that occurs just after the cause. Immediate causes and effects are often the most apparent because they occur in such close proximity to one another.

• **BE CAREFUL!** Post hoc reasoning—assuming that because one event precedes another it is the cause of that event—is a pitfall of discussing immediate causes or effects. Remember that the cause and effect need to be necessary to one another. Just because you ate tuna salad right before you crashed your bike doesn’t mean that tuna salad causes bike accidents.



Remote Cause or Effect: “Remote” means far from or distant, so a remote cause may not immediately precede an effect OR a remote effect might not immediately follow a cause; however, the connection between the two is relevant enough to create a causal relationship. Sometimes the remote causes or effects can be the most convincing when making a cause and effect argument. They are the least obvious to the reader and are likely to give the reader new information or a new perspective to consider.



Primary Cause or Effect: For our uses, “primary” means the main or most important cause or effect. For example, the immediate cause of a flood might be the river rising beyond the riverbed, but the primary cause of a flood is most likely excess rain or a lack of proper drainage. Writers often focus on the primary cause and the primary effect, but then expand the discussion to include

additional ideas to avoid overly simplifying a situation.

Contributory Cause or Effect: Back to our flood example. Though the primary cause could be excess rain or a drainage issue, there could be several contributory or supporting causes that lead to the effect identified by the writer. A contributory cause could be how the issue was responded to, the geographical location of the flood, the type of vegetation that grows near the river, or any of the additional aspects that helped create the effect except the main cause.

Phrasing:

The following is a list of signal words and phrases that are commonly used in Cause and Effect papers.

therefore	yet	in addition	furthermore
of course	at any rate	also	in particular
consequently	still	further	indeed
as a result	after all	likewise	above all
nevertheless	of course	moreover	in fact

One last warning! Cause and Effect is one rhetorical strategy where it is crucial that the writer knows the difference between Affect and Effect.

Both can appear as a noun and a verb, but create different meaning.

- **Effect** is most often a noun that expresses a result or outcome. (As a verb it means to "bring about" as in "That mediation effected a peaceful solution.")
- **Affect** is most often a verb that conveys the act of producing an effect on or influence on something or someone.