

Cause and Effect: A Comprehension Strategy

Nothing happens without a reason or without some kind of consequence. When you explain **why** things happen and **what** occurs when they do, the technique you use is called **cause and effect**.

You must be able to identify these relationships so that you can understand the sequence of a text (a different strategy for a different time), however, the strategy is also used day to day when problem solving and making decisions.



Cause – why something happened.

Effect – the result of what happened.

Example 1: Cause: I forgot to set my alarm clock last night.
 Effect: I was an hour late for school.

Example 2:



Activity: Supply a cause or effect after reading the information given.

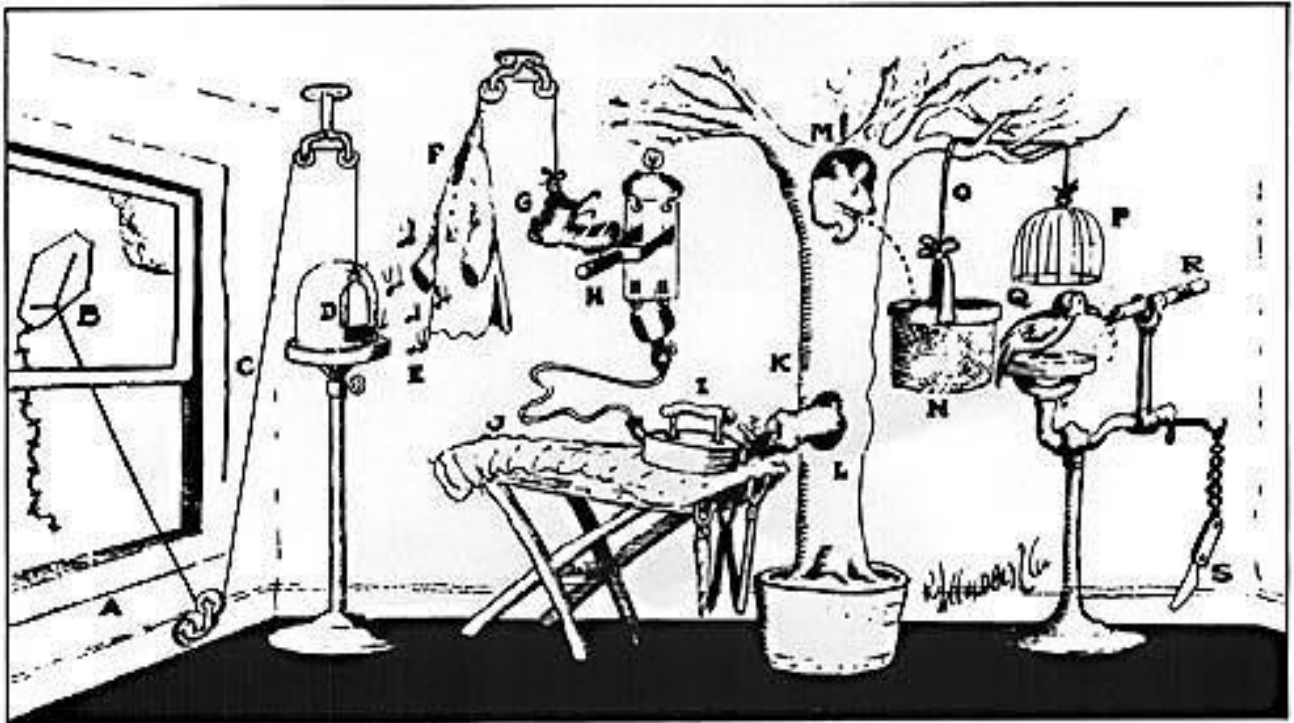
Cause	Effect
The chef ran out of sugar.	
	The flower died.
The waitress was clumsy.	
	The water in the pool was freezing.
	The telephone was dead.
A huge flood hit.	

Often an effect becomes the cause of another effect, resulting in a **chain** of related events.

Example 1: When people pollute rivers, they destroy the habitats of fish. This reduces the number of fish that can reproduce. As a result, fewer fish are born in fresh water, and the fish population declines.

Example 2: Pencil Sharpener (see below)

Activity: On loose leaf, record the chain of causes and effects shown in this illustration.



Tips for Finding Cause and Effect

1. To find the effect, ask yourself, "what happened?"
2. To find the cause, ask yourself, "why did it happen?"
3. Look for chain reactions. A chain reaction occurs when a cause or effect leads to future causes and effects.

Signal Words for Cause and Effect Relationships:

Because
So

Therefore
After

Since
As a result