

CAUSE AND EFFECT vocabulary

Academic Vocabulary in Use

30 Cause and effect

Much academic study is concerned with establishing cause and effect or the relationship that exists between events, objects, variables or states of affairs. Cause and effect is often described using conjunctions like *because*, prepositions like *due to* and *because of* and adverbs like *therefore* and *consequently*. In this unit, however, we focus on nouns and verbs relating to cause and effect. Pay particular attention to the prepositions they are used with.

A Verbs relating to cause and effect

You are probably already familiar with these verbs relating to cause and effect: *make, cause, create, do, produce, force*. Here are some other useful verbs.

Her grandmother **influenced** / **had** a considerable influence on Sarah's choice of career.

Parental attitude **largely determines** how well a child adapts to school. [is the main factor affecting]

The teacher **motivated** them to work hard. [made them want to do something positive]

The flow of traffic through the town is **facilitated** by the one-way system. [made easier]

The speech **provoked** an angry response. [caused, usually something negative]

The explosion was **triggered** by the heat. [started, usually something sudden and negative]

The tilting of the earth on its axis **accounts for** the change in the seasons. [explains]

Sid's determination **springs/stems from** his desire to improve the world. [is the result of]

The country's victory **gave rise to** a new mood in society.

The mobile phone **contributed to** the information revolution. [was one factor influencing]

The child was given drugs to **stimulate** growth. [cause something to develop or function]

The exhibition **generated** a lot of interest. [aroused, caused to exist]

The drugs may **induce** nausea. [cause, often used in a medical context]

The teacher's presence **inhibited** the teenagers' discussion. [prevented it from being as free as it might otherwise have been]

A number of benefits can be **derived** from this situation. [gained as a result]

B Nouns relating to cause and effect

| noun | example | meaning/comment |
|----------------|---|--|
| chain reaction | The incident set off a chain reaction which affected us all. | set of related events in which each one causes the next one |
| consequence | The war had major consequences . | results |
| effect, impact | The effect/impact of the film on the audience was very powerful. | influence |
| end | Does the end justify the means? | note how end here means aim |
| origin/source | The accident was the origin/source of her later problems. | beginning or cause |
| outcome | We hope for a positive outcome to the discussions. | result or effect of an action |
| precedent | There are several precedents for taking such a decision. | something that already happened and provides a reason for doing the same |
| reason | What was the reason for his success / why he succeeded? | note how reason is often followed by for or why |



While **cause** can be both a noun and a verb, **effect** is usually a noun. The equivalent verb is **affect**. Her father's problems **affected** her deeply. Her father's problems **had a profound effect** on her. Note the formal and infrequent verb **effect** [= achieve], mainly used in the phrase to **effect a change**. (See also Unit 3.)

Exercises

30.1 Replace the underlined words with a more precise verb of cause or effect. Note that all the sentences below are appropriate for essays apart perhaps from 6 with its use of 'got'.

- 1 Researchers are investigating why chocolate causes headaches in certain people.
- 2 Wilson's most recent paper has caused a great deal of interest among sociologists.
- 3 The drug caused headaches and dizziness among a number of subjects in the test.
- 4 Having an end-of-term prize helps students to do well in their class tests.
- 5 Intensive farming has been a significant factor in the decline of bird populations.
- 6 The missile test got an immediate and very strong response from adjacent governments and from the United Nations.
- 7 Astrologists believe that people's lives are largely affected by the planets and stars.
- 8 The barrier affects the flow of water into the area to prevent flooding in the rainy season.
- 9 A leak in the tank explained 40% of the fuel loss, and evaporation took away another 5%.
- 10 The renovated college buildings have wider doors and corridors to make the use of wheelchairs easier.
- 11 The Minister cut taxes in an attempt to affect the economy, which was performing poorly.
- 12 Britain has received many economic benefits from membership of the European Union.

30.2 Match the beginning of each sentence with the most appropriate ending.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1 The article explores the origins | major consequences for larger families. |
| 2 One small explosion set off a chain | precedents for his decision. |
| 3 The confusion probably stemmed | rise to a widespread sense of disillusionment. |
| 4 The proposed new tax could have | of the concept of democracy. |
| 5 The disastrous events of 2003 gave | reaction, causing massive damage. |
| 6 The judge explained that there were | from a lack of communication. |

30.3 Choose the correct word in italics to complete these sentences.

- 1 De Rota's work in the 1970s influenced *on / to / –* the development of computer science.
- 2 The acid seemed to have no *affect / effect* whatsoever on the plastic.
- 3 Everyone hoped for a positive outcome *upon / off / to* the meeting between the two governments.
- 4 The reason *for / to / of* the failure of the project was a lack of funding.
- 5 The impact of global warming *for / on / to* the polar ice caps is now understood more clearly.
- 6 The journalist wondered what particular *ending / end* the government had in mind when it decided to build a national tennis academy.