

Skills

Students will:

- ✦ identify causes and effects within stories
- ✦ analyze causal relationships
- ✦ recognize consequences of characters' actions

Purpose

Identifying cause and effect relationships within a story helps students focus on two important elements of comprehension: *what* happened in the story, and *why* it happened. Looking for causes and their effects gives students an opportunity to look carefully at the consequences of characters' actions and to think about how different actions might have different effects.

How to Use the Organizer

Introduce the Cause-Effect Contraption. Point out that in each machine the marble rolling down the tube is about to *cause* something to happen. Ask what the *effect* of the rolling marble will be. (The dominoes will be knocked over.) Explain that in stories, "what happens" is often the *effect* of an action or event and "why it happened" is the event's *cause*.

Suggest students choose a character's action from a story and write a brief description of the action in the space labeled *Cause*. Then ask them to think about the results of that action and record the consequences under *Effect*. In some cases, students may find it easier first to describe an event or action under *Effect* and then record why the event happened under *Cause*. Be sure to point out that one cause may have a number of different effects and that one effect may have many different causes.

Examples

Primary Grades

After reading *Jiro's Pearl* by Daniel Powers, second-grade students worked in small groups to identify two important actions taken by the main character. By recording the actions and the results of those actions, they were able to see that a character's actions can have either positive or negative effects.

Name: David Date: 2-13
 Book Title: Jiro's Pearl Author: Daniel Powers

CAUSE-EFFECT CONTRAPTION
 Put each Cause-Effect Contraption into action. Write a cause inside the box of marbles. Write its effect within the ring of dominoes.

CAUSE
 Jiro stops to play with the frog.

EFFECT
 Jiro loses the rice and can't buy medicine for his grandmother.

CAUSE
 Jiro gives the Pearl to the beggar.

EFFECT
 Jiro's grandmother gets well.

Intermediate Grades

While reading Avi's *Nothing But the Truth*, a sixth-grade class discussed the causes of Phillip's suspension from school and the subsequent national uproar. Students recorded a number of possible causes for each event so that they could better analyze the events and come up with their own versions of "the truth."

Name: Zachary Date: 9-23
 Book Title: Nothing But the Truth Author: Avi

CAUSE-EFFECT CONTRAPTION
 Put each Cause-Effect Contraption into action. Write a cause inside the box of marbles. Write its effect within the ring of dominoes.

CAUSE
 1. Hums during the national anthem
 2. ~~Doesn't~~ Doesn't defend himself
 3. Is rude to teacher
 4. Gets bad advice
 5. Doesn't know when to quit

EFFECT
 Phillip is suspended from school

CAUSE
 1. Parent's turn incident into little about free speech
 2. Politician uses Phillip as election cause
 3. Reporter only tells part the story
 4. media paints Phillip as civil partner
 5. media paints teacher as evil.

EFFECT
 Phillip transfers to school with no track team. Teacher loses job.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Book Title: _____ Author: _____

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