

ENC 1101: Essay #3 – Causal Analysis Essay

Assignment: Explain and argue the causes of a situation (an event, a phenomenon, or a trend) *that interests you*. Narrow your topic enough to treat it in some detail, and provide more than a mere list of causes. When seeking causes, you will have to decide carefully how far back to go in your search for remote causes. *Moreover, you must be sure to distinguish between the immediate causes and the remote causes of the situation you are analyzing.* For this assignment, you have complete control of the topic of your essay, but your topic must first be approved by me. However, please note this is not a PRO or CON essay—abortion, gun control, the death penalty, global warming, etc. are all weak topics unless you organize and focus them correctly for this paper. I am available during office hours to help you with this issue.

In addition to simply arguing the cause of a particular topic, you will need to backup your assertions with researched evidence. You will have to research your topic to find evidence that helps you argue your cause. ***Let me be clear—this part of the assignment is non-negotiable: papers without research or citations will earn a failing grade.*** We will have time in the library and access to the resources to help you find evidence to make your arguments. You will cite your sources and quotes in MLA citation format. As a result, you must have a works cited page at the end of your paper. This paper is longer than the previous papers—it should be between 3.5 and 5 pages (about 1000 words).

Here are some possible topics to consider, but you can choose your own as long as you run it by me first:

What are the current top three causes of unemployment in Florida?

Why cheating in academics is on the rise at all levels of education. Or, What causes grade inflation?

What is causing the increase in college costs.

What is causing the average American couple to have children later in life than previous generations.

What are the immediate causes holding back the current 20-30 something generations from achieving the same levels of financial stability as their parents.

The cause of the major dogmatic split in American politics, or the cause of a split in a particular party (Republicans, Tea Party)?

Why students are choosing non-college based, trade careers in the current economy.

Causes of specific political issues during current election years (immigration, same-sex marriage, Ground Zero Mosque, etc.) when in every year the economy, jobs, wars, are at the forefront.

Your paper should:

Be 800-1000 words long.

Argue the causes of your particular topic, and use researched evidence (including direct quotes) to support your claims. It should also distinguish between immediate and remote causes, focusing on immediate causes first.

Remember, 3 is the magic number—assertion, evidence, importance.

Be typed according to MLA Guidelines—12 point Times New Roman, Name, Professor, - Course/Class, Date, and Paper Title all in the correct place. -Works Cited page as well, parenthetical documentation. ***DO NOT TRUST MS WORD TO FORMAT YOUR PAPER FOR YOU—CONSULT YOUR HANDBOOK OR ASK ME.*** Be proofread for basic errors and typos.

Follow writing rules we have learned so far: No 1st or 2nd person, No contractions, use transitional expressions, avoid passive voice, avoid the vague “this”, no sentence fragments, avoid rhetorical questions.

You need at least 3 sources from credible print or library database sources. Simple google searches or random internet pages will not be accepted.

Organizing and Structuring the Essay: Some pointers (from D. Chiang-Schulthesis at Fullerton College)

1. Introductory Paragraph:

- Begin your expository essay by arousing the audience's interest in the introductory paragraph. Invest them in the problem
- This is the paragraph that must clearly establish the subject of your essay and that must identify the purpose for writing the essay. In this assignment, your purpose is to explain what has given rise to a particular phenomenon. · Create a thesis that is one sentence long and that appears in the very last sentence of the introductory paragraph.

2. Main Body section:

- In the main body of your essay, create a paragraph for each of your causes, whether it is a remote or an immediate cause. In the form of a topic sentence, be sure the reader knows what type of cause you are writing about. (E.g. *Perhaps the most common cause for the breakdown of friendships is that the two people have a communication breakdown.*) Notice that my main idea in this paragraph will be to explain how communication breakdowns can ruin a friendship. I will have to give at least a couple examples of real or hypothetical situations to illustrate the claim.
- Consider how to order the main body paragraphs. For example, within the immediate causes section, you might arrange the 3-4 paragraphs by the most serious reasons to the least serious causes. Alternatively, you could order the paragraphs according to what is the most common factor in friendships breaking up. You will have several main body paragraphs, but the number will vary depending on your subject. Each paragraph, though, should start off with a topic sentence that indicates the next cause you will be explaining.
 - Remember to add the analysis part to each of the paragraphs. You cannot merely write about what causes X to happen; you have to explain *why it happens* and why it is important. Use researched evidence to support your claims.
- Don't stray from your topic; stay focused.
- You must use transitions between paragraphs to signal that you are writing about a new cause, whether it is a remote or an immediate cause. Your objective is to link the paragraphs together smoothly.

3. Conclusion Paragraph:

Your conclusion paragraph should clearly bring the essay to a close. While you do not need to restate each of the various causes, you might want to reiterate your essay's purpose that was stated in the introductory paragraph. You might want to predict what the future holds if the event you are examining is not the end result of some previous events. What are the implications of the event now that it has occurred?

- **Page length:** Your essay must be between 3 and 5 typed, double-spaced pages. Remember to title your essay uniquely. Don't call it the "Causal-Analysis Essay" or "Essay #3".
- **Audience:** academic; assume they are aware but not fully knowledgeable about the event you are writing on.
- **Purpose:** to practice the skill of accurately explaining/analyzing why one event causes another and to practice paragraph development and unity skills.
- **Writing Mode:** expository, illustration, causal analysis.
- **POV:** The point of view for this essay will be in the **third person**, so you will be using the "he/she/it/they" pronouns frequently. You must consistently maintain this point of view.
- **Standard American English (SAE):** Remember, your paper must follow the basic conventions of standard American written English. Correct mechanics, usage, grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, and so forth