

Writing an essay on cause and effect

Aims:

- To bring attention to the need for lexical variation in a good essay.
- To increase range of cause and effect phrases and topic related vocabulary.
- To provide a lexical resource for future essay writing.

Target Language:

Cause and effect: so/ As a result/ are due to/ The consequence of/ Owing to/ one effect of/ This is because/ as/ Hence/ consequently/ The effect of/consequent (levels)/ therefore/ (creates)/ As a result/ For this reason/ Thus/ as a consequence

Lexical variation: Population/ (uninhabitable)/ overcrowding/ teeming with people/ inhabitants/ too dense a population/ over peopled/ crowded with people/ crawling with cars/ overpopulation/ epidemic of people/ most populous nation/ overcrowded

Time: 1 hour plus writing task for homework

Materials: The following worksheets

- 1) **Cards** (cut up one card for each student)
- 2) **Prediction task** (one copy on an OHP or one copy between two)
- 3) **Reorder following sentences** (one copy each)
- 4) **Analysis worksheet** (one copy each)
- 5) **Vocabulary extension worksheet** (one copy each)
- 6) **Homework sheet** (one copy each)
- 7) **Model essay – Answer Key** (one copy each)

Lesson steps:

- 1) As a warm-up exercise, give one card, from '**Cards**', to each student. (Make sure you are using matching cause and effects). Tell students to mill until they have found their partner. **(5 minutes)**
- 2) Tell the new pairs to then sit down and connect their sentences by introducing a phrase which expresses the relationship of cause and effect. **(5 minutes)**
- 3) Pairs read out their sentences and the teacher marks up cause and effect phrases on the board as they come up. **(5 minutes)**
- 4) Tell the class they are now going to read some sentences which use (hopefully) some different cause and effect phrases. They are taken from

- an essay entitled 'Describe some of the problems caused by overcrowding in modern cities' and write this title on the board. **(2 minutes)**
- 5) Put '**Prediction task**' on the OHP (alternatively give out one copy between two) and cover over all but the top unfinished sentence. Students guess the ending, shout out their answers and the nearest answer gets a point/ sweet/ counter etc. **(15 minutes)**
 - 6) Explain again that the prediction task comes from the essay on the board and give out '**Reorder the following sentences**' and the '**Analysis worksheet**' to complete individually. Explain that in writing such an essay you need to list a lot of problems of a single cause (overcrowding) so a lot of cause and effect phrases are needed. Also you would need a lot of words which function as an alternative to the topic word, in this case, 'overcrowding'. **(15 minutes)**
 - 7) Be available to help as the students work through the worksheet. Give out '**Model essay – Answer Key**' and allow students to check through it quickly before looking at it as a class (see teachers' notes.) **(10)**
 - 8) Give out '**Vocabulary extension worksheet**' explaining that the words on the sheet come from other common essay themes, one of which they will write an essay on for homework. You could work through this as a class, answering questions about the slight differences in meaning, in order to keep the pace up and finish on a chatty note. **(5)**
 - 9) Give out '**Homework sheet**' for homework.

Teachers' notes (*numbers correspond to lesson steps*):

- 1) If your class doesn't like moving around, give each pair a complete set of jumbled cards to match up. However, still limit one sentence to each pair for connecting them with a phrase.
- 2) -
- 3) Some students' written work lacks coherence because of a paucity of cause and effect in their ideas. This step will help focus these students on the need to use clear connections in their written work.
- 4) The idea here is that if you make the introduction of these phrases fun, students will have a better chance of remembering them (step six gives further comprehension and analytical focus on the target phrases)
- 5) –
- 6) –
- 7) And 8) are simply to prepare for written homework so keep the pace relaxed and chatty and reiterate that the point of their homework is to produce a piece of writing that has a good range of topic vocabulary and cause and effect phrases.

Cards
for a warm-up exercise

I told them what they could do with their job	I'm out of work	I've run out of tobacco	I'm smoking rolled-up banana skins
I've locked myself out	I'm sleeping under a bush in the garden	I've left the rat race	I'm a beach bum, selling pictures made of seashells. It's great!
She's dumped me	I'm in the pub, drowning my sorrows	I trained for ten years as an astronaut	I'm sitting in a NASA space station, drinking tea with my colleagues
MI6 asked me to become a spy	I'm sitting on a park bench with a briefcase, waiting for a man in dark glasses and a red scarf	I've met the man of my dreams	I'm getting married next week

Prediction task

(for model essay on the problems caused by overcrowding in cities)

<p>Cities face a number of problems which are due to...</p> <p>...overcrowding.</p>
<p>The consequence of too dense a population is that...</p> <p>...one or all of these areas (housing, healthcare, education, jobs and a certain quality of life) must suffer.</p>
<p>Owing to being over-peopled, Britain's main cities all have....</p> <p>...a number of people living on the street</p>
<p>One effect of such a lifestyle (living on the street) is that...</p> <p>...drug abuse and crime rates rise.</p>
<p>A city crowded with people leads to...</p> <p>...roads crawling with cars.</p>
<p>(In a city) light, heat, transport and food must all be supplied artificially as...</p> <p>...one is living a life removed from nature.</p>
<p>The greater the population, the more natural resources are burnt up and, consequently...</p> <p>...the more pollution is created.</p>
<p>(We are part of) an unhealthy, consumerist and throwaway society, which creates...</p> <p>...creates environmental crisis.</p>

Reorder the following sentences...

to make a coherent essay.

“Describe some of the problems that overcrowding in cities causes and suggest at least one possible solution.”

- A) As a result our modern day cities face a number of serious problems which are due to overcrowding.
- B) The consequence of too dense a population is that one or all of these areas must suffer.
- C) Owing to being over peopled Britain’s main cities all have a number of people living on the streets. Life must be extremely hard for these people and one effect of such a lifestyle is that drug abuse and crime rates rise.
- D) Cities are environmentally unfriendly places.
- E) Thus, Governments must educate people to limit the size of their family. In China, couples are penalized financially as a consequence of having more than one child. This may seem cruel, but the “one-child policy” is beginning to have an effect on the world’s most populous nation.
- F) The twentieth century saw a major increase in the world’s population. Yet large parts of the globe remain uninhabitable, so people are drawn towards living in existing towns and cities.
- G) Hence, the greater the population, the more natural resources are burnt up and, consequently, the more pollution is created. A city crowded with people leads to roads crawling with cars.
- H) As a result a lot of taxpayer’s money is spent on trying to keep the effects of overcrowding under control. More housing is built; more roads are planned. This tactic might alleviate some symptomatic problems at high cost. However, it will never solve the problem of overpopulation.
- I) This is because light, heat, travel and food must all be supplied artificially as one is removed from nature.
- J) Living in a city, therefore, forces us to be part of an unhealthy consumer throwaway society, which creates illness and environmental crisis, rather than curing it.
- K) It is the Government’s responsibility to find solutions for these problems.

- L) For this reason, we must look to the cause of the problem, which is simply an unchecked epidemic of people.
- M) Similar such policies may also be necessary in other overcrowded nations and this, in turn, would eventually result in solving the problem of overcrowding in cities.
- N) Cities teeming with people are put under great strain to supply housing, health care, education, jobs and a certain quality of life for the inhabitants.
- O) The effect of the consequent levels of carbon monoxide in the air is said to, in cities as crowded as Mexico City, be equivalent to smoking twenty cigarettes a day.

Analysis worksheet

1) Write the appropriate sentence letters for each heading.

Introduction sentences: _____

Paragraph one – first problem: _____

Paragraph two – second problem: _____

Paragraph three – first solution: _____

Paragraph four – second solution: _____

- 2) Underline all the words or phrases which are used to express a relationship between **a cause and an effect**.
- 3) Circle the cause and effect expressed in each case in 2).
- 4) Underline all the words or phrases which are used as an alternative to the **topic word** overcrowding.

Homework Sheet

Use a variety of **topic words** and ***cause and effect phrases*** to write a short essay on one of the following titles;

- 1) Describe some of the problems ***caused*** worldwide by **unemployment** and suggest at least one possible solution.

- 2) Describe some of the problems ***caused*** by **pollution** in the world today and suggest at least one possible solution.

- 3) Describe some of the ***causes*** of the **poverty**, which exists in the world **today**, and suggest at least one possible solution.

Model Essay – Answer Key

Describe some of the problems that overcrowding in cities **causes** and suggest at least one possible solution.

The twentieth century saw a major increase in the world's population. Yet large parts of the globe remain uninhabitable, so people are drawn towards living in existing towns and cities. **As a result** our modern day cities face a number of serious problems **which are due to overcrowding**.

Cities teeming with people are put under great strain to supply housing, health care, education, jobs and a certain quality of life for the inhabitants. **The consequence of** too dense a population is that one or all of these areas must suffer. **Owing to** being over peopled Britain's main cities all have a number of people living on the streets. Life must be extremely hard for these people and **one effect of** such a lifestyle **is** that drug abuse and crime rates rise.

Cities are environmentally unfriendly places. This is because light, heat, travel and food must all be supplied artificially as one is removed from nature. Hence, the greater the population, the more natural resources are burnt up and, **consequently**, the more pollution is created. A city crowded with people **leads to** roads crawling with cars. **The effect of** the **consequent** levels of carbon monoxide in the air **is** said to, in cities as crowded as Mexico City, be equivalent to smoking twenty cigarettes a day. Living in a city, **therefore**, forces us to be part of an unhealthy consumer throwaway society, **which creates** illness and environmental crisis, rather than curing it.

It is the Government's responsibility to find solutions for these problems.

As a result a lot of taxpayer's money is spent on trying to keep the effects of overcrowding under control. More housing is built; more roads are planned. This tactic might alleviate some symptomatic problems at high cost. However, it will never solve the problem of overpopulation.

For this reason, we must look to the cause of the problem, which is simply an unchecked epidemic of people. **Thus**, Governments must educate people to limit the size of their family. In China, couples are penalized financially **as a consequence** of having more than one child. This may seem cruel, but the "one-child policy" **is beginning to have an effect** on the world's most populous nation. Similar such policies may also be necessary in other overcrowded nations and **this**, in turn, **would** eventually **result in** solving the problem of overcrowding in cities. (390)

Answer Key

Reorder the following sentences to make a coherent essay on the following subject.

“Describe some of the problems that overcrowding in cities causes and suggest at least one possible solution.”

1. The twentieth century saw a major increase in the world’s population. Yet large parts of the globe remain uninhabitable, so people are drawn towards living in existing towns and cities.
2. As a result our modern day cities face a number of serious problems which are due to overcrowding.
3. Cities teeming with people are put under great strain to supply housing, health care, education, jobs and a certain quality of life for the inhabitants.
4. The consequence of too dense a population is that one or all of these areas must suffer.
5. Owing to being over peopled Britain’s main cities all have a number of people living on the streets. Life must be extremely hard for these people and one effect of such a lifestyle is that drug abuse and crime rates rise.
6. Cities are environmentally unfriendly places.
7. This is because light, heat, travel and food must all be supplied artificially as one is removed from nature.
8. Hence, the greater the population, the more natural resources are burnt up and, consequently, the more pollution is created. A city crowded with people leads to roads crawling with cars.
9. The effect of the consequent levels of carbon monoxide in the air is said to, in cities as crowded as Mexico City, be equivalent to smoking twenty cigarettes a day.
10. Living in a city, therefore, forces us to be part of an unhealthy consumer throwaway society, which creates illness and environmental crisis, rather than curing it.
11. It is the Government’s responsibility to find solutions for these problems.
12. As a result a lot of taxpayer’s money is spent on trying to keep the effects of overcrowding under control. More housing is built; more roads are

- planned. This tactic might alleviate some symptomatic problems at high cost. However, it will never solve the problem of overpopulation.
13. For this reason, we must look to the cause of the problem, which is simply an unchecked epidemic of people.
 14. Thus, Governments must educate people to limit the size of their family. In China, couples are penalized financially as a consequence of having more than one child. This may seem cruel, but the “one-child policy” is beginning to have an effect on the world’s most populous nation.
 15. Similar such policies may also be necessary in other overcrowded nations and this, in turn, would eventually result in solving the problem of overcrowding in cities.
(390)