Cause/Effect Essays

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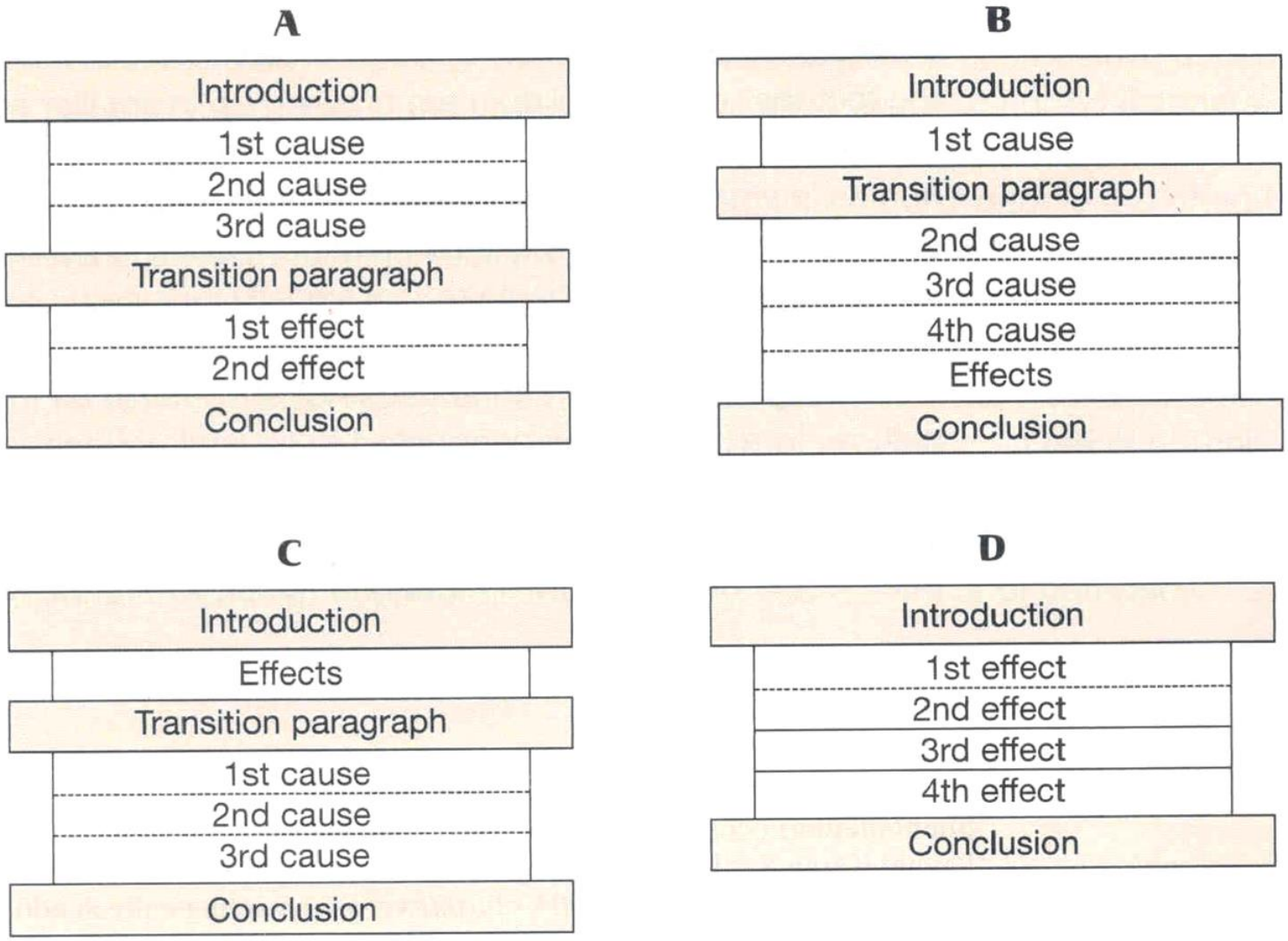
Why Cause and Effect Essays

- To concern why things happen (causes) and what happens as a result (effects)
- To find solutions to problems and make the world better

Question

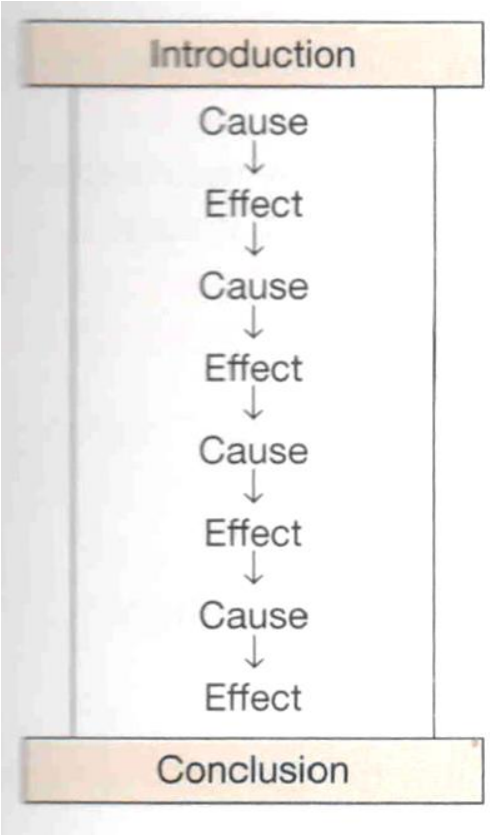
How many causes and effects do you need to present in an essay?

Block Organization



Introduction to Academic Writing, p. 95

Chain Organization



How Fertile Land Becomes Desert

People move into new areas and clear land for agriculture by cutting down trees.

The tree roots no longer hold the soil in place.

The tree roots do not hold the soil in place.

The topsoil washes away during heavy rains.

The topsoil washes away during heavy rains.

There is no good soil to grow crops in.

There is no good soil to grow crops in.

People move to new areas and clear land for agriculture by cutting down trees.

Introduction to Academic Writing, p. 99

Easy Organization

1. Introduction (phenomenon—effect)
2. 1st cause
3. 2nd cause
4. 3rd cause
5. Conclusion

The Analysis of the Model Essay

- Group work:

Read the article, *Shyness,* on p. 96

Do the analysis:

(1) Organization form

(2) Strategies in each paragraph

Step 1: Starting Point

- Present an event, phenomenon or trend
- Explain the background of the cause

Example: Introductory Paragraph

Phenomenon

Phenomenon
Explanation

Shyness

If you suffer from shyness, you are not alone, for shyness is a universal phenomenon. According to recent research, "close to 50 percent of the general population report that they currently experience some degree of shyness in their lives. In addition, close to 80 percent of people report having felt shy at some point in their lives" (Payne, par. 3). As shyness is so prevalent in the world, it is not surprising that social scientists are learning more about its causes. They have found that shyness in an individual can result from both biological and environmental factors.

Phenomenon: bridging

Thesis statement

Step 2: Transition

- Separate one major section from another
- Make links and connections between the cause and effect

Example: Transition Paragraph

Connection between paragraphs

However, environment can, at least in some cases, triumph over biology. As shy child may lose much of his or her shyness. On the other hand, many people who were not shy as children become shy as adults, a fact that points to environmental or experiential causes.

Reasons

Step 3: Limiting the Points

- Possible multiple causes or effects in any given relationship
- Limit the number of points

Step 4: Organization

- Organize your essay effectively

(1) a thesis statement: the event, phenomenon or trend

(2) body paragraph: showing a topic sentence that explains the cause or effect

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Step 5: Repeating the major points

- End with a summary of the causes and effects discussed in your essay

Assignment

Find out a problem around you and write a cause and effect essay