How To Determine Cause and Effect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What?</th>
<th>Determining Cause and Effect is a strategy to find a causal relationship between or among events, conditions, or behaviors.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why?</td>
<td>This strategy gives reasons and explanations for events, conditions, or behaviors. It is an analysis tool to display possible cause of a specific condition or event, or the possible effects of a specific condition or event.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| How?  | Often cause and effect are subtle and hard to distinguish. Be sure not to confuse cause and effect. To determine the cause of something, ask why it happened. To determine the effect of a cause, ask what happened. Three general causal relations can exist when a cause and effect relationship exists:  
- **Necessary cause** - one that must be present for the effect to occur.  
- **Sufficient cause** - one that can produce an effect unaided, though there may be more than one sufficient cause of a given effect.  
- **Contributory cause** - one that helps to produce an effect but cannot do so by itself.  

Questions that can be raised to identify cause-and-effect relationships:  
- Have I assumed a cause-and-effect relationship where none exists?  
- Have I assumed only one cause when many causes may be appropriate?  
- Have I incorrectly assumed a causal relationship between two events where one immediately follows another?  
- Are there single or multiple causes?  
- Are there single or multiple effects?  
- Is a chain reaction involved?  

Once a cause-and-effect relationship has been identified, then the task becomes to determine the relationship. Several kinds of causes exist.  
- The primary cause (also known as the main cause, the necessary cause, or first cause) is the basis for a causal chain of events.  
- The secondary cause or effect is usually an ancillary cause that contributed to an effect or an ancillary effect of a cause.  
- The short-term cause or effect (also called the immediate cause or effect) is a single, immediately identifiable event.  
- The long-term cause or effect (often referred to as the underlying cause) is an important contributing cause or effect that may be difficult to identify, but in the long run is more important than the immediate causes or effects.  

Questions to be raised once a cause-and-effect relationship has been identified:  
- To determine causes, ask, “Why did this happen?” or “What are the causes?” or “What are the factors that cause ___?”  
- To determine effects, ask, “What happened because of this?” or “What is the effect or result?” or “What are the factors that resulted from this cause?”  
- If a causal chain has been identified, ask “What causal chain of events led to this effect?” |
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### How?

Use an appropriate cause-and-effect graphic organizer to organize the information and identify the cause and effect relationship(s). After identifying the causes and effects, then develop a summary statement, make a generalization, or draw a conclusion or inference based on the cause-and-effect relationships. Among the cause-and-effect graphic organizers are the causal chain, multiple causes, multiple effects, multiple causes and multiples effects, the herringbone, and the fishbone.

### When?

This strategy should be used whenever cause-and-effect relationships are apparent. Social studies, science, literature, and most other subjects are full of cause-and-effect relationships that students are generally unaware of and therefore need to be explicitly identified.

### Clues

#### Causes Sound Like...
- Because
- This leads to
- For one thing
- Due to
- Hence
- One cause is
- Another is
- For this reason
- For one thing
- Since
- So
- For
- First
- Second
- Another reason is
- If . . . then

#### Effects Sound Like...
- Consequently
- As a result
- For this reason
- This leads to
- On account of
- One result is
- Hence
- Later
- A result of this is
- Another result is
- Resulted in
- Therefore, thus
- So
- Then, so
- If . . . then

- [Clue Word] is leading to...
- The event is leading to...

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In 1895 the Cuban patriot and revolutionary, José Martí, resumed the Cuban struggle for freedom that had failed during the Ten Years' War (1868-1878). Cuban juntas provided leadership and funds for the military operations conducted in Cuba. Spain possessed superior numbers of troops, forcing the Cuban generals Máximo Gómez and Antonio Maceo, to wage guerrilla warfare in the hope of exhausting the enemy. Operations began in southeastern Cuba but soon spread westward. The Spanish Conservative Party, led by Antonio Cánovas y Castillo, vowed to suppress the insurrectos, but failed to do so.

The Cuban cause gained increasing support in the United States, leading President Grover Cleveland to press for a settlement, but instead Spain sent General Valeriano Weyler to pacify Cuba. His stern methods, including reconcentration of the civilian population to deny the guerrillas support in the countryside, strengthened U.S. sympathy for the Cubans. President William McKinley then increased pressure on Spain to end the affair, dispatching a new minister to Spain for this purpose. At this juncture an anarchist assassinated Cánovas, and his successor, the leader of the Liberal Party Práxedes Mateo Sagasta, decided to make a grant of autonomy to Cuba and Puerto Rico. The Cuban leadership resisted this measure, convinced that continued armed resistance would lead to independence.

In February two events crystallized U.S. opinion in favor of Cuban independence. First, the Spanish minister in Washington, Enrique Dupuy de Lôme, wrote a letter critical of President McKinley that fell into the hands of the Cuban junta in New York. Its publication caused a sensation, but Sagasta quickly recalled Dupuy de Lôme. A few days later, however, the Battleship Maine, which had been sent to Havana to provide a naval presence there exploded and sank, causing the death of 266 sailors. McKinley, strongly opposed to military intervention, ordered an investigation of the sinking as did Spain. The Spanish inquiry decided that an internal explosion had destroyed the vessel, but the American press claimed an external source.

http://www.loc.gov/rr/hispanic/1898/trask.html
How To Determine Cause and Effect

One of the main areas of study in Social Studies is the relationship between cause and effect. A cause is why something happens and an effect is what happens. Some other words you may see for cause and effect include words such as “causal” or “causation”. Here are some more examples of other words that indicate cause or effect:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Element</td>
<td>Result</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Origin</td>
<td>Led to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Therefore / So</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For</td>
<td>Outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason</td>
<td>End result</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because</td>
<td>As a result</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Since</td>
<td>Resulted in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As</td>
<td>Consequently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due to</td>
<td>Have an effect on / Affected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resulted from</td>
<td>Was a reason for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Impact on</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regardless what you are asked about, you have to use your knowledge of Social Studies and then connect either a given effect to a cause or a given cause to an effect. Here are some examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bombing of Pearl Harbor</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td>Creation of N.A.T.O.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waves of Immigration</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td>U.S. Enters World War I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crash of the Stock Market</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td>The U.S. Gains Overseas Territories</td>
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Finally, you may be asked to discuss a series of causes and effects known as a causal chain.

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The first event above sets off a chain reaction of events that cause other events. Think of the Assassination of Archduke Ferdinand and how that caused a series of ultimatums and declarations of war to begin World War I. Those events can be labeled as a causal chain.
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Example

Causal Chain

Event 1 → Event 2 → Event 3

1 Cause - Multiple Effects

Event 1 → Effect 1

Effect 1 → Effect 2

Effect 2 → Effect 3