

# CAUSE AND EFFECT ESSAY

The way an essay is put together is almost as important as the manner in which the argument is presented. The purpose of the cause and effect essay is to state an effect and then discuss its various causes, **OR** to state a cause, then deal with its possible effects. The following guidelines may help you construct the cause and effect essay.

## **INTRODUCTION**

- Begin by citing causes if you plan to write about effects
- Begin by citing effects if you plan to write about causes
- Motivate interest with an anecdote
- Be sure to end with a clear thesis that has a strong direction

### **Example of an introduction:**

While driving down I-285 this morning, I could not help but notice the congestion: the broken, shattered pavement, the illegible traffic signs, and the confusing exit ramps. I realized then that the chances of my having an accident were very good. What led to such deplorable conditions? Though many things make the interstates less than perfect in Atlanta, the incompetence of the DOT comes to mind first, particularly that agency's poor planning, irresponsible workers, and antiquated equipment.

## **BODY**

- Be sure that each paragraph concentrates on one cause or one effect
- Cite specific examples, facts, or illustrations to lend credence to your argument
- Move from your least to most convincing cause or effect

## **CONCLUSION**

- ***Remember*** to begin with a restatement of your thesis

### **Example of thesis restated:**

Thus, the DOT's inadequacy certainly has left the burgeoning city of some two million people with an interstate system suitable for a metropolitan area of much smaller dimensions.

- After restating the thesis, you may wish to recognize opposing causes and effects

### **Example of recognizing opposing causes and effects:**

Yet, other factors do create the shoddy interstates in and around Atlanta. Two factors are, for example, the failure of many tax referendums to fund greater highway construction and repair and the persistent use of the interstates, though such use is illegal, by cement haulers who also damage an already fragile system.

**NOTE:** Don't forget that this is an argument; therefore, you must state your position clearly and feel free to be controversial.