

Cause-and-Effect Essay

INTRODUCTION

Interesting opener

Background information

Thesis

BODY

Causes

Effect 1

Support for effect 1

Part-time Jobs, Full-time Lives:

Teenagers at Work

To work or not to work? That is the question many teenagers ask themselves, especially during high school. Surveys show that more than two thirds of high school students in the United States hold part-time jobs. These teenagers have all kinds of reasons for working, and the consequences can be positive or negative, or—to make things even more confusing—both.

Why do students work? As many as 83 percent say they spend their earnings on entertainment. Others seek jobs to pay for necessities: car insurance, clothes, and college expenses. Still others work to help with their families' finances. A minority of students work in jobs that they hope will give them valuable experience in fields that interest them. The majority of teens, though, work in low-paying service or clerical jobs.

Whatever their reasons for working, students with part-time jobs end up paying for their paychecks. Many are forced by time constraints to give up a number of activities they once enjoyed. For example, high school sophomore Kendra Moore has had to give up running track because of her time-consuming job at a grocery store. "I've always loved to run," she says, "but now the only running I do is from school to my job." Other working teens note that they have little time to socialize and are even too tired—after school and work—to just hang out with friends.

Cause-and-Effect Essay *continued*

Effect 2

Support for effect 2

Additional support for effect 2

Effect 3

Support for effect 3

Most studies show that students who work more than fifteen hours a week not only have lower participation rates in extracurricular activities but also get lower grades than students who work fewer hours or not at all (Stern). Students who work and try to keep up their extracurricular activities must juggle those activities and their school-work to try to maintain a balance. Sam Linares, a high school junior, has had to learn this juggling act. Sam is a varsity basketball player, is involved with student government, and is a member of a choir that meets four days a week. He also works at a local fast-food restaurant ten nights every month. "Since I started working, I've had to schedule every minute of my life," says Sam. "At first, my grades really slipped, but after a while I became more organized. Luckily, my grades are improving again, and I'm still keeping up with my other activities."

Not all consequences of working part time during the high school years are detrimental, however. There are benefits as well, and, like the drawbacks, these depend on the individual student and the type of job he or she has. Most jobs require teenagers to meet adult goals and to function in adult situations. Managers and colleagues can offer positive role models to students, and the "real-world" demands of punching a clock and learning to work well with others teach responsibility and self-discipline. Research conducted in the late 1990s shows that students who work fewer than fifteen hours a week have more positive attitudes about work and higher future earning potential (Stern).

Cause-and-Effect Essay *continued*

CONCLUSION

Restatement of thesis

To work or not to work? Perhaps every teen thinking about leaping into the job market should consider this question: Why work? Having more money for new clothes and movie tickets isn't as important as having time for family, friends, and school. On the other hand, learning new skills in a part-time job can increase self-esteem and motivate students to learn more in school and to budget their time more effectively. Teens who are considering a leap into the world of work should weigh their reasons for wanting a job against the consequences of having one. As Sam Linares can tell you, it's a lot easier to juggle things that are balanced.

Literary Research Paper *continued*

Works Cited

Linares, Sam. Personal interview. 19 April 2000.

Moore, Kendra. Personal interview. 19 April 2000.

Stern, David. "Learning and Earning: The Value of Working for Urban Students." ERIC/CUE Digest Nov. 1997. 19 April 2000
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Cause-and-Effect Essay

Definition

A **cause-and-effect essay** examines the causes and effects of an event or situation. A good cause-and-effect essay clearly explains the relationship between actions and reactions in a specific context.

Many cause-and-effect essays use the structure illustrated in the framework below. Print this framework and use it as a guide when you write your own cause-and-effect essay.

Framework

Directions and Explanations

Introduction

- Get your readers interested.
- Provide background information.
- Include a clear thesis.

Listen up Your introduction should make readers want to keep reading your essay. Try starting with a thought-provoking question, an interesting quotation, or an anecdote.

The back story Give readers background information that helps them understand why your topic is important.

Announce the main event Your thesis statement should clarify the purpose of your essay.



Body

- Present the causes and/or effects of your topic in a clear sequence.
- Support the causes and/or effects with adequate detail.

Telling the tale Make sure your analysis progresses in logical order. Use chronological order to analyze a causal chain. Otherwise, use order of importance—from most important to least important or vice versa.

Support your statements Use statistics, facts, examples, and expert opinions to provide supporting details for each of your statements.



Conclusion

- Remind your readers of your thesis and bring your essay to a close.

The curtain call Restate your main points briefly. End your explanation on a high note with a thought-provoking statement, a question, or a prediction.