Chapter 11

Cause and Effect
Determining Reasons and Outcomes

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WHEN TO USE CAUSE AND EFFECT

FOR COLLEGE WRITING ASSIGNMENTS
• Cause-and-effect questions are at the center of
  scientific investigation. They are also common-
place in reading assignments, class discussion,
reports, research papers, and tests. If you want
to study for an examination or just to be prepared
for class discussion, highlight any situation, event,
or trend and list relevant causes and effects. Try
that approach with these general topics: gang
activity, high blood pressure, obesity, divorce rate,
drug addiction, inflation, economic depression,
drought, flood, political change, racism, foreign
policy, earthquake, volcanic eruption, or tax
increase.

IN CAREERS AND AT THE WORKPLACE
• Businesses and other institutions deal constantly
  with reasons and results. For the individual, the
rise and fall of careers are usually tied to causes
and effects. Businesses need to make money.
Institutions need to function well. Helping them do
so requires the use of cause-and-effect analysis
in almost every measurable respect. Cause-and
effect issues are subjects of progress reports,
performance reviews, memos, and proposals.
Accountability, a key word in measuring effective-
ness, is based on causes and effects. Being able
to understand and explain cause and effect will
make you indispensable in any vocational field.
Causes and effects deal with reasons and results; they are sometimes discussed together and sometimes separately. Like other forms of writing to explain, writing about causes and effects is based on natural thought processes. The shortest, and arguably the most provocative, poem in the English language—“I/Why?”—is posed by an anonymous author about cause. Children are preoccupied with delightful and often exasperating “why” questions. Daily we encounter all kinds of causes and effects. The same subject may raise questions of both kinds.

The car won’t start. Why? [cause]
The car won’t start. What now? [effect]

At school, from the biology lab to the political science classroom, and at work, from maintaining relationships to changing procedures, causes and effects are pervasive.

**EXPLORING AND ORGANIZING**

One useful approach to developing a cause-and-effect analysis is *listing*. Write down the event, situation, or trend you are concerned about. Then on the left side, list the causes; on the right side, list the effects. From them you will select the main causes or effects for your paragraph or essay. Here is an example.
Chapter 11 Cause and Effect: Determining Reasons and Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causes</th>
<th>Event, Situation, or Trend</th>
<th>Effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low self-esteem</td>
<td>Joining a gang</td>
<td>Life of crime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td></td>
<td>Drug addiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradition</td>
<td></td>
<td>Surrogate family relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear</td>
<td></td>
<td>Protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surrogate family</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ostracism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection</td>
<td></td>
<td>Restricted vocational opportuni</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Neighborhood status

As you use prewriting techniques to explore your ideas, you need to decide whether your topic should mainly inform or mainly persuade. If you intend to inform, your tone should be coolly objective. If you intend to persuade, your tone should be subjective. In either case, you should take into account the views of your audience as you phrase your ideas. You should also take into account how much your audience understands about your topic and develop your ideas accordingly.

COMPOSING A TOPIC SENTENCE OR A THESIS

Now that you have listed your ideas under causes and effects, you are ready to focus on the causes, on the effects, or, occasionally, on both.

Your controlling idea, the topic sentence or the thesis, might be one of the causes: “It is not just chance; people have reasons for joining gangs.” Later, as you use the idea, you would rephrase it to make it less mechanical, allowing it to become part of the flow of your discussion. If you wanted to personalize the work—thereby probably making it more interesting—you could write about someone you know who joined a gang. You could use the same basic framework, the main causes, to indicate why this particular person joined a gang.

WRITING AN OUTLINE

Your selection of a controlling idea takes you to the next writing phase: completing an outline or outline alternative. There you need to

- consider kinds of causes and effects.
- evaluate the importance of sequence.
- introduce ideas and work with patterns.

In its most basic form, your outline, derived mainly from points in your listing, might look like one of the following:

**Paragraph of causes**

Topic sentence: It is not just chance; people have reasons for joining gangs.

I. Low self-esteem (cause 1)
II. Surrogate family (cause 2)
III. Protection (cause 3)
Essay of effects
Thesis: One is not a gang member without consequences.

I. Restricted vocational opportunities (effect 1)
II. Life of crime (effect 2)
III. Drug addiction (effect 3)
IV. Ostracism from mainstream society (effect 4)

CONSIDERING KINDS OF CAUSES AND EFFECTS

Causes and effects can be primary or secondary, immediate or remote.

Primary or Secondary

Primary means “major,” and secondary means “minor.” A primary cause may be sufficient to bring about the situation (subject). For example, infidelity may be a primary (and possibly sufficient by itself) cause of divorce for some people but not for others, who regard it as secondary. Or, if country X is attacked by country Y, the attack itself, as a primary cause, may be sufficient to bring on a declaration of war. But a diplomatic blunder regarding visas for workers may be of secondary importance, and, though significant, it is certainly not enough to start a war over.

Immediate or Remote

Causes and effects often occur at a distance in time or place from the situation. The immediate effect of sulfur in the atmosphere may be atmospheric pollution, but the long-range, or remote, effect may be acid rain and the loss of species. The immediate cause of the greenhouse effect may be the depletion of the ozone layer, whereas the long-range, or remote, cause is the use of CFCs (chlorofluorocarbons, commonly called Freon, which are found in such items as Styrofoam cups). Even more remote, the ultimate cause may be the people who use the products containing Freon. Your purpose will determine the causes and effects appropriate for your essay.

EVALUATING THE IMPORTANCE OF SEQUENCE

The sequence in which events occur may or may not be significant. When you are dealing with several sequential events, determine whether the sequence of events has causal connections; that is, does one event bring about another?

Consider this sequence of events: Joe’s parents get divorced, and Joe joins a gang. We know that one reason for joining a gang is to gain family companionship. Therefore, we may conclude that Joe joined the gang to satisfy his need for family companionship, which he lost when his parents divorced. But if we do so, we may have reached a wrong conclusion, because Joe’s joining the gang after the family breakup does not necessarily mean that the two events are related. Maybe Joe joined the gang because of drug dependency, low self-esteem, or a need for protection.
In each case, examine the connections. To assume that one event is caused by another just because it follows the other is a logical error called a post hoc ("after this") fallacy. An economic depression may occur after a president takes office, but that does not necessarily mean the depression was caused by the new administration. It might have occurred anyway, perhaps in an even more severe form.

**Order**

The order of the causes and effects you discuss in your paper may be based on time, space, emphasis, or a combination.

- **Time**: If one stage leads to another, as in a discussion of the causes and effects of upper atmospheric pollution, your paper would be organized best by time.
- **Space**: In some instances, causes and effects are best organized by their relation in space. For example, the causes of an economic recession could be discussed in terms of local factors, regional factors, national factors, and international factors.
- **Emphasis**: Some causes and effects may be more important than others. For instance, if some causes of divorce are primary (perhaps infidelity and physical abuse) and others are secondary (such as annoying habits and laziness), a paper about divorce could present the secondary causes first, and then move on to primary causes to emphasize the latter as more important.

In some situations, two or more factors (such as time and emphasis) may be linked; in that case, select the order that best fits what you are trying to say, or combine orders.

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**Transitional Words**

Consider using the following transitional words to improve coherence by connecting ideas with ideas, sentences with sentences, and paragraphs with paragraphs.

**FOR CAUSE AND EFFECT:**

- **Cause**: as, because, because of, due to, for, for the reason that, since, bring about, another cause, for this reason, one cause, a second cause, another cause, a final cause
- **Effect**: accordingly, finally, consequently, hence, so, therefore, thus, as a consequence, as a result, resulting

**FOR ALL PATTERNS OF WRITING**: The HOTSHOT CAT words: However, Otherwise, Therefore, Similarly, Hence, On the other hand, Then, Consequently, Also, Thus

(See pages 427–428 for additional transitional words.)
INTRODUCING IDEAS AND WORKING WITH PATTERNS

In presenting your controlling idea—probably near the beginning for a paragraph or in an introductory paragraph for an essay—you will almost certainly want to perform two functions:

1. Discuss your subject. For example, if you are writing about the causes or effects of divorce, begin with a statement about divorce as a subject.

2. Indicate whether you will concentrate on causes or effects or combine them. That indication should be made clear early in the paper. Concentrating on one—causes or effects—does not mean you will not mention the other; it only means you will emphasize one of them. You can bring attention to your main concern(s)—causes, effects, or a combination—by repeating key words such as cause, reason, effect, result, consequence, and outcome.

The most likely pattern for your work is one of those shown in Figure 11.1. These patterns may look familiar to you. We discussed similar patterns in Chapters 5 and 6.

Figure 11.1
Patterns for Paragraph and Essay

For Paragraph

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject and Topic Sentence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cause or Effect 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause or Effect 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause or Effect 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection on Topic Sentence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For Essay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject and Thesis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topic Sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause or Effect 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic Sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause or Effect 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic Sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause or Effect 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FINDING PATTERNS IN PHOTOS

EXERCISE 1  A Text-Based Activity for Groups or Individuals

As we gaze at the photo on page 228 of a glove and a baseball sharing space with syringes and vials, we may be disappointed at what “our national pastime” has become, but we are probably not shocked. After all, numerous well-known athletes have tested positive for illegal performance-enhancing drugs, while others have been charged with using those drugs at some time in their past career. Learning from the media about the drug-related charges, suspensions, lawsuits, testimonies, and confessions has prompted many of us to become more cynical about the purity of sports, to question sports ethics, and even to reexamine our own values.
Either as individuals or in groups, as directed by your instructor, make two lists—one for causes and the other for effects. First list the causes with the possible motives of players (the users), of the suppliers (personal trainers, pushers, manufacturers), of the teams (management and sponsors), and even of the fans. Then change your focus from causes to effects on the same entities: players, suppliers, teams, and fans.

Possible Assignments (as directed by instructor):

1. Class discussion of individual work
2. Class reports from group discussions
3. Writing assignment of a paragraph or essay emphasizing either causes or effects on sports generally, a specific sport, or a specific player, with reference(s) to the photo

A SPECIFIC USE OF CAUSE AND EFFECT: THE SHORT STORY REVIEW

Short Story Review

A short story is a brief, imaginative narrative, with numerous functional elements (all of which can be analyzed): setting, conflict, characters, plot, theme, and point of view.

The overarching element of the short story is usually the plot. In the simplest terms, the plot begins when a character in a setting experiences (with or without being aware) a conflict. The plot develops as the character deals with the conflict in a single scene or sequence of scenes. All of this narrative is related from a first-person (I) or a third-person (he, she, they) point of view. The entire presentation has a theme, the underlying generalization or fictional point.

Short stories are fiction, meaning they are not a report of what has actually happened, though they may be based squarely on an author’s experience.
Writing the Short Story Review

One theory about why we enjoy fiction—in print and film—is that we can analyze it. The events of our lives may often appear too complicated and close for us to figure out, but with fiction we can see connections more clearly. We can dissect fiction, examine the parts and their relationships, and speculate about what it all means. We can even relate fiction to our own experiences.

Like most writing, the short story review (analysis) is a combination of writing forms, but one form—analysis by division, comparison and contrast, cause and effect, or narration—may provide much of the pattern. For a short review, you will likely emphasize one aspect of the short story—setting, conflict, plot, character(s), theme, point of view—though you may touch on several.

• Develop your ideas by referring directly to the story; by explaining; and by using summaries, paraphrases, and quotations. Avoid the temptation to oversummarize.
• Use present tense in relating events in the story. For example, “Jude is trying to survive,” not “Jude was trying to survive.” Use quotation marks around the words you borrow and provide documentation if directed to do so by your instructor.
• Although a short story review is mainly analytical, it may include your speculation and call forth references to your personal experience.


Practicing Patterns of Cause and Effect

A detailed outline and your subsequent writing may include a combination of causes and effects, but almost always either causes or effects will be emphasized and will provide the main structure of your paper. Whether you are writing a basic outline for an assignment outside of class without a significant time constraint or you are writing in class under the pressure of time, you will always have a chance to jot down prewriting lists and a simple outline.

EXERCISE 2 Completing Patterns of Cause and Effect

Complete the following cluster on teenage parenthood. Then select three primary causes or three primary effects that could be used in writing a paragraph or an essay on this topic.

Answers will vary.

Causes

Effects
## EXERCISE 3  Completing Patterns of Cause and Effect

Complete the following cluster on a bad diet. Then select three primary causes or three primary effects that could be used in writing a paragraph or an essay on this topic.

*Answers will vary.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causes</th>
<th>Effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bad Diet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary causes</th>
<th>Primary effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>3.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## EXERCISE 4  Completing a Pattern of Cause

Fill in the blanks to complete this outline of cause.

*Answers will vary.*

Causes for dropping out of high school

I. Family tradition
II. Boredom
III. Drug problems
IV. Psychological problems

## EXERCISE 5  Completing a Pattern of Effect

Fill in the blanks to complete this outline of effect.

*Answers will vary.*

Effects of becoming a parent

I. Pride
II. 
III. 
IV. 

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Readings for Critical Thinking, Discussion, and Writing

READING STRATEGIES AND OBJECTIVES

Underlining and annotating these reading selections will help you answer the questions that follow the selections, discuss the material in class, and prepare for reading-based writing assignments. As you underline and annotate, pay special attention to the author’s writing skills, logic, and message, and consider the relevance of the material to your own experiences and values.

Some selections begin with a Mindset suggestion that can help you create a readiness for connecting with what you are about to read.

PARAGRAPHS

Why Marriages Fail

ANNE ROIPHE

As novelist and journalist, Anne Roiphe has been especially concerned with the topic of contemporary relationships. In this essay, first published in Family Weekly, she concentrates on two phenomena all too frequently linked: marriage and divorce.

When we look at how we choose our partners and what expectations exist at the tender beginnings of romance, some of the reasons for disaster become quite clear. We all select with unconscious accuracy a mate who will re-create with us the emotional patterns of our first homes. Dr. Carl A. Whitaker, a marital therapist and emeritus professor of psychiatry at the University of Wisconsin, explains, “From early childhood on, each of us carried models for marriage, femininity, masculinity, motherhood, fatherhood, and all the other family roles.” Each of us falls in love with a mate who has qualities of our parents, who will help us rediscover both the psychological happiness and miseries of our past lives. We may think we have found a man unlike Dad, but then he turns to drink or drugs, or loses his job over and over again or sits silently in front of the TV just the way Dad did. A man may choose a woman who doesn’t like kids just like his mother or who gambles away the family savings just like his mother. Or he may choose a slender wife who seems unlike his obese mother but then turns out to have other addictions that destroy their mutual happiness.

EXERCISE 6 Discussion and Critical Thinking

1. The author says that in our romances we experience unconscious attempts to re-create our childhood emotional patterns and, therefore, select mates similar to our parents. Does she argue that this practice is the only cause of failed marriages?
   No. She says only “some of the reasons for disaster” can be traced to those attempts.

2. Roiphe’s examples of how one may duplicate the conditions found in one’s childhood home tend toward family problems. Does she allow for more positive influences from the family of one’s childhood?
   Yes. She says that we fall in love with those who have the qualities of our parents and that the result may lead to our rediscovering “both the psychological happiness and miseries of our past lives.”
3. Elsewhere in the essay from which this paragraph is taken, Roiphe says we can overcome the stress produced by the bad family patterns we have re-created, but we also have to deal with real-life problems such as “failure at work, disappointments, exhaustion, bad smells, bad colds, and hard times.” Which do you think are more significant causes of marriage failure—the unconscious psychological patterns we have chosen or the real-life problems? Why? Answers will vary.

Family Heroes and Role Models

MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN

We are not born with values. We do not survive and prosper by ourselves. Any person who has succeeded should be able to look back and recognize those who provided a heritage through example and instruction. Marian Wright Edelman pays homage to her family and community for what her generation of black children received. This paragraph comes from her book The Measure of Our Success: A Letter to My Children and Yours (1992).

The legacies that parents and church and teachers left to my generation of Black children were priceless but not material: a living faith reflected in daily service, the discipline of hard work and stick-to-it-ness, and a capacity to struggle in the face of adversity. Giving up and “burnout” were not part of the language of my elders—you got up every morning and you did what you had to do and you got up every time you fell down and tried as many times as you had to to get it done right. They had grit. They valued family life, family rituals, and tried to be and to expose us to good role models. Role models were of two kinds: those who achieved in the outside world (like Marian Anderson, my namesake) and those who didn’t have a whole lot of education or fancy clothes but who taught us by the special grace of their lives the message of Christ and Tolstoy and Gandhi and Heschel and Dorothy Day and Romero and King that the Kingdom of God was within—in what you are, not what you have. I still hope I can be half as good as Black church and community elders like Miz Lucy McQueen, Miz Tee Kelly, and Miz Kate Winston, extraordinary women who were kind and patient and loving with children and others and who, when I went to Spelman College, sent me shoeboxes with chicken and biscuits and greasy dollar bills.

EXERCISE 7 Discussion and Critical Thinking

1. What is the subject at the center of this discussion?
   The people who influenced the author’s generation of black children.

2. Which sentence most clearly indicates why black children of Edelman’s generation developed a good set of values?
   The first sentence, although some students may prefer the second, third, or fourth one.

3. What were the three main legacies, or causes, of the value system of Edelman’s generation?
   “A living faith reflected in daily service, the discipline of hard work and stick-to-it-ness, and a capacity to struggle in the face of adversity.”

4. What kinds of role models were causal factors?
   Those who achieved in the outside world and those who lived ordinary but inspiring lives.
5. Give two examples of role models (one of each kind) offered by Edelman. Marian Anderson (who achieved) and Miz Lucy McQueen (one of the ordinary women who inspired her).

**SHORT STORY**

The Girls in Their Summer Dresses

IRWIN SHAW

*Is Irwin Shaw writing only about two individuals in this short story, or do the characters represent a general, and long-standing, division between the sexes?*

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**MINDSET**

Imagine you are a woman. And imagine you can read minds. Your husband is staring at you across the room. You read his mind: “She looks great. She’s absolutely stunning. Oops! She’s my wife.” Overall, would you be happy?

---

1. Fifth Avenue was shining in the sun when they left the Brevoort. The sun was warm, even though it was February, and everything looked like Sunday morning—the buses and the well-dressed people walking slowly in couples and the quiet buildings with the windows closed.

2. Michael held Frances’ arm tightly as they walked toward Washington Square in the sunlight. They walked lightly, almost smiling, because they had slept late and had a good breakfast and it was Sunday. Michael unbuttoned his coat and let it flap around him in the mild wind.

3. “Look out,” Frances said as they crossed Eighth Street. “You’ll break your neck.”


5. “She’s not so pretty,” Frances said. “Anyway, not pretty enough to take a chance of breaking your neck.”

6. Michael laughed again. “How did you know I was looking at her?”

7. Frances cocked her head to one side and smiled at her husband under the brim of her hat. “Mike, darling,” she said.


9. Frances patted his arm lightly and pulled him along a little faster toward Washington Square. “Let’s not see anybody all day,” she said. “Let’s just hang around with each other. You and me. We’re always up to our neck in people, drinking their Scotch or drinking our Scotch; we only see each other in bed. I want to go out with my husband all day long. I want him to talk only to me and listen only to me.”

10. “What’s to stop us?” Michael asked.

11. “The Stevensons. They want us to drop by around one o’clock and they’ll drive us into the country.”

12. “The cunning Stevensons,” Mike said. “Transparent. They can whistle. They can go driving in the country by themselves.”

13. “Is it a date?”

14. “It’s a date.”

15. Frances leaned over and kissed him on the tip of the ear.

16. “Darling,” Michael said, “this is Fifth Avenue.”

17. “Let me arrange a program,” Frances said. “A planned Sunday in New York for a young couple with money to throw away.”

18. “Go easy.”
“First let’s go to the Metropolitan Museum of Art,” Frances suggested, because Michael had said during the week he wanted to go. “I haven’t been there in three years and there’re at least ten pictures I want to see again. Then we can take the bus down to Radio City and watch them skate. And later we’ll go down to Cavanaugh’s and get a steak as big as a blacksmith’s apron, with a bottle of wine, and after that there’s a French picture at the Filmarte that everybody says—say, are you listening to me?”

“Sure,” he said. He took his eyes off the hatless girl with the dark hair, cut dancer-style like a helmet, who was walking past him.

“That’s the program for the day,” Frances said flatly. “Or maybe you’d just rather walk up and down Fifth Avenue.”

“No,” Michael said. “Not at all.”

“You always look at other women,” Frances said. “Everywhere. Every damned place we go.”

“No, darling,” Michael said, “I look at everything. God gave me eyes and I look at women and men and subway excavations and moving pictures and the little flowers of the field. I casually inspect the universe.”

“You ought to see the look in your eye,” Frances said, “as you casually inspect the universe on Fifth Avenue.”

“I’m a happily married man.” Michael pressed her elbow tenderly. “Example for the whole twentieth century—Mr. and Mrs. Mike Loomis. Hey, let’s have a drink,” he said, stopping.

“We just had breakfast.”

“Now listen, darling,” Mike said, choosing his words with care, “it’s a nice day and we both felt good and there’s no reason why we have to break it up. Let’s have a nice Sunday.”

“All right. I don’t know why I started this. Let’s drop it. Let’s have a good time.”

They joined hands consciously and walked without talking among the baby carriages and the old Italian men in their Sunday clothes and the young women with Scotties in Washington Square Park.

“At least once a year everyone should go to the Metropolitan Museum of Art,” Frances said after a while, her tone a good imitation of the tone she had used at breakfast and at the beginning of their walk. “And it’s nice on Sunday. There’re a lot of people looking at the pictures and you get the feeling maybe Art isn’t on the decline in New York City, after all—”

“I want to tell you something,” Michael said very seriously. “I have not touched another woman. Not once. In all the five years.”

“All right,” Frances said.

“You believe that, don’t you?”

“All right.”

They walked between the crowded benches, under the scrubby city-park trees.

“I try not to notice it,” Frances said, “but I feel rotten inside, in my stomach, when we pass a woman and you look at her and I see that look in your eye and that’s the way you looked at me the first time. In Alice Maxwell’s house. Standing there in the living room, next to the radio, with a green hat on and all those people.”

“I remember the hat,” Michael said.

“The same look,” Frances said. “And it makes me feel bad. It makes me feel terrible.”

“Sh-h-h, please, darling, sh-h-h.”

“I think I would like a drink now,” Frances said.

They walked over to a bar on Eighth Street, not saying anything, Michael automatically helping her over curbstones and guiding her past automobiles. They sat near a window in the bar and the sun streamed in and there was a
small, cheerful fire in the fireplace. A little Japanese waiter came over and put
down some pretzels and smiled happily at them.
43  “What do you order after breakfast?” Michael asked.
44  “Brandy, I suppose,” Frances said.
45  “Courvoisier,” Michael told the waiter. “Two Courvoisiers.”
46  The waiter came with the glasses and they sat drinking the brandy in the
sunlight. Michael finished half his and drank a little water.
47  “I look at women,” he said. “Correct. I don’t say it’s wrong or right. I look at
them. If I pass them on the street and I don’t look at them, I’m fooling you, I’m
fooling myself.”
48  “You look at them as though you want them,” Frances said, playing with her
brandy glass. “Every one of them.”
49  “In a way,” Michael said, speaking softly and not to his wife, “in a way that’s
ture. I don’t do anything about it, but it’s true.”
50  “I know it. That’s why I feel bad.”
51  “Another brandy,” Michael called. “Waiter, two more brandies.”
52  He sighed and closed his eyes and rubbed them gently with his finger tips. “I
love the way women look. One of the things I like best about New York is the
battalions of women. When I first came to New York from Ohio that was the first
thing I noticed, the million wonderful women, all over the city. I walked around
with my heart in my throat.”
53  “A kid,” Frances said. “That’s a kid’s feeling.”
54  “Guess again,” Michael said. “Guess again. I’m older now. I’m a man getting
near middle age, putting on a little fat and I still love to walk along Fifth Avenue
at three o’clock on the east side of the street between Fiftieth and Fifty-seventh
Streets. They’re all out then, shopping, in their furs and their crazy hats, everything
all concentrated from all over the world into seven blocks—the best furs, the best
clothes, the handsomest women, out to spend money and feeling good about it.”
55  The Japanese waiter put the two drinks down, smiling with great happiness.
56  “Everything is all right?” he asked.
57  “Everything is wonderful,” Michael said.
58  “If it’s just a couple of fur coats,” Frances said, “and forty-five-dollar hats—”
59  “It’s not the fur coats. Or the hats. That’s just the scenery for that particular
kind of woman. Understand,” he said, “you don’t have to listen to this.”
60  “I want to listen.”
61  “I like the girls in the offices. Neat, with their eyeglasses, smart, chipper,
knowing what everything is about. I like the girls on Forty-fourth Street at
lunchtime, the actresses, all dressed up on nothing a week. I like the salesgirls
in the stores, paying attention to you first because you’re a man, leaving lady
customers waiting. I got all this stuff accumulated in me because I’ve been
thinking about it for ten years and now you’ve asked for it and here it is.”
62  “Go ahead,” Frances said.
63  “When I think of New York City, I think of all the girls on parade in the city. I
don’t know whether it’s something special with me or whether every man in the
city walks around with the same feeling inside him, but I feel as though I’m at a
picnic in this city. I like to sit near the women in the theatres, the famous beau-
ties who’ve taken six hours to get ready and look it. And the young girls at the
football games, with the red cheeks, and when the warm weather comes, the
girls in their summer dresses.” He finished his drink. “That’s the story.”
64  Frances finished her drink and swallowed two or three times extra. “You say
you love me?”
65  “I love you.”
66  “I’m pretty, too,” Frances said. “As pretty as any of them.”
67  “You’re beautiful,” Michael said.
“I’m good for you,” Frances said, pleading. “I’ve made a good wife, a good housekeeper, a good friend. I’d do any damn thing for you.”

“I know,” Michael said. He put his hand out and grasped hers. “You’d like to be free to—” Frances said.

“Sh-h-h.”

“Tell the truth.” She took her hand away from under his.

Michael flicked the edge of his glass with his finger. “O.K.,” he said gently. “Sometimes I feel I would like to be free.”

“Well,” Frances said, “any time you say.”

“Don’t be foolish.” Michael swung his chair around to her side of the table and patted her thigh.

She began to cry silently into her handkerchief, bent over just enough so nobody else in the bar would notice. “Someday,” she said, crying, “you’re going to make a move.”

Michael didn’t say anything. He sat watching the bartender slowly peel a lemon.

“ Aren’t you?” Frances asked harshly. “Come on, tell me. Talk. Aren’t you?”

“Maybe,” Michael said. He moved his chair back again. “How the hell do I know?”

“You know,” Frances persisted. “Don’t you know?”

“Yes,” Michael said. Frances stopped crying then. Two or three snuffles into the handkerchief and she put it away and her face didn’t tell anything to anybody. “At least do me a favor,” she said.

“Sure,”

“Stop talking about how pretty this woman is or that one. Nice eyes, nice breasts, a pretty figure, good voice.” She mimicked his voice. “Keep it to your- self. I’m not interested.”

Michael waved to the waiter. “I’ll keep it to myself,” he said.

Frances flicked the corners of her eyes. “Another brandy,” she told the waiter.

“Two,” Michael said.

“Yes, Ma’am; yes, Sir,” said the waiter, backing away.

Frances regarded Michael coolly across the table. “Do you want me to call the Stevensons?” she asked. “It’ll be nice in the country.”

“Sure,” Michael said. “Call them.”

She got up from the table and walked across the room toward the telephone. Michael watched her walk, thinking what a pretty girl, what nice legs.

EXERCISE 8 Discussion and Critical Thinking

1. **Point out the significance of the setting, either stated or implied.**
   
   It is a mild February Sunday in New York on Fifth Avenue, a time anticipating spring and a new beginning for nature. Sunday is a free day for most workers, and the location is a good place for seeing well-dressed people.

2. **Indicate the main conflict (and any secondary conflict).**
   
   Conflict 1: Between Michael and Frances regarding Michael’s penchant for staring at women.
   Conflict 2: Between Michael and Frances regarding their view of what constitutes love.

3. **Name the central character(s) and his or her (their) traits.**
   
   Michael: agreeable, restless (at least the eye), with a multidirectional libido. Frances: cheerful, warm, with a strong impulse for some closeness with her spouse.

4. **State the point of view (first or third person).**
   
   Third person (omniscient).
5. How does the behavior of both characters change after Michael starts looking at other women?
   They talk differently: “said flatly” (paragraph 21). They act differently: “joined hands consciously” (paragraph 30). They decide to have an early morning drink: “I think I would like a drink now” (paragraph 41).

6. Would you say one is more at fault in this argument? Explain.
   Arguable. Some will see Frances as possessive; some will see Michael as insensitive; some will rule “no fault” because of the characters’ natural gender differences.

7. What is the significance of Michael’s last observation of Frances?
   Frances is often a sex object to Michael. His looking at her in that way reminds us of paragraph 39, when Frances tells him how she felt about his lust for her: “The same look. And it makes me feel bad. It makes me feel terrible.”

8. What do you think will happen to their marriage? Why?
   Answers will vary.

9. What would be your advice to the couple?
   Answers will vary.

10. Briefly discuss the theme (what the story means, what it says about an individual specifically or human nature generally).
    We have two people who regard their relationship in different ways. She wants intimacy and is essentially monogamous. He loves her in his fashion, with one eye for her and the other (perhaps his better one) for the passing parade of females; he is essentially polygamous. Some readers may see this story as a study of two people or two genders. One wants to be monogamous; the other wants to be polygamous.

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**VIEWS ON VIOLENCE**

Depending on the perspective of an individual, violence may be regarded in quite different ways. Here, in three essays, we have three different views.

- “The Ghetto Made Me Do It” makes a case for significantly taking into account the traumatic, violent childhood of those who go on to commit violent crimes.
- “Enough Is Enough” stresses the need for a perpetrator of violent crimes to accept personal responsibility without casting primary blame on society generally or family specifically. She says that most youngsters growing up in a difficult environment struggle to do what is right and do not play the “victim game.”
- “From ‘Kick Me’ to ‘Kiss Me’” is written by an inmate who was raised in an environment of violence, learned to be violent, and is now learning about herself.

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**The Ghetto Made Me Do It**

FRANCIS FLAHERTY

*This essay by freelance author Francis Flaherty was first published in In These Times, a magazine from Chicago.*

**MINDSET**

The title states Felicia Morgan’s plea to a murder charge. Can you imagine you would let her go free? Or, would you lock her up?
When Felicia “Lisa” Morgan was growing up, her parents would sit down to meals with guns next to their plates. They were defending themselves—against each other.

“This was Lisa’s dinner,” explains attorney Robin Shellow. “She was seven at the time.”

If nothing else, Lisa Morgan’s childhood in a poor, inner-city Milwaukee neighborhood starkly illustrates the tragic effects of omnipresent urban violence. “Mom shot dad,” Shellow says. “And Mom shot boyfriend. . . . [Lisa’s] uncle, who was actually her age, was murdered. Two days later, her other uncle was murdered. Her sister’s boyfriend was paralyzed from the neck down by gunfire. Her brother was shot at and injured. Her mother once had set her father on fire.”

If this weren’t enough tragedy in one young life, Lisa Morgan’s mother was a drug addict and Lisa was raped at age 12.

The “Ghetto Defense”

So perhaps it’s not too surprising that Morgan, as a teenager, committed six armed robberies and one intentional homicide in the space of 17 minutes in October 1991. The victims were girls; the stolen objects were jewelry, shoes, and a coat. The dead girl was shot at point-blank range.

What is surprising—to the legal establishment, at least—is the approach Robin Shellow used in defending Morgan. In the girl’s neighborhood and in her family, Shellow argued, violence is a norm, an occurrence so routine that Morgan’s 17 years of exposure to it have rendered her not responsible for her actions.

This “ghetto defense” proved fruitless in Morgan’s case. In court, the young woman was found both sane and guilty. Unless Shellow wins on appeal, Morgan will be behind bars well into [this] century.

But despite its failure for Morgan, Shellow’s “cultural psychosis” or “psychosocial history” strategy has taken hold. “I’ve gotten hundreds of calls from interested attorneys,” Shellow says. Already, the defense is being floated in courtrooms around the nation. It’s eliciting both enthusiasm and outrage.

The Defense Is a Medical One

Technically, Shellow’s defense is a medical one. She believes that Morgan suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other psychological ailments stemming from her lifelong exposure to violence.

Like other good lawyers, Shellow knows that the law abhors broadly applicable excuses, so she emphasizes the narrowness of her claim. Morgan belongs to a very small group of inner-city residents with “tremendous intra-familial violence,” only some of whom might experience PTSD. She also stresses the unrevolutionary nature of the defense, medically and legally. PTSD has been recognized as a malady in standard diagnostic texts since 1980, she says, and it has been employed as a criminal defense for Vietnam veterans, battered wives, and many other trauma victims.

Despite Shellow’s attempts to show that her defense is neither new nor broad, the case is ringing loud alarms. For, however viewed, her strategy sets up an inflammatory equation between inner-city conditions and criminal exculpation. The implication is that if you grew up in a poor, violent neighborhood and you commit a crime, you may go scot-free.

Yet why not a ghetto defense? After all, if a Vietnam veteran can claim PTSD from the shock of war, why shouldn’t a similar defense be available for a young black reared in the embattled precincts of Bed-Stuy [Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood of New York City]? Sounds sensible, no? Isn’t a ghetto like a battlefield?
Compare These Neighborhoods to War Zones

13 Alex Kotlowitz, who chronicled the lives of two Chicago black boys in *There Are No Children Here*, goes even further. He says the inner city can be worse than war. “You hear constant comparisons of these neighborhoods to war zones, but I think there are some pretty significant differences,” he says. “In war, there’s at least a sense that someday there will be a resolution, some vision that things could be different. That is not the case in the inner cities. There is no vision. And there’s no sense of who’s friend and who’s foe.”

14 There are other analogies that make the ghetto defense seem very legitimate. For instance, despite traditional self-defense principles, a battered wife in some jurisdictions can kill her sleeping husband and be legally excused for the homicide. The reason is the psychological harm she has sustained from her life of fear and violence.

15 Why not Lisa Morgan? Hasn’t her life been debilitatingly violent and fearful?

16 These arguments make some lawyers hopeful about the future of Shellow’s pioneering strategy. But most observers are pessimistic. “We’ll get nowhere with it,” says famous defense lawyer William Kunstler.

The Poor Instead of the Powerful

17 Why? One reason is that the American justice system often favors the powerful over the poor. For generations, for instance, the bloodiest crime in the nation—drunk driving—was punished with a relative wrist slap. By contrast, a recent federal law mandates that those convicted of the new crime of carjacking get socked with a minimum and mandatory 15-year sentence.

18 What explains these disparate approaches? Simple: protection of the affluent classes. Light penalties for drunk driving protect the affluent because they often drive drunk. Harsh carjacking penalties protect the affluent because they are the usual carjacking victims. “The middle class sees carjacking [laws] as protecting them from people coming out of some poor neighborhood and just showing up in their neighborhood and committing a crime in which they are at risk of dying,” says Professor James Liebman of Columbia University School of Law.

19 Because the ghetto defense protects the poor instead of the powerful, Kunstler and others doubt it has a bright future. Other factors further dim the strategy’s chances. Fear is a main one, says Professor Liebman. The ghetto defense brings a gulp from jurors because “their first thought is, ‘If he’s not responsible, then none of those people are,’” he reasons. And we all know what that means: riots, mayhem, Los Angeles.

20 Social guilt raises even higher the hurdles for the ghetto defense. To allow such a defense is a tacit admission that we—society—tolerate a situation so hobbiling that its victims have become unaccountable for their actions. “If it ain’t them who’s guilty, it’s us,” says Michael Dowd, director of the Pace University Battered Women’s Justice Center in New York. And “it’s just too horrific for us to accept responsibility, too horrific to say, ‘I’m responsible for what happened in L.A.’ We will be able to accept the [ghetto] defense at the same moment that we are seriously moved to eradicate the realities behind that defense.”

21 What are the biggest criticisms of the ghetto defense? One focuses on the victim’s identity. Battered spouses and battered children are accused of killing precisely those who hurt them. This endows the crime with a certain rough justice. But in a ghetto defense case, the victim is usually an innocent stranger.

22 Others, like Kotlowitz, worry that the ghetto defense might dislodge the cornerstone of our justice system: personal responsibility. “We have to be careful not to view people growing up in neighborhoods completely as victims; they are both victims and actors,” he warns. “We can’t absolve them from responsibility.”
Lisa Morgan “went up to someone she didn’t know, stole a jacket from her, and then just blew her away,” he says. “There’s no way as a society that we can excuse that. We can understand it, but we can’t excuse it.”

He raises a fundamental question. Everyone can point to scars from the past—alcoholic parents, tragic love, etc.—and claim exculpation. And if all are excused, who is responsible?

Another worry is diminished standards. “[The ghetto defense] lowers expectations,” Kotlowitz continues. “It says, ‘OK, I understand what you’ve been through, so it’s OK to go out and hurt somebody.’ And once you lower your expectations, particularly with kids, they will meet only those lower expectations.”

**A Disease Is a Disease**

It’s only fair to note that other criminal defenses also have these weaknesses. For instance, the victim of a PTSD-afflicted veteran is often an innocent passerby, and the battered-spouse doctrine certainly raises questions about personal responsibility and lowered expectations.

And if, as seems likely, some ghetto residents do have PTSD largely as a result of their living conditions, it’s hard to see why this ailment should be exculpatory for veterans, say, but not for ghetto residents. After all, a disease is a disease, and how you got it is irrelevant.

How deep go the wounds from the ghetto? Here are two incidents in Morgan’s life: “When Felicia was about 11, her mother put a knife to her throat and threatened to kill her,” according to a psychologist’s report in the case. “Felicia escaped by running into the basement, where she ‘busted the lights out with my hand’ so that her mother could not see her.” Then, when she was 12, the landlord attacked her. “Felicia fought him off by throwing hot grease onto him, but he finally subdued her, tied her hands to the bed, stuffed her mouth with a sock and raped her.”

How does one live like this? Morgan gives a hint. “My ears be open,” she told the psychologist, “even when I’m asleep.”

This was a child. Society did nothing to stop these daily depredations upon her. While the legal propriety of the ghetto defense is an important question, the biggest question of all in this story has nothing to do with personal responsibility. It has to do with society’s responsibility to poor children like Morgan. What does it say about our society that such a defense was conceived? How can things have come to this pass?

**EXERCISE 9 Vocabulary Highlights**

Write a short definition of each word as it is used in the essay. (Paragraph numbers are given in parentheses.) Be prepared to use these words in sentences.

- omnipresent (3)
- rendered (6)
- eliciting (8)
- abhors (10)
- malady (10)
- exculpation (11)
- sustained (14)
- debilitatingly (15)
- tacit (20)
- eradicate (20)
EXERCISE 10  Discussion and Critical Thinking

1. What writing pattern does Flaherty use in the first four paragraphs that serve as an introduction to her essay?
   Narrative.

2. Which sentence in which paragraph contains the definition of “ghetto defense”?
   Paragraph 6, sentence 2.

3. What is post-traumatic stress disorder?
   Usually linked to violent incidents such as combat, terrorism, and rape, PTSD is characterized by debilitating flashbacks, irrational behavior, anxiety, headaches, and depression.

4. Does Attorney Shellow argue that all poor people living in the ghetto be granted excuses for any crimes they commit? If not, what is she arguing?
   No. She limits Morgan and other special individuals: “Morgan belongs to a very small group of inner-city residents with ‘tremendous intra-familial violence’” (paragraph 10).

5. How is Morgan’s case arguably similar to and different from those of battered spouses?
   Morgan and battered women who have committed homicide have argued that they were desensitized and traumatized by violence. The difference is that the battered women killed the perpetrators of the violence, whereas Morgan killed a stranger.

6. How is Morgan’s case arguably similar to those of certain Vietnam veterans with PTSD who committed homicide?
   They both experienced traumatizing violent acts and they both killed strangers.

7. According to Alex Kotlowitz, how can the inner-city environment be worse than that of a war zone?
   In a war zone, people know that someday there will be a resolution, that the war will end. They also know the good people from the bad people, the friends from the enemies. Those distinctions do not exist in some inner-city areas.

8. According to the ghetto defense, where does responsibility lie, with the person or with society?
   With society.

9. What is your opinion of the ghetto defense?
   Answers will vary.

10. If the ghetto defense has validity, should the concept be extended to anyone who has had extremely violent experiences—“Everyone can point to scars from the past—alcoholic parents, tragic love, etc.” (paragraph 24)?
    Answers will vary.

11. Imagine you were a juror judging Morgan’s case. How would you have voted and why?
    Answers will vary.
As a family court judge, I looked down daily on a pageant of dysfunction that would curl your hair. After twenty-four years on the bench, I came to realize that these are not legal problems. They mirror what is wrong with our society, reflecting just how far we have strayed from personal responsibility and old-fashioned discipline.

Most of the kids I prosecuted during my early years in court were involved in petty thefts, but as the 70s passed into the 80s, both the incidence and the ferocity of juvenile crime accelerated. A new breed of delinquents was born, and the system did not have a clue how to treat them. We still don’t.

To show you the price we pay, let me share some of my experiences in family court. The first case is heard at 9:30 a.m. A boy I’ll call Elmo, 15, has been charged for a second time with selling crack cocaine. His lawyer argues that Elmo’s troubles started when his grandmother died. In his grief, he had no choice but to deal the hard stuff. “Get a better story,” I fire back, startling the boy, who is looking smug. “Nobody goes out and sells drugs because Grandma died.”

Next is a youth I’ll call Tito, a delinquent who confesses to mugging an 80-year-old man in broad daylight. Tito’s older brother has just been sent to prison for murder. Tito was very close to his brother, the boy’s lawyer insists, and his crime was a result of post-traumatic stress. “You’ll have to do better than that,” I snap.

Then comes a woman who is addicted to crack. She’s already given birth to two crack-addicted babies, and she didn’t report to her drug-rehab program as promised. Her excuse: She lost the address. “What do you want, a road map?” I exclaim.

Welcome to my world.

I believe that you deal with these problems the way you would deal with any crisis in a family: by setting strict limits and by showing compassion. As the mother of five children, I know that you have to get tough at the same time that you show love. Family court should be no different. I think we should send a tough message to first-time offenders every chance we get, in the hopes that perhaps there will not be a second offense.

The primary obligation of any civilized society is to preserve the peace and protect its citizens. Only after that should you worry about the lawbreakers and their rehabilitation. This might be our last chance to do something about the future of these delinquents—and our own safety. Here are my suggestions for improving our juvenile system.

Spend Public Money on Good Kids

The vast majority of the children who suffer from poverty, neglect, and even abuse do not commit crimes. They struggle in their chaotic environments, with little or no support. But for years our concerns have been with those who break the law.
A recent set of photographs in my local newspaper illustrated this inversion of priorities. In one picture was a state-of-the-art gymnasium, with Nautilus equipment and gleaming free weights—part of the recreational complex at a state detention facility. The other photo was of an overcrowded, deteriorating inner-city junior high school with peeling paint and broken windows. What kind of insanity is this? We should offer offenders food, clothing, and a bed, plus vocational and academic training. Period. The money we save by not dressing up our detention facilities should be spent on the good kids who struggle just to get by.

No Rules of Confidentiality for Juvenile Offenders

It is impossible for judges to sentence intelligently if they do not know the offender’s criminal history. If a youngster turns his or her life around, those records can be sealed or expunged at age 25. If he does not, that record should follow him to the grave.

Make Them Earn Early Release

Convicted juveniles, like adult offenders, often gain early and undeserved release from jail. In my opinion, early release should be earned. Juveniles should qualify only if they complete an academic or vocational course of study. The rest should stay behind bars their full term.

Enact a National Curfew

Most lawbreaking by youngsters takes place at a time when these kids should be at home. I recommend a national curfew for kids under 18. If parents cannot or will not set limits, then society must do it for them, for their protection and its own.

Make the Parents Pay

Too many people treat the juvenile system as a joke. That would change overnight if we required parents to pay for their children’s defense attorneys according to their means, even if it is a percentage of their welfare benefits. Furthermore, in too many states, welfare keeps flowing while the kids are in jail, or middle-class parents continue to claim children as tax deductions even as the state pays for their upkeep in detention facilities. We must demand that parents reimburse the state for housing their failures.

No Public Assistance for Parents of Dropouts

Kids need an education to have hope for the future. It makes sense to insist that children stay in school or go off welfare. Our message should be clear to everyone: If you want to eat, you have to work. If you stay in school, we’ll support you. Otherwise, support yourself. No exceptions. Does it sound like I’m cracking down on the poor? Far from it. If a middle-class kid drops out of school, the $2,750 tax break that his parents claim for him should be eliminated. Without proof that a child is attending school, parents should lose the exemption.

If I had to boil my message down to one sentence, it would be that people create their own opportunities. As a woman, a mother, and a judge who has seen our criminal system deteriorate for nearly a quarter of a century, I have had it with the victim game. A delinquent is responsible for his crime. Parents are responsible for their children.
Chapter 11 Cause and Effect: Determining Reasons and Outcomes

18  The prescription so far has been to give them more social programs, and that remedy has failed. Self-discipline, individual accountability, and responsible conduct are the answer. They have always been the answer, but America got lost. It is time to get back on course.

EXERCISE 11 Discussion and Critical Thinking

1. According to Judge Judy, what is wrong with our society?
   Loss of personal responsibility and old-fashioned discipline.

2. How does she use the case of Elmo in her argument?
   His case shows how members of society have strayed from personal responsibility and old-fashioned discipline. His excuse is his problem of dealing with grief over the loss of his grandmother.

3. What is her reaction to the lawyer’s plea that Tito’s crime was caused by his post-traumatic stress?
   She doesn’t accept that as a defense for a delinquent who mugged an “eighty-year-old man in broad daylight” (paragraph 4).

4. How does she feel about showing compassion to first-time offenders?
   She says a tough response may teach first-time offenders to avoid a second offense.

5. What is Judge Judy’s economic message to parents of delinquents?
   No school should mean no tax break and no welfare.

6. Do you agree with her judicial tough-love approach? Why or why not?
   Answers will vary.

7. Do you agree with her view that “self-discipline, individual accountability, and responsible conduct are the answer” (paragraph 18)? Explain.
   Answers will vary.

STUDENT ESSAY

From “Kick Me” to “Kiss Me”
SHANDRA BRYSON (PSEUDONYM)

Victims of abuse do not always feel sorry for themselves. They also do not always protect others who are being abused. These are shocking conclusions reached by Shandra Bryson, a victim who now looks at herself thoughtfully.

1  I can identify with people who were physically abused as children. I am one of them, and I’ve got all kinds of scars. In prison, I am surrounded by people with a background similar to mine. Like me, they are trying to leave a whole pattern of thinking and behavior behind. Here in prison, a woman I know filed a grievance against a guard who, she said, had struck her numerous times. When the Watch Commander read the statement, he said, “You didn’t fill in this part that says, ‘Action Requested’?” Her answer was immediate. “I want people to stop beating me unless I deserve it.” A former victim of child abuse, she was taking an important step. The final
one would occur when she stopped believing that she should be beaten for any reason. Some people might think that understanding is simple, but it isn’t. First, one has to understand what happens to a person who gets beaten on every day. When I was a little kid, my father used to abuse me—in ways I don’t want to describe just yet. Abuse was a normal part of my life. He especially liked to throw things such as ashtrays, books, the TV remote control, and beer cans (usually with beer in them). Then if he missed, he’d get even madder and chase me down and pound me with his fists. Naturally, I figured out it would be better to be hit with a flying object than to be pounded, so I learned to move toward whatever he threw. He never seemed to catch on. I’d lunge toward something like an ashtray, and it’d hit me—fleshy parts like my seat were the best targets—and then I’d cry, and he’d stop. Sometimes he’d say how sorry he was and how I got him all upset. It always was my fault.

Of course, I believed it was my fault. Whenever he hit me, however he did it. I knew I deserved it, if not for the immediate mischief, for something else—I was wicked, I always felt more guilt than anger. My life was full of guilt-producing incidents. I received bad grades in school. I embarrassed him in front of his friends. I got in his way around the house. The food I cooked was never as good as that cooked by my mother, who’d disappeared four years after I was born—which was another source of guilt because she probably didn’t like me. There were plenty of reasons for me to feel guilty, and I didn’t neglect any of them.

But I wasn’t the only one around the house who felt guilty. My little brother had his share of guilt feelings. For him, it was not my father he had to watch out for. My father thought Joey could do no wrong. I was the one who beat Joey. When my father was out, I slapped Joey around and threw things—ashtrays, books, hair brushes, whatever I had. Pretty soon I had me a little whiner to pick on, so I could feel better. I even had him apologizing, acting mousier than I ever did, and even cutting on himself.

Finally, when I went to school with bruises for the hundredth time, a teacher took me to the principal, and I told all. The result was juvenile hall, followed by a half-dozen foster homes and a pattern of beating by adults in all kinds of situations—even by men I lived with.

Being abused is bad. It made me feel guilty. It made me want to be abused. And it made me want to be an abuser. Now I’m working on undoing the pattern of thinking that I’ve had all these years. I want to take the “Kick me” sign off my back and replace it with one that reads “Kiss me.” But right now I’m all so mixed up in changing that if someone did kiss me, I don’t know whether I’d kiss back or kick.

**EXERCISE 12  Discussion and Critical Thinking**

1. Does the author seem to understand her situation well in terms of causes and effects? Explain.
   Answers will vary, but probably yes.

2. How would you relate the content of this essay to the two previous essays on the causes of violence?
   Answers will vary.
3. If you were a judge in a case in which Shandra Bryson were the defendant, and you knew the story of her childhood, would you consider her family history in determining her incarceration or treatment? How do you think you might rule and what would you say to her?

Answers will vary.

STUDENT PARAGRAPH AND ESSAY

Responding to an assignment on a topic organized mainly around causes and effects, Richard Blaylock chose to write about the consequences of his becoming a college student. With much trepidation, at thirty-three he had enrolled in the evening program at a local community college. The reasons for his being there were multiple, and so, surprising to him, were the results.

Blaylock’s Writing Process Worksheet shows how his writing evolved from idea to final draft. To conserve space here, the freewriting and the rough drafts marked for revision have been omitted. The balance of his worksheet has been lengthened for you to be able to see his other work in its entirety.

You will find a full-size blank worksheet on page 6, which can be photocopied, filled in, and submitted with each assignment if your instructor directs you to do so.

Writing Process Worksheet

Name Richard Blaylock Title The Classroom and Beyond Due Date Tuesday, May 9, noon

Use the back of this page or separate paper if you need more space.

Assignment

In the space below, write whatever you need to know about your assignment, including information about the topic, audience, pattern of writing, length, whether to include a rough draft or revised drafts, and whether your paper must be typed.

In a paragraph of 200 to 300 words, discuss the causes or effects of any new element in your life at any point. The element could be a relationship, death, health problem, marriage, college program, new job, or winning ticket in the lottery. Submit this completed worksheet, a rough draft marked for revision, and a typed final draft.

Stage One

Explore Freewrite, brainstorm (list), cluster, or take notes as directed by your instructor.

Listing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causes</th>
<th>Event, Situation, or Trend</th>
<th>Effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boss’s suggestion</td>
<td>My going to college</td>
<td>Family pride</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company pays</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wife inspired</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
My desire: Personal growth
Family support: More competitive at work
Better pay
Work scholarship
Tired
School friendships

Stage Two

Organize: Write a topic sentence or thesis; label the subject and the focus parts.

My decision to enroll in college night school would offer more benefits than I could have imagined.

Write an outline or an outline alternative. For reading-based writing, include references and short quotations with page numbers as support in the outline.

I. Effects on family
   A. Wife inspired
   B. Family proud
II. Effects on me
   A. Learn usable skills
   B. More confident
   C. More curious
III. Effects at work
   A. In line for better pay
   B. Soon given new responsibilities
   C. Given new respect

Stage Three

Write: On separate paper, write and then revise your paragraph or essay as many times as necessary for coherence, language (usage, tone, and diction), unity, emphasis, support, and sentences (CLUESS). Read your work aloud to hear and correct any grammatical errors or awkward-sounding sentences.

Edit any problems in fundamentals, such as capitalization, omissions, punctuation, and spelling (COPS).

Final Draft

THE CLASSROOM AND BEYOND
Richard Blaylock

“We think you would benefit from our work-study program,” he said to me. He was not my high school counselor, and I wasn’t 18. He was the division manager, and he had just offered to pay my expenses for attending a local community college. At 33, I was working for a large company in a dead-end job, dead-end because I was not qualified for any management positions. Naturally, I enrolled in college. [More benefits than I expected were to follow.] I had hardly started when the first response greeted me: my family was clearly proud. I heard my two kids in elementary school bragging about me to kids in the neighborhood. They even brought me some of their tough homework questions. My wife had lots of questions about college. We talked
about taking a class together. Unlike me, she had been a good student in high school. Then I had had no interest in going on to college. Now I did, and one thing led to another. A geography class connected me with a geology class. A political science class moved me to subscribe to the Los Angeles Times. I became more curious about a variety of subjects, and I felt more confident in dealing with ideas. At work my supervisors started asking me to become more involved in ongoing projects and planning. By the time I had taken my second English class, I was writing reports with much more confidence and skill. Now, after receiving a good job review and being interviewed by my plant manager, I am in line for a promotion that I once thought was beyond my reach. At most, I had expected a classroom. I found much more.

EXERCISE 12 Discussion and Critical Thinking

1. Is this an essay mainly of causes or effects?
   Effects.

2. Circle the topic sentence.
   See text.

3. Underline each effect.
   See text.

READING-BASED WRITING: SHORT STORY REVIEW

The Use of Self-Analysis

GLORIA MENDEZ

This essay explains that the first-person point of view places the central character in “The Use of Force” in close focus, with all his strengths and weaknesses there on the surface for our analysis—and for his own. The underlinings and margin notes have been added to show how Mendez organized her final draft.

Thesis 1

One of the main thrusts in “The Use of Force” is point of view. The narrator, a doctor, tells his own story, a story about his encounter with an uncooperative patient but also—and mostly—a story about the narrator’s transformation from a mature, rational person to someone of a lower order who has lost considerable self-respect. This transformation happens in stages of changes in attitude that occur during his arrival, his early attempt at obtaining cooperation, his loss of self-control, and his reflection on his behavior.

Parts of support

Topic sentence 2

When the doctor arrives at the small farmhouse, he feels like an outsider. The family is self-conscious and not sure about how to act around a doctor. They are poor, and out of concern for the daughter, are spending some of their meager funds to get a diagnosis and possible treatment. The doctor sees that they are “all very nervous, eyeing me up and down distrustfully . . .” (330). They tell him very little, wanting to get their money’s worth.

Quotations and references

Topic sentence 3

The doctor initially follows standard procedure. He sees that the daughter is feverish and panting. With concern about a local diphtheria epidemic, he asks the mother if she had looked at the girl’s throat. In a foreshadowing that the doctor does not catch, the mother says, “I tried to . . . but I couldn’t see.” Moving to the hands-on stage, he asks the girl to open her mouth. “Nothing doing.” He tries a gentle approach, shows her he has no concealed
## Suggested Topics and Prompts for Writing Cause and Effect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Topic sentence 4 | Both his tact and his attitude change. The parents are embarrassed; they apologize, threaten the daughter, and awkwardly try to help the doctor. He’s disgusted with them, however; they’ve done all the wrong things. But he admires the girl, even saying he had “already fallen in love with the savage brat” (330). He knows that her anger is caused by her fear of him. He decides to use force—for her own good. The possibility that she has diphtheria is there. The girl’s resistance builds: she screams and struggles. He uses a “wooden tongue depressor,” and she chews it “into splinters” (331).
| Quotations and references |
| Topic sentence 5 | It is during this phase of the incident that the doctor joins the struggle at her level. As he admits, “But now I also had grown furious—at a child. I tried to hold myself down but I couldn’t.” He goes for heavier equipment—a metal spoon. He convinces himself that he must get the “diagnosis now or never.” Whether his rationality or truth prevailed in that decision, he does know that he “had got beyond reason” (331). “I could have torn the child apart in my fury. It was a pleasure to attack her. My face was burning with it.” He has truth and reason on his side, but his emotions as “a blind fury” are in control. He mounts the “final unreasoning assault” and wins. She has an infected throat, and he has exposed it, but she still tries to attack “while tears of defeat blinded her eyes” (331).
| Quotations and references |
| Topic sentence 6 | The final stage, the recognition, is there throughout the last part of the story. If the doctor had dismissed the incident, we would have thought him insensitive. If the doctor had savored the experience, we would have called him sadistic. But the doctor, with obvious regret, has admitted that he had “grown furious,” lost restraint, “got beyond reason,” felt a “longing for muscular release,” and gone on “to the end” (332).
| Quotations and references |
| Conclusion 7 | The “use of force” has two effects in this story. The girl resents the force and becomes alternately defensive and offensive. The doctor uses force and becomes so caught up in the physical and emotional conflicts that he is responding to the wrong motive for acting. It is the point of view that highlights the doctor’s feelings of guilt in retrospect. This feeling comes across much more poignantly because this story is, after all, a confessional.
| Effects |

### Work Cited

READING-BASED WRITING

Reading-based writing requires you to read critically, write a reply that shows you understand what you have read, and give credit for ideas you borrow and words you quote. The form can be a summary, a reaction, or a two-part response (with separated summary and reaction). Documentation, in which you give credit for borrowed ideas and words, can be either formal (MLA) or informal, as directed by your instructor. Both the forms of reading-based writing and documentation are discussed with examples in Chapter 1. Definitions of the three forms follow. Any form can be used for any reading selection in this book.

Summary

- The summary is a statement presenting only the main points of what you have read by using different wording without altering the meaning, adding information, or showing bias.
- It is the purest form of reading-based writing.

Reaction

- In the reaction, the meaning of what you have read will be central to your topic sentence of your paragraph or the thesis of your essay.
- Although the reaction is not a personal narrative by itself, it may include personal experience to explain elements of the text. For example, if your source is about driving styles, your own experiences as a driver or an observer of drivers could be relevant in your analysis of the text.
- The reaction may incorporate a summary to convey a broad view of what you have read, but your summary should never be the main part of your reaction.

The Two-Part Response

- The two-part response separates the summary from the reaction.
- This form will give you practice in separating your objective summary in the first part from your more personal evaluation, interpretation, or application in the second part, the reaction.

READING-BASED WRITING TOPICS

“Why Marriages Fail”

1. Roiphe says that “we all select with unconscious accuracy a mate who will re-create with us the emotional patterns of our first homes.” In a reaction either agree or disagree with that statement and its support, and explain your own views by discussing the causal factors in a marriage you are familiar with.

“The Girls in Their Summer Dresses”

2. Write a reading-based paragraph or essay of agreement or disagreement with one or more of the following statements. Paraphrase the statements if you like. Use references, quotations, and reasoning to support your views. Or write your own controlling statement(s).
Suggested Topics and Prompts for Writing Cause and Effect

a. “That is the way men are, and Frances should learn to love them or leave them.”
b. “Michael is a self-centered male chauvinist, and he is at fault.”
c. “The day started well, turned bad, and got worse because of (his or her) behavior.”
d. “They have different definitions of love, and (he or she) deserves someone better.”
e. “Their marriage can be saved if (he or she) will change.”

3. Pretend you are “Dear Abby” or a marriage counselor by correspondence, and write advice on what Michael and Frances should do. Imagine that you have already read this short story as a very revealing document of their differences and that they know you have read it. Refer to their behavior and quote what they say as you discuss this eventful day.

“The Ghetto Made Me Do It”

4. In a reaction write about one or more of the questions posed by the author:
   - If under certain conditions a Vietnam veteran or a battered spouse can use post-traumatic stress disorder as a defense, then why cannot a brutalized product of the ghetto such as Felicia Morgan use the same or a similar defense?
   - What is the role of personal responsibility in the commission of a crime, regardless of what the perpetrator has experienced?
   - To what extent is society responsible when a person such as Felicia Morgan grows up under such horrific conditions?

Refer directly to the essay and use quotations from it. Evaluate Flaherty’s use of evidence such as examples and comparisons.

“Enough Is Enough”

5. Write either a summary of or a two-part response to Judge Judy’s essay. In your reaction, agree or disagree with her views. You may use your own examples as support of your views.

“From ‘Kick Me’ to ‘Kiss Me’”

6. Write a reaction in which you use Bryson’s words to help you understand the depth of her problems and to speculate about the chances for her recovery.

Views on Violence

7. Write a reaction in which you apply Judge Judy’s philosophy (see pages 237, 242) expressed in “Enough Is Enough” to the two inmates in “The Ghetto Made Me Do It” and “From ‘Kick Me’ to ‘Kiss Me.’” Explain what you think she would do and say in sentencing each inmate, assuming that they were both convicted of assaulting a stranger in separate cases. Use at least one quotation from or reference to each essay.

GENERAL TOPICS

8. Write a paragraph or an essay about people who have influenced you in important ways. How have they caused you to be who you are and are becoming?
Consider giving credit to historical figures, family members, close friends, and other individuals from your community, neighborhood, or school. For a helpful model on a similar topic, review “Family Heroes and Role Models” on page 232.

9. Write a paragraph or an essay of cause and effect in which you discuss how your life has changed, is changing, or will change as a result of your ongoing education. For a helpful model on a similar topic, review “The Classroom and Beyond” on pages 247–248.

10. Select one of the following topics as a subject (situation, circumstance, or trend) for your paragraph or essay and then determine whether you will concentrate on causes, effects, or a combination. You can probably write a more interesting, well-developed, and therefore successful paragraph or essay on a topic you can personalize. For example, a discussion about a specific young person who contemplated, attempted, or committed suicide is probably a better topic idea than a general discussion of suicide. If you do not personalize the topic, you will probably have to do some basic research to supply details for development.
   a. Having or getting a job
   b. Alcoholism
   c. Gambling
   d. Moving to another country, state, or home

**CROSS-CURRICULAR TOPIC**

11. From a class that you are taking or have taken, select a subject that is especially concerned with causes and effects and develop a topic. Begin by selecting an event, a situation, or a trend in the class content and make a list of the causes and effects; that procedure will almost immediately show you whether you have a topic you can discuss effectively. Class notes and textbooks can provide you with more specific information. If you use textbooks or other materials, give credit or make copies of the sources. Instructors across the campus may have suggestions for studies of cause and effect. Some areas for your search include history, political science, geology, astronomy, psychology, philosophy, sociology, business, real estate, child development, education, fashion merchandising and design, psychiatric technician program, nursing, police science, fire science, nutrition and food, physical education, and restaurant and food-service management.

**CAREER-RELATED TOPICS**

12. Discuss the effects (benefits) of a particular product or service on the business community, family life, society generally, a specific group (age, income, interest), or an individual.

13. Discuss the needs (thus the cause of development) by individuals, families, or institutions for a particular product or type of product.

14. Discuss the effects of using a certain approach or philosophy in sales, human resources management, or customer service.
WRITER’S GUIDELINES: Cause and Effect

1. Determine whether your topic should mainly inform or mainly persuade, and consider your purpose and audience.

2. Use listing to brainstorm cause-and-effect ideas. This is a useful form:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causes</th>
<th>Event, Situation, or Trend</th>
<th>Effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
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<td>3.</td>
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<td>3.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Decide whether to concentrate on causes, effects, or a combination of causes and effects. Most paragraphs will focus only on causes or only on effects. Many short essays will discuss causes and effects but will use one as the framework for the piece. A typical basic outline might look like this:

Topic sentence of paragraph or thesis of essay
I. Cause or Effect 1
II. Cause or Effect 2
III. Cause or Effect 3

4. Do not conclude that something is an effect merely because it follows something else.

5. Emphasize your main concern(s)—causes, effects, or a combination—by repeating key words such as cause, reason, effect, result, consequence, and outcome.

6. Causes and effects can be primary or secondary, immediate or remote.

7. The order of causes and effects in your paper may be based on time, space, emphasis, or a combination.

8. The short story review is likely to include the following:
   - In a short paper, you would probably use one or more of the short story’s elements: setting, conflict, characters, plot, point of view, theme.
   - Develop your ideas by referring directly to the story; by explaining; and by using summaries, paraphrases, and quotations.
   - Use the present tense in relating events in the story.

9. Use the writing process.
   - Write and then revise your paragraph or essay as many times as necessary for coherence, language (usage, tone, and diction), unity, emphasis, support, and sentences (CLUESS).
   - Read your work aloud to hear and correct any grammatical errors or awkward-sounding sentences.
   - Edit any problems in fundamentals, such as capitalization, omissions, punctuation, and spelling (COPS).