Cause OR Effect

Speculating about Causes or Effects

Causes

Φ**Why did that happen?**

When something surprising occurs, we automatically look to the past and ask this question to help us to:
- understand the occurrence
- make the occurrence happen again
- find a way to prevent its recurrence

In order to accomplish any of the above, we must <u>speculate</u> about the factors that <u>caused</u> the occurrence.

Effects

Φ**What is going to happen?**

After something important happens, we may look to the future and ask this question to help us:
- Make educated guesses
- Plan ahead
- Make decisions

In order to accomplish any of the above, we must <u>speculate</u> about the <u>effects</u> of the occurrence.

Speculation

Φ What does it mean to speculate about something?

Φ How do we make educated guesses?
- Conduct research
- Search out hidden, underlying causes or effects of the issue that are surprising, new, yet believable.
- Present a causal argument for your chosen causes or effects.

What is a causal argument?

Φ An argument about the influence of one thing on another, when the nature of the influence cannot be proven.

Φ This type of argument involves: <u>Explanation & Prediction</u> because these arguments are used to:
1. Explain what has caused a problem
2. What the problem's effects will be if no solution is found
3. What effects each possible solution is likely to have.

What is the Focus of C/E Speculative Writing?

Φ The **focus** of this type of writing is on <u>analysis & argument</u> about possible causes or effects of events, trends, or phenomena.

Φ **Note:** The readings in this chapter don't simply <u>summarize</u> others' proposed causes or effects, but <u>argue inventively</u> for the writer's owned proposed causes or effects that cannot presently be explained definitively.

What is the Purpose of This Assignment?

Φ To acquaint you with how to:
  Φ Choose an event, trend, or phenomenon that remains open to speculation about its possible causes or effects.
  Φ Conduct research about the topic.
  Φ Establish the existence and significance of a subject.
  Φ During research, you will weigh and evaluate each cause and effect in light of your understanding of the topic and your chosen argument.
  Φ Then you should argue for your preferred causes or effects, whether you discovered them on your own or came across them during research.
  Φ Convince readers that the causes or effects you propose are believable.

Basic Features of Cause/Effect Writing

Φ Intro. Paragraph and Thesis Stmt.

Φ Presenting the Subject

Φ Making a Causal Argument

Φ Counterarguing

Φ Establishing Credibility

Φ Organizing essay in a logical sequence of cause or effects

Φ Signal explicitly the stages of cause or effect reasoning.

Constructing A Thesis

Φ Announce the subject and how you will approach it.

Φ Clearly identify the proposed causes or effects and the order in which you will discuss them.

Φ Suggest the direction the causal argument will take.

3 Intro Par. & Thesis Examples

Φ Gun control is a major issue today in the United States. There are many people devoting a lot of time and money to get their viewpoints across and to change the laws in their favor. Congress has been on both sides of the issue in the past. Strict gun control laws can have both negative and positives aspects to society. <u>Lower crime rate, the lowering of the murder rate, and the infringement of people's constitutional rights are all effects of stricter gun control laws.</u>

Φ What if the Columbine incident only had one determining causal factor? Could it be that a school yard occurrence, such as bullying, could force someone to want to kill? On April, 20th 1999, it did. Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold opened fire killing a teacher and 12 students as well as themselves in their assault on Columbine High School. <u>The bullying and harassment that Harris, Klebold, and the school suffered from the Jocks was the main causal factor for the rampage on Columbine High School and it's students.</u>

Φ What is it that causes a new, happy mother to suddenly turn into a brutal murderer? The National Mental Health Association stated that "Postpartum depression is a major type of depression that affects a mother within the first year after they give birth; although it usually hits shortly after childbirth" ("Recognizing..."). This disorder strikes about ten percent of mothers, while two to four percent experience the more severe side of postpartum depression (Barnard). Over the years, Postpartum depression seems to have become a phenomenon. <u>There is a wide range of speculations on what causes a this, such as: the hormonal change after pregnancy, the constant responsibility and stressful events of a newborn, and pre-existing problems and issues are a few possibilities of the cause.</u>

Presenting the Subject

Writers need to:

Φ Be sure that readers recognize & understand the subject by:
 Φ Presenting it in detail, define it, give examples, & relate the subject to something that is common knowledge.

Φ Convince readers that the subject is important and worth speculating about.
 Φ Answer the "So what…?" research question.
 Φ Prove that the subject involves a large # of people or has great importance to a specific group of people.

Φ Prove the existence of the subject by:
 Φ Describing it in great detail, offer factual evidence, cite statistics, or quote statements from experts in the field.

Making a Cause or Effect Argument

Φ A Causal Argument is made up of 2 parts:
 Φ The proposed causes or effects.
 Φ The reasoning & support for each cause of effect.

Φ To Argue Effectively the Writer Must:
 Φ Selectively choose only the causes or effects that support the argument.
 Φ Offer new, imaginative Cs or Es that will surprise readers. The best arguments avoid stating the obvious.

Counterarguing

To Counterargue Effectively Writers Should:

Φ Anticipate & then respond to readers' questions, opinions, & objections by:

 Φ Evaluating their preferred causes

 Φ Using evidence or language that will appeal to the reader

 Φ Answering their Qs

 Φ Reacting to their objections

Establishing Credibility (Ethos)

Φ The believability of your argument depends on:
  - Φ The attitudes towards readers expressed in the writer's choice of wording & use of sources
  - Φ The ring of truth in interview quotes & personal experience stories
  - Φ The step-by-step logic of the argument
  - Φ The believability of reasons
  - Φ The adequacy of support
  - Φ The sensitivity shown to readers' Qs or objections.