



5th Grade

Cause/Effect

Fact/Opinion

- Analyze the difference between fact and opinion
- Identify, distinguish between and explain examples of cause and effect in informational text

What Students Need to Know:

- fact
- opinion
- cause
- effect
- informational text

What Students Need to be Able to Do:

- analyze (difference between fact and opinion)
- identify (examples of cause and effect)
- distinguish between (examples of cause and effect)
- explain (examples of cause and effect)

Important Vocabulary

Cause and effect—An organizational structure of text in which there is a description of events and their causes or consequences. Often, a single cause will have more than one effect, and a single event may have more than one cause.

CAUSE AND EFFECT FACT AND OPINION

The study of cause and effect and fact and opinion at this level is laying the groundwork for students' being able to identify a text structure in later years. Just as we have come to expect fiction to have characters, settings, problems and resolutions, nonfiction also has predictable structures. The difference is that there are a variety of structures that can be used in nonfiction: cause and effect, descriptive, sequential, problem and solution, compare and contrast, etc.

Research has shown that the ability to identify and use nonfiction text structure contributes to comprehension and readers comprehend some nonfiction text structures more easily than others. A complicating issue is that texts often contain more than one structure and students must therefore know how to read multiple structures.

In another research project the following findings were discovered:

- ideas at the top of a text's structure are remembered better than those lower in a text's hierarchy
- a text's overall plan and major relationships between its paragraphs have a more powerful effect on its recall than the organization of details
- some top-level text structures such as cause/effect and compare/contrast help readers recall the content more than others
- strategic instruction in the recognition and use of text structures improves students' ability to remember what's in a text

Cause/Effect structure

Usually, effects come before their causes. To improve comprehension, readers should look for causes when they begin to see effects in a text.

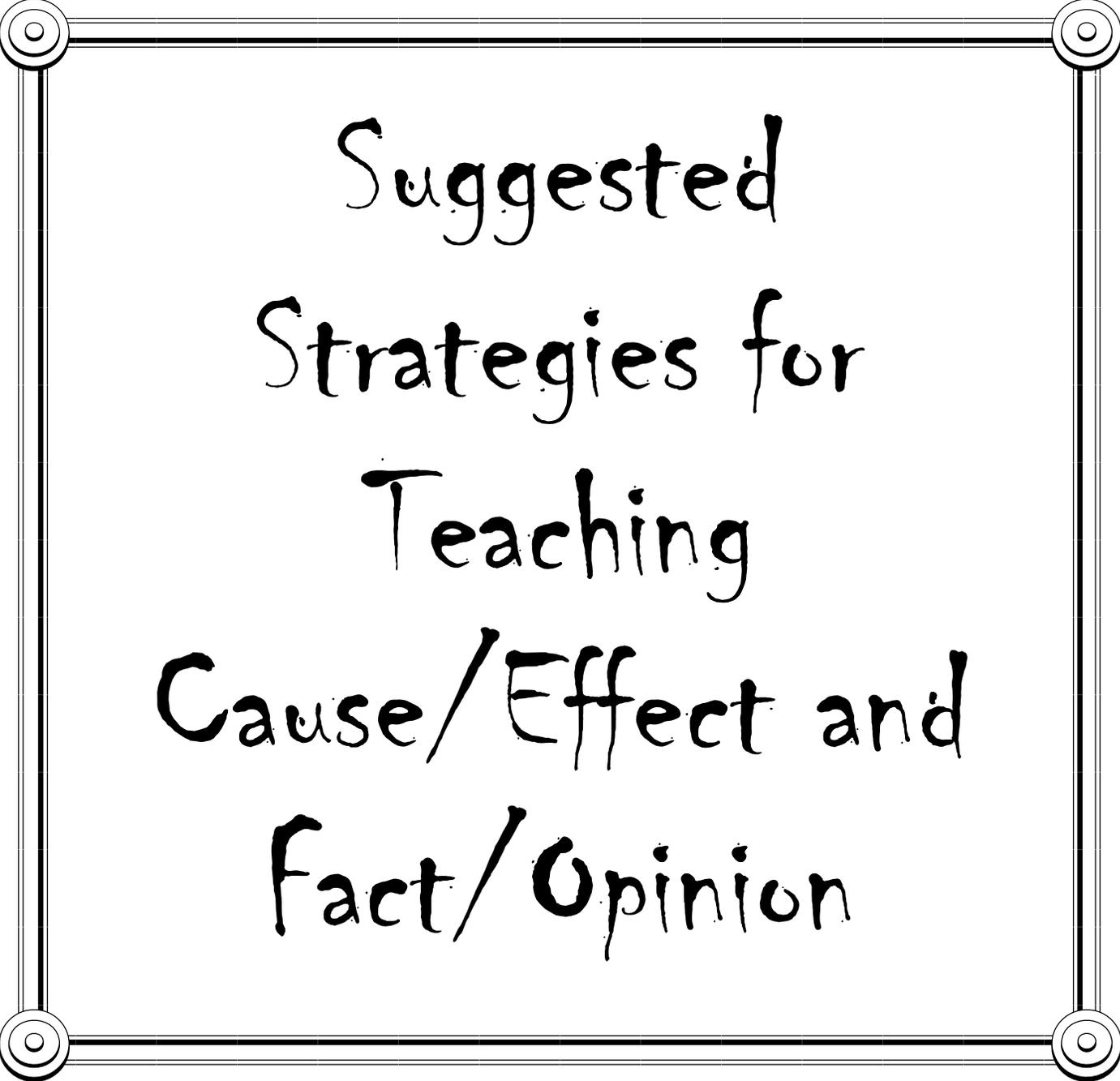
Clue Words: reasons for this, because, was caused by, so

Fact/Opinion

Although texts are not usually organized in a fact/opinion structure, students must learn to identify when an author is stating facts and when he/she is stating opinions. Critical readers have learned to distinguish between the facts and opinions. In later years the emphasis of the informational text standard is on how the author uses a combination of facts and opinions to convince the reader of something. These play out in the form of propaganda. High functioning adults certainly need to know when the information they are reading or hearing is based on fact and when it is intended to appeal to one's emotions. The ability to identify the difference between a fact and opinion at an early age is critical to being able to identify propaganda at a later age.

QUESTIONS FROM PREVIOUS TESTS

<p>In the 1800s, people noticed that Mars' red color faded to brown and then grew red again. What did the people think caused the changes in color?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Cities on MarsB. Canals on MarsC. Storms on MarsD. Seasons on Mars	<p>What caused amber to form?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Resin was mixed together with honey and oil.B. The climate of the earth became warmer.C. Giant trees were buried under saltwater.D. Air bubbles hardened into clear glass.
<p>According to the selection, what might happen if we put devices in power plants and vehicles to reduce carbon dioxide?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Transportation costs will rise.B. People will use wind energy.C. Global warming will increase.D. People will burn less fossil fuel.	<p>Which statement is an opinion?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. The world should take a big step toward slowing global warming.B. The gasoline and diesel fuel burned by cars and trucks is made from oil.C. Coal-burning power plants produce a great deal of electricity.D. If we burn less fossil fuel, less carbon dioxide will be produced.



Suggested
Strategies for
Teaching
Cause/Effect and
Fact/Opinion

Fact and Opinion—Reader Is a Judge

Often students practice identifying facts and opinions with a series of statements which they classify as one or the other. In real life, adults don't ever have statements to identify in such a way. Adults read information that contains some facts and some opinions. Critical readers know how to distinguish between the two, not only in what they read but also in what they hear on television, the radio, and in conversation.

To provide this type of real life experience with fact and opinion, find nonfiction selections that contain both facts and opinions. Have students highlight the facts in yellow and the opinions in green. Then discuss with the students how they distinguished between the two. If you have developed a chart which lists characteristics of facts and opinions, use the information on the chart to check whether the identified facts and opinions are truly classified correctly.

Another approach to working with fact and opinion is to find a newspaper article and an editorial that address the same topic. Have students list the facts and opinions found in each.

Develop Criteria to Identify Facts and Opinions

Work with your students to develop criteria to use in identifying facts and opinions. Following are some possibilities:

Facts

The truth — you can check it out for yourself

Words used mean the same to everyone

Observable

Unemotional

Supportable — reliable data available to support

Opinions

What somebody believes

Words used mean different things to different people

Debatable

Verbs show emotions, adjectives show values

Overly generalized, imply all people think or feel

Fact and Opinion Sort

Each student should pick a familiar topic and write 10 factual statements and 10 opinion statements about that topic on index cards, one sentence per card. Have students trade cards with a partner and sort into two piles — facts and opinions. The original author of the sentences can check the partner for accuracy.

Fact and Opinion Signal Words

Teach your students that certain words usually signal an opinion. When they see these words they should look for an opinion. These words include the following:

- **Appear**
- **Believe**
- **Could**
- **Think**
- **Seem**
- **Perhaps**
- **Probably**
- **Possible**
- **In all likelihood**
- **Adjectives that relate to quality (beauty, best, etc.) instead of quantity (a number)**

Put Facts and Opinions into Book

When giving a book talk, include some facts and some opinions, then have students identify them. From the following sample, students should identify three facts and two opinions.

The Double Life of Pocahontas

Pocahontas, an Indian princess, daughter of Chief Powhatan, befriends the English settler, John Smith, who is adopted into the tribe. When fire destroys Jamestown, the English settlement, she visits often, bringing food. But a series of poor leaders cause the settlers and the Indians to war with each other. During one winter, most of the settlers starve but more arrive. Hostilities increase and Pocahontas is kidnapped. Christian beliefs are forced on her and she eventually marries an Englishman. Caught between two worlds, she journeys to England with her husband and son where she dies, never resolving the conflict of identity that was her life.

Use advertisements to reinforce the difference between facts and opinions.

Cut out ads, then have students identify the facts and the opinions in them.

Fact or Inference

This activity will not only help students identify facts, but it will also serve as a review of inferring. Ask students to read a portion of a text (2-3 paragraphs), then write down what they remember from the text. After writing down information, return to it and label each statement as a fact or an inference. For the facts, have students cite information from the text that confirms it is a fact, and for the inferences, have them support their inference with information from the text.

Put It in Writing

In his book *Illuminating Texts*, Jim Burke quotes a student as he tried to describe the difference between a fact and opinion. A similar writing activity would be appropriate for all students.

“What is the difference between a fact and opinion? Simple, a fact, according to the dictionary, is something (as an event or an act) that really exists or has occurred. An opinion, according to the dictionary, is a belief based on experience and on seeing certain facts but not amounting to sure knowledge. So how do you tell the difference? For one, if a statement is coming from a biased person it’s probably that it’s an opinion. For example, the statement, ‘It is programs like *Doom* that are to blame for the Littleton massacre.’ If this statement is coming from someone who is a victim of the Littleton massacre, or if it’s one of the culprits of the massacre, then it’s probably an opinion, or for a culprit, an opinion to help them excuse what they did. . . In conclusion, the way to determine fact from opinion is to determine what is absolute truth and not, but what’s absolute truth? Not a clue, I’m just here to determine fact from opinion.”

Fact and Opinion in Anticipation Guides

One prereading activity is the Anticipation Guide. Students read a series of statements about a text to be read and determine whether they agree or disagree with the statements. After reading the selection, they return to the anticipation guide and reread each statement, deciding whether they agree or disagree with each based on what has been read.

As you create Anticipation Guides, include some statements of fact and some that express opinions. After students complete the Anticipation Guide before reading, have them re-examine each statement to determine whether it is a fact or an opinion. They should give reasons for why they think a statement is a fact or opinion. Try using some multiple choice Anticipation Guides as well that incorporate words like *feel* and *believe*. Then have students create their own anticipation guides using statements of both fact and opinion. They should identify whether each statement is a fact or opinion and support their answers with information from the text as well as their background knowledge about facts and opinions. Students can also be encouraged to identify statements of fact and opinion during class discussions.

Fact and Opinion Tips

Try some of these to help your students learn the difference between fact and opinion:

- When you read facts, look at the source of the information. When you read opinions, be sure they are well supported with facts, experiences, accounts of experts and other reliable sources.
- Examine the same topic as related from different sources: a newspaper article, a letter to the editor, and a television documentary, for example. How do the authors treat their subject? How do the facts and opinions expressed differ in each source?
- Give students a quiz to determine their understanding of fact and opinion. A sample is found on the next page.

Cause and Effect

If students recognize a text that is written in a cause/effect format, they will have a better chance of understanding the content of the text. A selection that is written in this format will meet the following conditions:

- Answers the question “Why did it happen?”
- Carefully examines what happened and why
- Contains clear, logical writing
- Uses descriptive writing to illustrate the relationship between the cause and the effect

After providing models of cause/effect selections for students to analyze, have them write a paragraph or essay following a similar format. Writing is often one of the best ways to practice reading skills.

The reader of a cause/effect text assumes the role of a scientist, trying to determine what happened and why it happened.

Cause and Effect Signal Words

According	As a result	Because	Consequently	For this reason	If . . . then
In order to	Resulting	Since	Therefore	Then	This caused

Fact vs. Opinion

1. How do you explain the difference between the "truth," a fact, and an opinion? Provide an example to illustrate your point, taking time to explain your answer.

2. What questions do you need to ask to determine whether a piece of information is a fact or an opinion?

3. After reading each of the following statements, indicate whether you think each one is a fact (F) or an opinion (O). Briefly explain why you think this.

_____ The San Francisco 49ers are the best team in the history of football.

_____ The San Francisco 49ers won more Super Bowls than any other team.

_____ Children exposed to violent television programming are more likely to engage in violent behavior immediately after watching such shows.

_____ Television is bad for kids.

_____ The Ford Mustang is the most popular American-made car.

_____ The Ford Mustang is the best car made in America.

_____ Rick Rood, who as "Ravishing Rick Rude" was one of professional wrestling's biggest stars in the 1980s and early 1990s, died April 20. He was 40. Rood was found unconscious at his home. He was resuscitated, but died later at a hospital. Autopsy results were pending. In the ring, Rood played a womanizing, conceited bad guy who would often finish off opponents with the "Rude Awakening," a neck-breaking takedown. He was injured in a 1994 match with the wrestler Sting in Japan and then retired. Since then, he had been a manager and commentator for Extreme Championship Wrestling, the World Wrestling Federation and, most recently, Atlanta-based World Championship Wrestling.

_____ 1986 Ford Maverick with new tires and AM radio. Lime green metallic paint. 240k miles on it. Excellent condition. A classic. Great first car for teen driver! Call 342-8892.

4. Write a short piece titled "How to Know a Fact When You See One," or "How to Spot an Opinion with Your Eyes Closed." Be sure to provide examples to illustrate and to explain how these examples support your ideas.

Graphic Organizers for Cause and Effect

- Two-column notes or T-charts can help students identify the cause and effect. Label one side “Cause” and the other “Effect.” Be sure to model how it is possible to have more than one cause for an effect or more than one effect from a cause, then provide selections for students to read that have multiple causes or effects.
- The fish bone is a graphic organizer often used with cause/effect passages. The effect is the fish’s head, and the causes appear on it’s skeleton.
- Other maps that provide places for students to fill in the cause with multiple effects or an effect with multiple causes can also be used.

Key Question Charts

Provide students with a controversial question, such as “Should companies be allowed to drill for oil in Alaska Arctic National Wildlife Refuge?” Give students “pro” and “con” articles to read about the topic, and have them create a chart that lists the facts that support a pro argument on one side and the con argument on the other. Ask the students to form an opinion of their own after carefully evaluating the data, and to provide a thorough analysis of their reasoning.

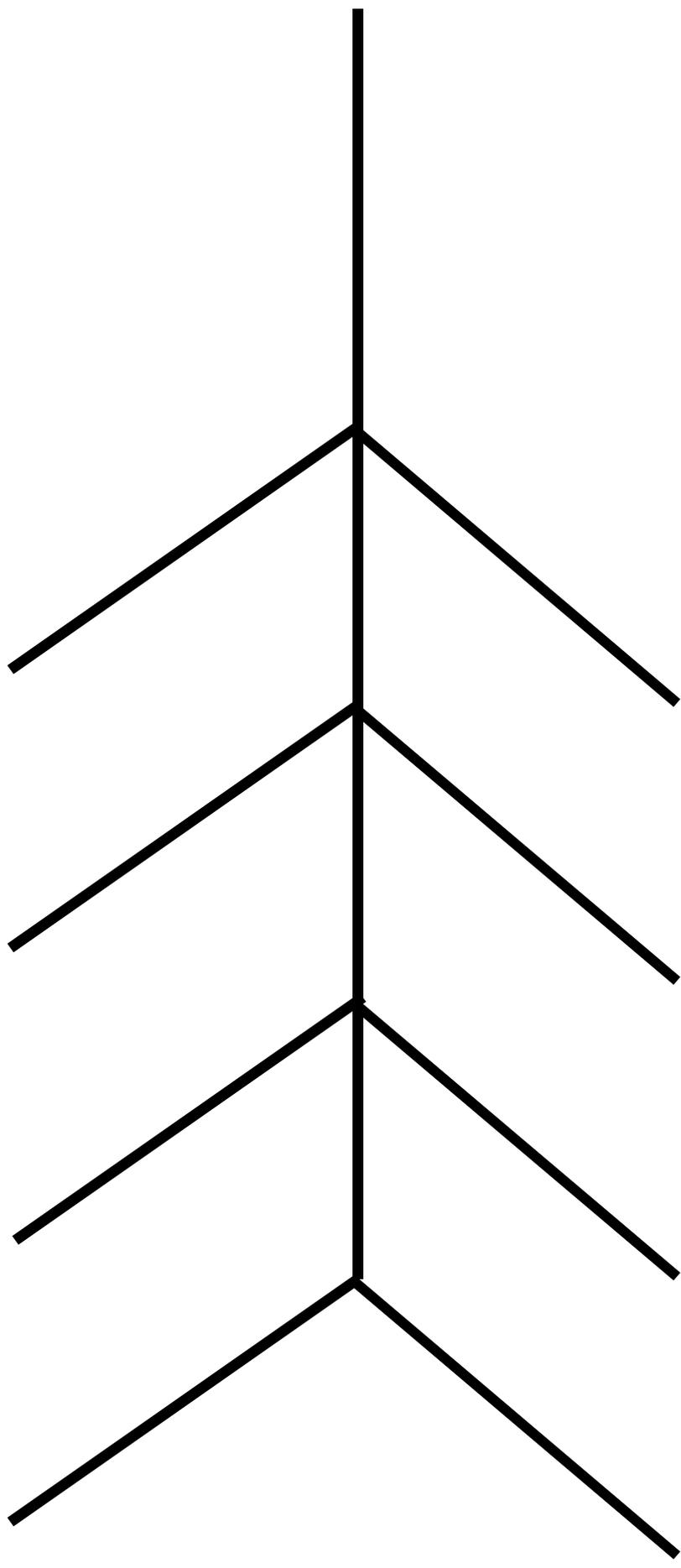
Pro-Con-Interesting Fact

Provide students with a controversial statement or question. Have them work in small groups to make a chart containing three columns labeled “Pro,” “Con,” and “Interesting Facts.” Ask students to research the topic and categorize the information they find under the three categories, form an opinion about the question, and then discuss their findings with the class.

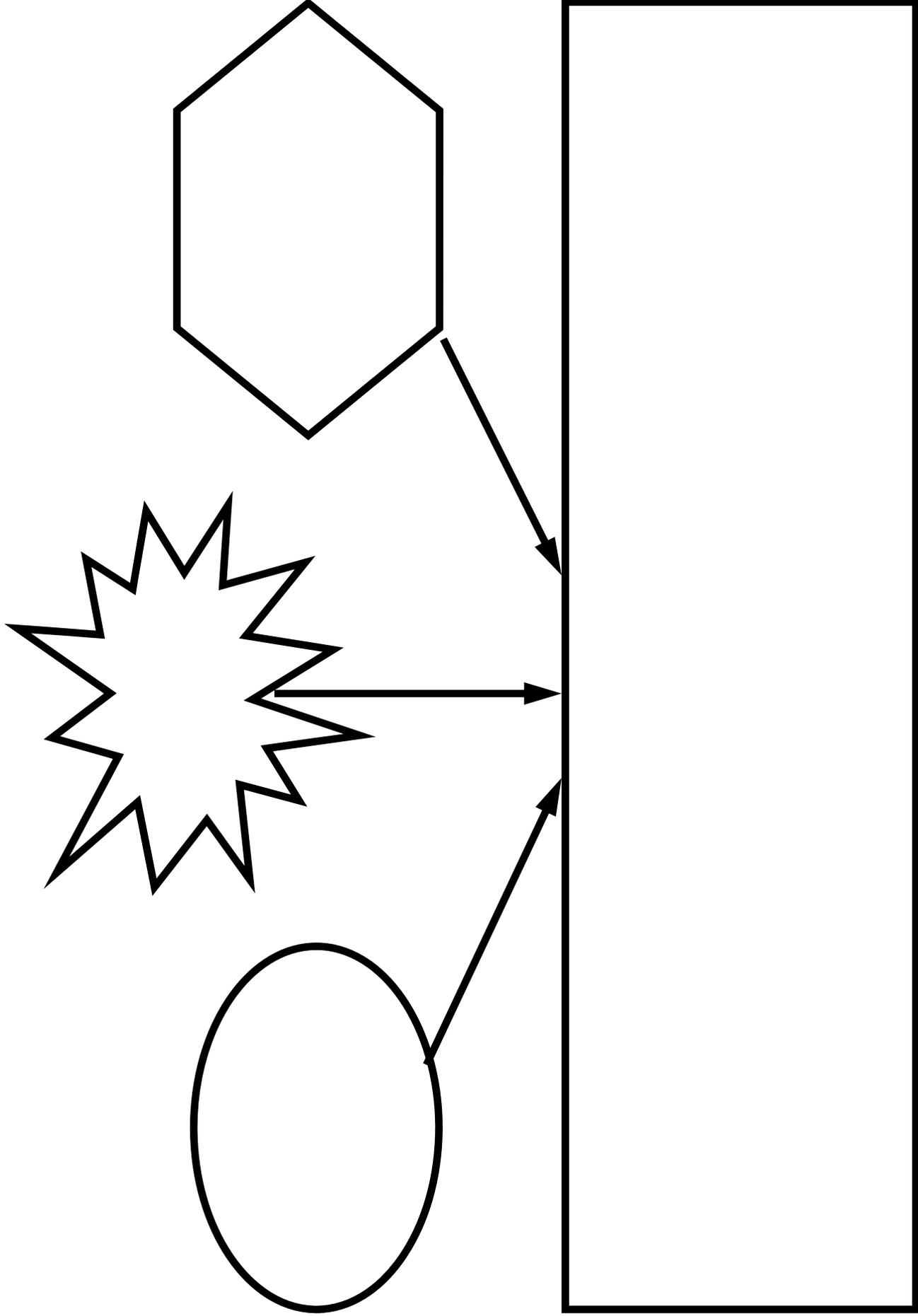
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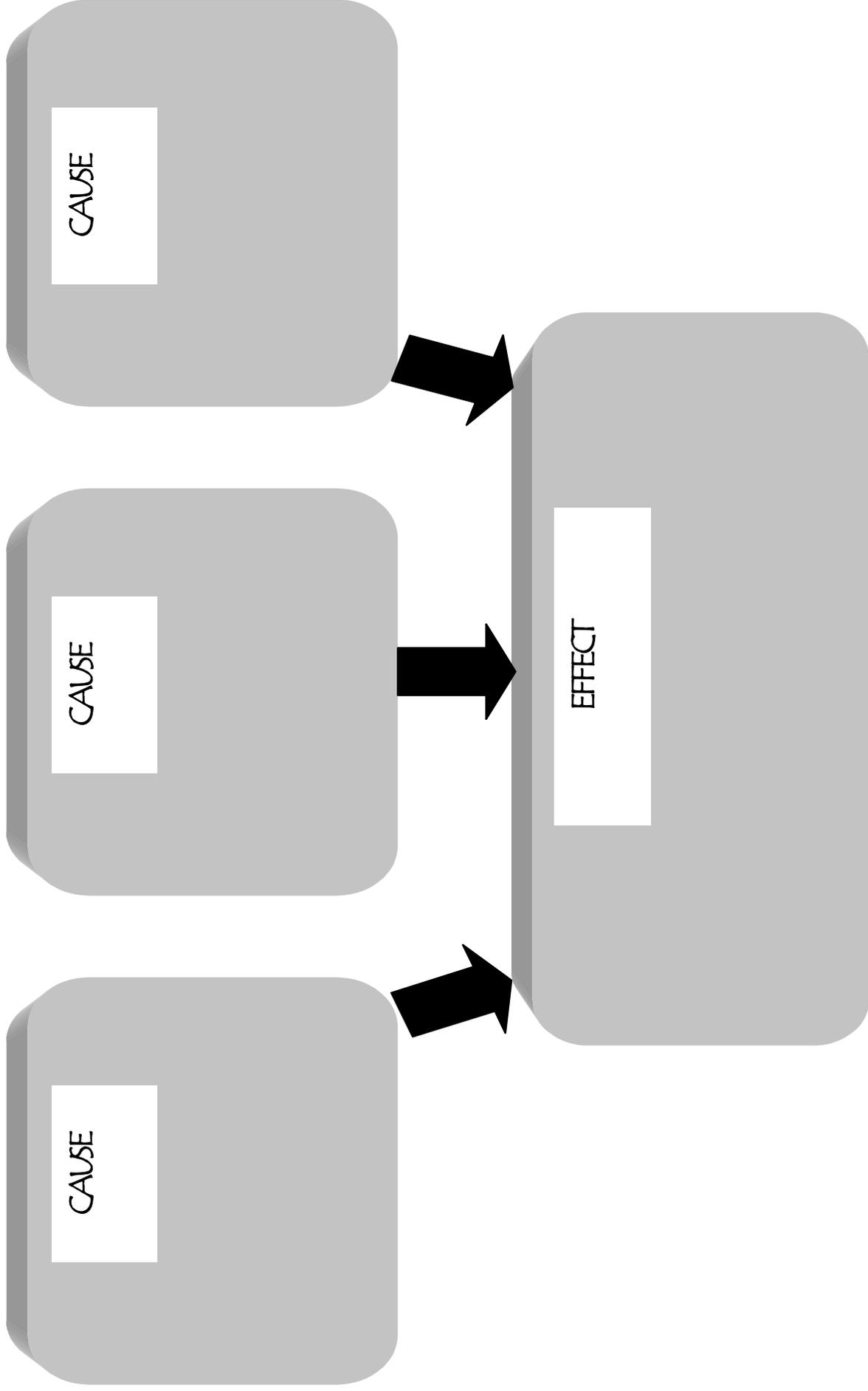
Cause and Effect



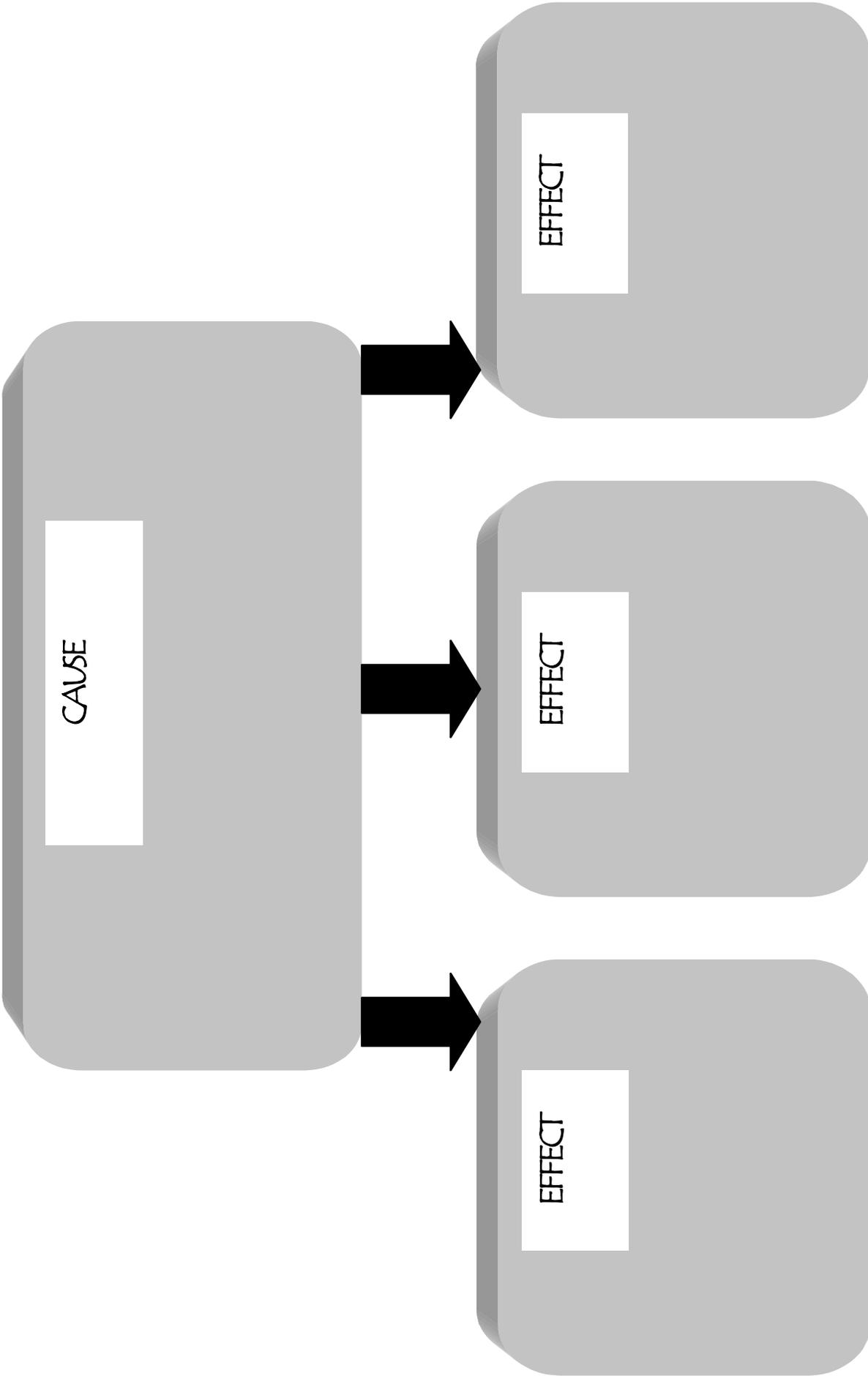
CAUSE AND EFFECT



MULTIPLE CAUSES/ONE



ONE CAUSE/MULTIPLE EFFECTS



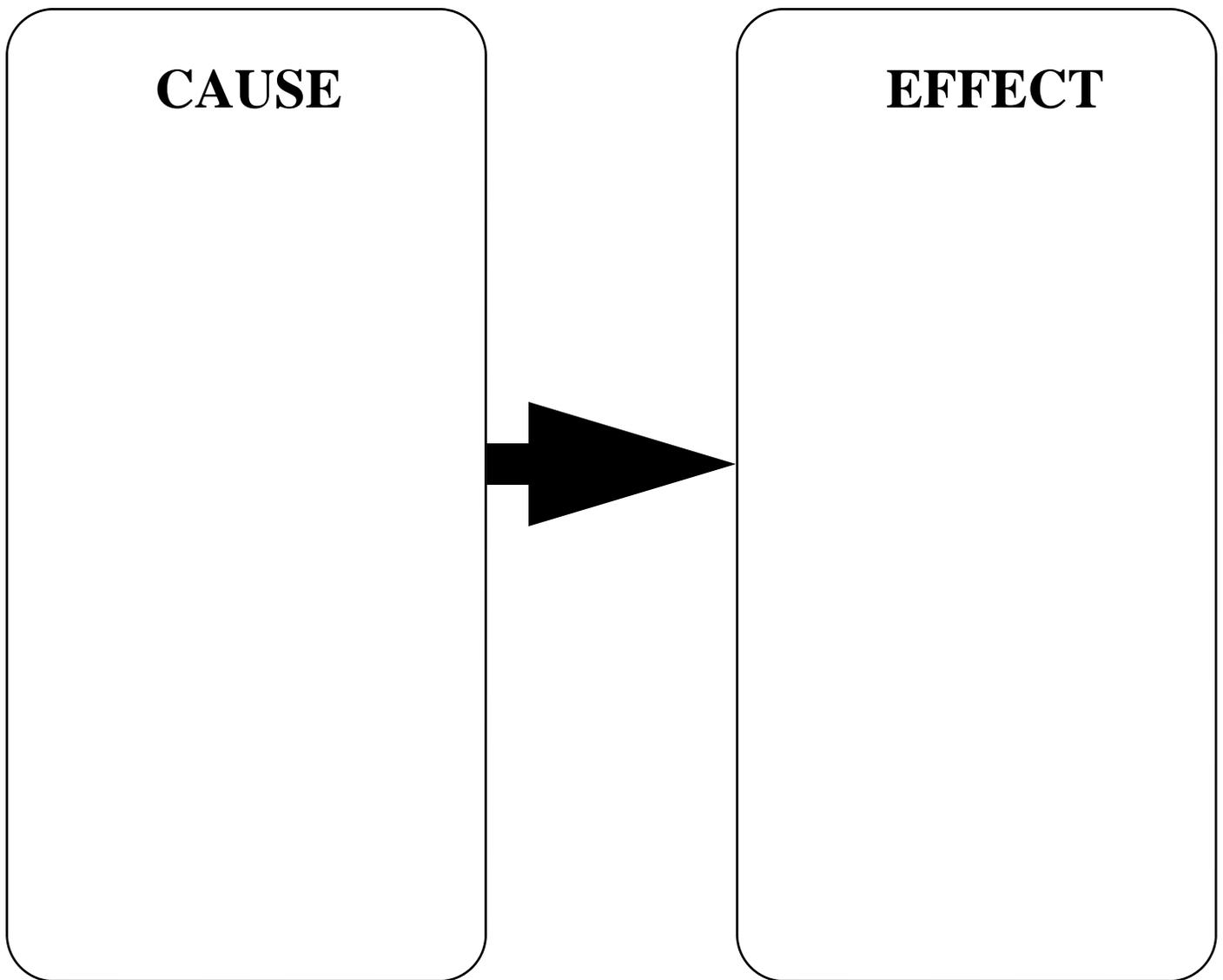
One Cause/One Effect

A **cause** is an event that makes something happen. An **effect** is what happens because of the cause.

- To find a cause, ask why something happened.
- To find an effect, ask what happened.

Use the chart below to identify cause and effect.

Book Title: _____



Everyday Causes and Effects

Have students make a chart of the effects of the following:

- A common cold
- A new haircut
- A school vacation
- A dirty room
- Being late coming home
- Going hunting

Provide students with a statement and let them develop possible causes for the effect reflected in the statement:

- Sue was late for band practice.
- John baked cookies for the class.
- The teacher was absent from school.
- The money was missing from the wallet.

Cause and Effect in Book Talks

Have students identify causes and effects from your book talks. An example for the book Medicine Walk is shown below.

What caused the plane to crash? What were the effects of the crash?

It was not to be a long flight, the trip to grandfather's. And they had plenty of time. "Why not fly over the Petrified Forest?" Burr suggested to his father, who was piloting their small plane. So the two went off their flight plan, and when the accident happened, when Burr's father had a heart attack and died after bringing the plane to a landing in a desert draw, there was no way anyone would know where to look for them.

Burr did not want to leave the plane, did not want to leave his dead father. But no one would ever find him, with the plane at rest under a desert cottonwood tree in an area where they had not intended to be. He had no choice, if he wanted to live, but to take the small amount of water and food aboard the plane, stored there for emergencies, and start over the hot summer desert. There were no roads to follow, no paths, and he would have to walk at least 40 miles.

Cause and Effect Timeline

The Cause and Effect Timeline can be used for narrative and expository texts. The graphic organizer (on the next page) asks students not only to determine the sequence of events in a story or historical account but also to establish or infer the causes of those events. Students can be asked to draw lines to connect the events from the upper part of the graphic organizer to the cause in the lower part. You can use this activity for stories, novels, history texts, biographies, science observations, and more.

Procedure

1. Make a copy of the Cause and Effect Timeline reproducible. Cut out the two halves lengthwise, and fasten them together side by side to make one long timeline.
2. Above the thick line, write events with or without year dates. Each event should go above one of the lower arrows.
3. Put the causes of the events below the line, inside the arrows. Each cause should be directly under its corresponding event. Make sure you can support each cause with evidence. Causes can be inferred.
4. Draw additional lines, if applicable, to connect upper events to additional causes below; that is, some causes also will contribute to other events in addition to the ones written directly above them, or some events will, in turn, cause new events. Therefore, these new lines you draw will be diagonal. Students should be able to explain why they draw each additional line.
5. Connect more timeline halves, if necessary.

Variations

- Have students use the timeline to write a summary of a text that the timeline describes.
- Fill in empty timeline to show students how to create a logical story or account using the timeline's event and cause categories. Explain how different events usually will have different paragraphs in the story.
- Have students take notes on the timeline about the sequence of events in a video or science experiment and then write a report on the experience.

What happened?

