**Examples and Observations:**

* "If you prove the **cause**, you at once prove the **effect**; and conversely nothing can exist without its cause."
(Aristotle, *Rhetoric*)

* **Immediate Causes and Ultimate Causes**
"Determining **causes and effects** is usually thought-provoking and quite complex. One reason for this is that there are two types of causes:*immediate causes*, which are readily apparent because they are closest to the effect, and *ultimate causes*, which, being somewhat removed, are not so apparent and may perhaps even be hidden. Furthermore, ultimate causes may bring about effects which themselves become immediate causes, thus creating a *causal chain*. For example, consider the following causal chain: Sally, a computer salesperson, prepared extensively for a meeting with a client (ultimate cause), impressed the client (immediate cause), and made a very large sale (effect). The chain did not stop there: the large sale caused her to be promoted by her employer (effect)."
(Alfred Rosa and Paul Eschholz, *Models for Writers*, 6th ed. St. Martin's Press, 1998)

* **Composing a Cause/Effect Essay**
"For all its conceptual complexity, a cause/effect essay can be [organized](http://grammar.about.com/od/mo/g/organizaterm.htm)16 quite simply. The [introduction](http://grammar.about.com/od/il/g/introductionterm.htm)17 generally presents the subject(s) and states the [purpose](http://grammar.about.com/od/pq/g/purpose-term.htm)18 of the analysis in a clear [thesis](http://grammar.about.com/od/tz/g/thesis.htm)19. The [body](http://grammar.about.com/od/ab/g/Body-Paragraphs.htm)20 of the paper then explores all relevant causes and/or effects, typically progressing from least to most influential or from most to least influential. Finally, the [concluding](http://grammar.about.com/od/c/g/conclusterm.htm)21 section [summarizes](http://grammar.about.com/od/rs/g/summaryterm.htm)22 the various cause/effect relationships established in the body of the paper and clearly states the conclusions that can be drawn from those relationships."
(Kim Flachmann, Michael Flachmann, Kathryn Benander, and Cheryl Smith, *The Brief Prose Reader*. Prentice Hall, 2003)

* **Causes of Child Obesity**
"Many of today's kids are engaged in sedentary pursuits made possible by a level of technology unthinkable as recently as 25 to 30 years ago. Computer, video, and other virtual games, the ready availability of feature films and games on DVD, plus high-tech advancements in music-listening technology have come down into the range of affordability for parents and even for the kids themselves. These passive pursuits have produced a downside of reduced physical activity for the kids, often with the explicit or implicit consent of the parents. . . .

"Other fairly recent developments have also contributed to the alarming rise in child obesity rates. Fast food outlets offering consumables that are both low in price and low in nutritional content have exploded all over the American landscape since the 1960s, especially in suburban areas close to major highway interchanges. Kids on their lunch breaks or after school often congregate in these fast food outlets, consuming food and soft drinks that are high in sugar, carbohydrates, and fat. Many parents, themselves, frequently take their children to these fast food places, thus setting an example the kids can find justification to emulate."
(MacKie Shilstone, *Mackie Shilstone's Body Plan for Kids*. Basic Health Publications, 2009)

* **Cause and Effect in Jonathan Swift's**[**"A Modest Proposal"**](http://grammar.about.com/od/60essays/a/modpropoessay.htm)**23**
"'A Modest Proposal' is a brilliant example of the use of non-argumentative devices of rhetorical [persuasion](http://grammar.about.com/od/pq/g/persuasionterm.htm)24. The whole essay, of course, rests broadly upon the [argument](http://grammar.about.com/od/ab/g/argmterm.htm)25 of **cause and effect**: these causes have produced this situation in Ireland, and this proposal will result in these effects in Ireland. But Swift, within the general framework of this argument, does not employ specific argumentative forms in this essay. The projector chooses rather to *assert* his reasons and then to amass them by way of [proof](http://grammar.about.com/od/pq/g/proofterm.htm)26."
(Charles A. Beaumont, *Swift's Classical Rhetoric*. Univ. of Georgia Press, 1961)

* **Effects of Automobiles**
"I worry about the private automobile. It is a dirty, noisy, wasteful, and lonely means of travel. It pollutes the air, ruins the safety and sociability of the street, and exercises upon the individual a discipline which takes away far more freedom than it gives him. It causes an enormous amount of land to be unnecessarily abstracted from nature and from plant life and to become devoid of any natural function. It explodes cities, grievously impairs the whole institution of neighborliness, fragmentizes and destroys communities. It has already spelled the end of our cities as real cultural and social communities, and has made impossible the construction of any others in their place. Together with the airplane, it has crowded out other, more civilized and more convenient means of transport, leaving older people, infirm people, poor people and children in a worse situation than they were a hundred years ago."
(George F. Kennan, *Democracy and the Student Left*, 1968)

* **Examples and Effects of Entropy**
"Because of its unnerving irreversibility, entropy has been called the arrow of time. We all understand this instinctively. Children's rooms, left on their own, tend to get messy, not neat. Wood rots, metal rusts, people wrinkle and flowers wither. Even mountains wear down; even the nuclei of atoms decay. In the city we see entropy in the rundown subways and worn-out sidewalks and torn-down buildings, in the increasing disorder of our lives. We know, without asking, what is old. If we were suddenly to see the paint jump back on an old building, we would know that something was wrong. If we saw an egg unscramble itself and jump back into its shell, we would laugh in the same way we laugh as a movie run backward."
(K.C. Cole, "The Arrow of Time." *The New York Times*, March 18, 1982)

*This About.com page has been optimized for print. To view this page in its original form, please visit:*