



## Cause & Effect Essay

Before starting a rough draft, it is helpful to begin with a diagram that illustrates the causes and effects that will be discussed throughout the paper.

### The pattern from effect to causes:

Explore all contributing causes and seek out the principle cause that produced the effect. The list below illustrates this pattern:

**Effect:**

Had an auto accident at 2:15 last Friday

**Causes:**

Slick road or ice  
Driving too fast  
Brakes went out  
Stop sign was down  
Other driver did not give signal

In this pattern, first state the effect as the topic sentence. Then explore each possible cause and determine its precise correlation with the stated effect. Do not merely present reasons, assumptions, or speculations. Describe the causes and demonstrate that such causes made the effect inevitable. Toward the end of the essay, assert the major contributing cause and trace its relationship to the effect.

**Ex:** *The road was slick due to the ice, so James had an auto accident at 2:15 last Friday.*

### The pattern from a cause to effects:

Determine the major contributing cause, if there is one, that exceeds the rest. Be careful to eliminate all "unreal" causes. The list below illustrates this pattern:

**Cause:**

Had an auto accident last Friday

**Effects:**

Injured four people  
Totaled car  
Got a ticket  
Insurance went up  
Late to work

In this pattern, state the cause in the topic sentence. Then explore the effects coming after it and resulting from it. Be careful not to list an assumed effect which did not result solely from the cause.

**Ex:** *Due to the auto accident that James had last Friday, he totaled his care and his insurance went up.*