

Comprehension Instructional Routine: Identify Cause and Effect Relationships in Text

Preparation/Materials: large copy of graphic organizer, sentence strips, student sheets with sentences and graphic organizers, chart with signal words, pencils



- *Italicized sentences are what the teacher does*
- **Bold type is what the teacher says**
- Regular type is what the student(s) say
- **Bullet (•) and bolded type are what the teacher and student(s) say in unison**
- Teacher or student slides finger under underlined letter(s) or word(s)



NOTE: There are multiple aspects to cause and effect. There can be several causes to one effect, and there can be several effects from one cause. Sometimes one effect causes another effect, which then causes a third effect. This structure is often referred to as cause and effect chaining. This instructional routine includes sentences with one cause and one effect and a longer text with a cause and effect chain (i.e., a cause brings about an effect which then becomes the cause of a new effect).

TEACHER EXPLAINS TASK

We are going to identify cause and effect in a text. Cause and effect is the relationship between two things or events where one event caused another event, or several events, to happen.

TEACHER MODELS TASK

Cause and effect relationships occur everyday: at play, at home, and at school. To find cause and effect relationships, we look for one event that caused another event. The cause is why the event happens. The effect is what happened.

Here is an example. Let's read it together.

- **Sam has no cavities because he brushes and flosses his teeth everyday.**

Sam has no cavities is the effect or what happened.

Sam brushes and flosses his teeth everyday is the cause or why Sam has no cavities.

How did I figure out the cause and effect in this sentence? I had to ask two questions.

First, to find the effect, I asked, "What happened?"

Then, to find the cause, I asked, "Why did this happen?"

It may seem backward, but if I find the effect first, it is often easier to find the cause.

It also helps to know that some words 'signal' a cause and effect relationship in the text. In the sentence about Sam, the word, **because**, is a signal word. *Point to each signal word as you read aloud.* These can be other signal words:

so, consequently, therefore, as a result of, due to

Listen for a signal word and think about what may be the cause and the effect in the next sentence.

Let's read together. *Point to each word as you read aloud.*

- **The fire alarm sounded as a result of the smoke that filled the room.**

As a result of is a group of words that signals a cause and effect relationship in the text. *Underline the words, as a result of, in the sentence.*

To find the effect, I ask myself, "What happened?" The fire alarm sounded.

What happened?

The fire alarm sounded.

Yes, that is the effect.

If students answer the question, 'What happened?' with the cause (i.e., the smoke filled the room) ask them why this happened. The answer isn't in the sentence; we don't know why the smoke filled the room. If we cannot answer this, to find the effect we should ask, 'Is there anything else that happened?' (i.e., the fire alarm sounded). Then, to find the cause, we can ask why this happened.

To find the cause, I ask myself, "Why did this happen?" The smoke filled the room.

EMPOWERING TEACHERS

TEACHER MODELS TASK (continued)

Why did this happen, or, why was the fire alarm sounded?

- The smoke filled the room.

That's right. This is the cause.

When we read a longer text, there is additional information, so it may be more difficult to find the cause and effect.

Listen for a signal word or words and think about what may be the cause and the effect in the following sentences.

Let's read together. *Point to each word as you read aloud.*

I missed the banana nut bread my grandmother used to make for me. The recipe was very easy and quick to make. So, I decided to make the bread myself.

Did you hear a signal word?

- Yes

The word, so, signals us to look for a cause and effect relationship in this text.

To find the effect, I ask myself, "What happened?" I decided to make the bread myself.

What is the effect?

- I decided to make the bread myself.

If students answer the question, 'What happened?' with the cause (i.e., I missed my grandmother's bread) ask them why this happened. The answer isn't in the sentence; we don't know why she missed her grandmother's bread. If we cannot answer this, to find the effect we should ask, "Is there anything else that happened?" (i.e., she decided to make it herself) Then, to find the cause, we can ask why this happened.

To find the cause, I ask myself, "Why did this happen?"

I missed my grandmother's banana nut bread.

What is the cause?

- I missed my grandmother's banana nut bread.

When we find the cause, we learn why it happens. When we find the effect, we learn what happened or the result.

Display large graphic organizer. Point to each part as it is explained.

A graphic organizer can help us write the cause and effect after reading a text. Let's look at this organizer. I will write the cause on the left side of the chart under 'cause'. I will write the effect on the right side of the chart under 'effect'.

The question in the left box, "Why did this happen?" helps me find the cause.

The question in the right box, "What happened?" helps me find the effect.

I will write 'I missed my grandmother's bread' in the left box under cause.

What do I write for the cause?

- I missed my grandmother's bread.

I will write 'I decided to make the bread myself' in the right box under effect.

What do I write for the effect?

- I decided to make the bread myself.

Sometimes a sentence or paragraph can have more than one cause and more than one effect.

TEACHER AND STUDENTS PRACTICE TASK TOGETHER

To find cause and effect relationships, we look for one event that caused another event. The cause is why the event happens. The effect is what happened. Sometimes there can be more than one cause and effect. This occurs when one cause brings about an effect; then that effect becomes the cause for another effect.

What is the cause?

- Why the event happens.

The effect is what happened.

What is the effect?

- What happened.

Give students a pencil and the student sheets with the stories and graphic organizers.

EMPOWERING TEACHERS

TEACHER AND STUDENTS PRACTICE TASK TOGETHER (continued)

Listen and follow along as I read the next story. Together, we will find the signal words and the cause and effect for the events that happen. In this longer text, we will have more than one cause and effect.

This story is about people who immigrated or moved from another country to New York City. *Display and point to the words as you read the story aloud.*

Over a hundred years ago, many people immigrated to New York City. They came from other countries far away. As a result of living in the United States, they missed many things from their home country. So the people decided to make some of their old recipes to enjoy the foods they missed.

There are two signal words in this text. The words, as a result of, and so, signal us to look for cause and effect relationships in this text.

Now we need to ask the two questions to find the cause and the effect.

To find the effect, we ask, “What happened?”

What do we ask to find the effect?

- What happened?

The effect is ‘they missed many things from their home country’.

What is the effect?

- They missed many things from their home country.

To find the cause, we ask, “Why did this happen?”

What do we ask to find the cause?

- Why did this happen?

The cause is, ‘they immigrated to New York City from other countries far away’.

What is the cause?

- They immigrated to New York City from other countries far away.

That’s right. The people moved to a new city and this caused them to miss many things from their home country.

We can ask these questions again to see if there were other effects.

To find another effect, we ask, “What else happened?”

Another effect is ‘they decided to make some of their old recipes’.

What is the effect?

- They decided to make some of their old recipes.

Now, we need to find the cause. Why did this happen?

What caused them to make some of their old recipes?

They missed the food from their home country. This is now the cause.

What is the cause?

- They missed the food from their home country.

That’s right. Missing the food from their home country was the cause or reason why they decided to make some of their old recipes.

We’re going to write this information on our graphic organizer. We will write the cause on the left side of the chart under ‘cause’. We will write the effect on the right side of the chart under ‘effect’.

The question in the left box, “Why did this happen?” helps me find the cause.

What is the question to find the cause?

- Why did this happen?

Where do we write the answer?

- We write it in the left box under cause.

The question in the right box, “What happened?” helps me find the effect.

What is the question to find the effect?

- What happened?

Where do we write the answer?

- We write it in the right box under effect.

We will write ‘they immigrated to New York City from other countries far away’ in the left box under cause.

What do we write for the cause?

- They immigrated to New York City from other countries far away.

EMPOWERING TEACHERS

TEACHER AND STUDENTS PRACTICE TASK TOGETHER (continued)

We will write 'they missed many things from their home country' in the right box under effect.

What do we write for the effect?

- They missed the food from their home country.

Now we have to record the other cause and effect on our graphic organizer.

Let's look at the question in the left box to find out what caused them to make some of their old recipes? 'Why did this happen?'

We will write 'they missed the food from their home country' in the left box under cause.

What do we write for the cause?

- They missed the food from their home country.

Look at the question in the right box to find out the effect of missing the food from their home country. 'What happened?'

We will write 'they decided to make some of their old recipes' in the right box under effect.

What do we write for the effect?

- They decided to make some of their old recipes.

That's right. They make their old recipes because they miss their home country.

When we find the cause, we learn why something happens. When we find the effect, we learn what happens or the result.

STUDENTS PRACTICE TASK

Let's review first. To find cause and effect relationships, we look for one event that caused another event.

What is the cause?

Why did this happen.

What is the effect?

What happened.

Yes. The cause tells us why an event happens and the effect tells us what happened.

Let's choral read these sentences about cats. *Display and point to the words as you read aloud.*

Cats often have lots of energy and play for a long time. Therefore, they take many naps.

What word signals us to look for a cause and effect relationship in this text? Use the list of signal words to help you. What word?

therefore

Now you need to ask the questions to find the cause and the effect.

What do you ask to find the effect?

What happened?

Yes. Tell me, What happened?

Cats take many naps.

That's right. Cats take many naps is the effect.

If students answer the question, 'What happened?' with the cause (i.e., cats have lots of energy and play a long time) ask them why this happened. The answer isn't in the sentence; we don't know why they have lots of energy and play a long time. If we cannot answer this, to find the effect we should ask, "Is there anything else that happened?" (i.e., cats take many naps). Then, to find the cause, we can ask why this happened.

What do you ask to find the cause?

Why did this happen?

Yes. Now, tell me, why did this happen?

Cats play for a long time.

That's right. You figured out 'why' cats take naps! It is because they play a lot.

We're going to write this information on our graphic organizer. We will write the cause on the left side of the chart under 'why did this happen'. We will write the effect on the right side of the chart under 'what happened'.

EMPOWERING TEACHERS

STUDENTS PRACTICE TASK (continued)

What is the question in the left box to find the cause?

Why did this happen?

What will you write for the cause?

Cats play for a long time

Write ‘cats play for a long time’ on your graphic organizer and I will write on the large one.

What is the question in the right box to find the effect?

What happened?

What will you write for the effect?

Cats take many naps.

Write ‘cats take many naps’ on your graphic organizer and I will write on the large one.

Let’s read another story together. This story is about Sarah and bike riding. Ready, let’s read.

Sarah liked to ride her bike. One day on her way home from school, she was careless and didn’t pay attention while riding her bicycle. She hit a rock on the pavement and fell off her bike.

Is there a signal word in this story?

No

That’s right. Sometimes there are no signal words even though there is a cause and effect relationship in the text.

What do you ask to find the effect?

What happened?

What is the effect or what happens in this sentence?

Sarah hit a rock and fell off her bike.

Yes, that is the effect.

What do we ask to find the cause?

Why did this happen?

What is the cause or why did this happen in this sentence?

Sarah was careless and didn’t pay attention while riding her bike.

Yes, that is the cause.

Let’s write this information on the graphic organizer.

What will you write in the left box under cause?

Sarah was careless and didn’t pay attention while riding her bike.

Write ‘Sarah was careless and didn’t pay attention while riding her bike’ on your graphic organizer and I will write on the large one.

What do you write in the right box under effect?

Sarah hit a rock and fell off her bike.

Yes, write ‘Sarah hit a rock and fell off her bike’ on your graphic organizer and I will write on the large one.

You’ve done a great job finding cause and effect.

Using cause and effect is one way that authors organize their writing to show the relationship between two things or events. If we can recognize a sentence or paragraph that is organized around a cause and effect relationship, then we are able to better understand the author’s message.

INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

When students consistently identify cause and effect relationships in a sentence or paragraph, provide opportunities to practice individually or in pairs using other explicit passages that have this structure.

EMPOWERING TEACHERS

SCAFFOLDING SUGGESTION FOR ERRORS

Verify that students are correctly identifying how one event is the cause and another event is the effect. If students are experiencing difficulty with this concept, use more examples from everyday experiences (e.g., I dropped the glass; therefore, the glass broke.). Echo read the sentences for students having difficulty with the reading level. If necessary during student practice, prompt students by giving them the response before you ask them to state it. If students can't answer questions about 'what happened', prompt them with the following questions: Who or what is this sentence/paragraph about? What is the most important thing about the who or what? If students answer the question about the effect by giving the cause, ask them why this happened or if this happened as a result of something else. If students answer the question about the cause by giving the effect, ask them if this was the initiating or starting event that caused something else to happen.

Adaptations using this Instructional Routine:

- If students are having difficulty with this routine, use the 2nd Grade Comprehension Instructional Routine: Identify Cause and Effect Relationships in Text.
- Provide more words on the chart of signal words to use as clues to cause and effect relationships.
- Provide additional text with cause and effect chains.
- Provide additional text with one cause and many effects.

For further independent practice with narrative text sequencing, refer to the following Second and Third Grade FCRR Student Center Activities at http://www.fcrr.org/Curriculum/PDF/G2-3/2-3Comp_3.pdf

- C.020

Sam has no cavities because he brushes and flosses his teeth everyday.

The fire alarm sounded as a result of the smoke that filled the room.

I missed the banana nut bread my grandmother used to make for me. The recipe was very easy and quick to make. So, I decided to make the bread myself.

Over a hundred years ago, many people immigrated to New York City. They came from other countries far away. As a result of living in the United States, they missed many things from their home country. So the people decided to make some of their old recipes to enjoy the foods they missed.

Cats often have lots of energy and play for a long time. Therefore, they take many naps.

Sarah liked to ride her bike. One day on her way home from school, she was careless and didn't pay attention while riding her bicycle. She hit a rock on the pavement and fell off her bike.