

Cause and Effect

"If you drink your milk, you will grow big and strong!"
"If you clean up your toys, you can go and play outside."
Children learn about cause and effect long before they begin formal schooling.

Words to Watch For! Clue Words and Phrases that signal a Cause-Effect Relationship

- such as
- because
- so
- consequently
- therefore
- thus
- because
- since
- as a result
- depends on
- the reason why
- accordingly
- then
- resulted in
- caused
- but

Cause and Effect



An effect is what happens in a story. A cause is why something happens.

Part 7: Reading Comprehension-Recognising Cause and Effect



The purpose of cause-effect is to demonstrate a relationship between two things. A cause is why something happens; an effect is what happens. To find an effect, good readers ask, "What happened?" To find cause, readers ask "Why did this happen?" They may be stated in either order, that is, the effect may appear before the cause in the text. Understanding cause-effect relationships is an important aspect of comprehending. It is vital when comprehending science, social studies and history texts. Causes may not be directly stated in the text and readers are required to reorganise ideas and use prior knowledge. Good readers understand that an effect can have numerous causes and the one cause may have several effects.

Tips to help at home!

- ✓ Name a cause and have your child identify an effect and vice versa. What can cause you to wake up late? What is the effect of walking in the rain? Discuss together.
- ✓ Play a simple game in which you orally provide a situation (or a cause). Ask your child to fill in an action (or an effect).
- ✓ Share the children's book *If You Give A Mouse A Cookie* by Laura Joffe Numeroff with your child. Point out the use of specific cause/effect words used in the book, including if...then. Keep a running tally of all the causes and effects that happen in the story.
- ✓ Set up dominoes on a desk or table and discuss what will happen when the first domino falls over.

Focus Questions

To help your child recognise cause and effect, ask him/her the following questions:

What events does the author describe in this story?

What causes are given for the events described in this story?

Which words and phrases did the author use to signal cause/effect relationships? (*because, since, thus, so that, if...then, therefore, nevertheless, this led to, as a result of, then...so, for this reason, on account of, due to..., consequently*).

What happened? Why did it happen?

Were there more than one cause or effect? Does the author tell me exactly what happens and why, or do I need to fill in some missing ideas?