

Understanding Cause and Effect Extra! Extra!

Read all about the newsboys' strike of 1899 in this issue's American history play (pp. 10-13). Then use the lesson plan below to explore the causes and effects of this pivotal event in labor history. This lesson was written for *JS* by Karen Kellaheer, a substitute teacher in Warren County, New Jersey, and former Scholastic editor.



Karen Kellaheer

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OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- analyze the causes and effects of the 1899 newsboys' strike.
- distinguish between short-term effects and long-term effects.
- investigate how ordinary people, including children, have advanced democratic values.

ENGAGE

First, review the concepts of cause and effect. Set up a short row of dominoes (or upright books), then nudge the first one to set off a chain reaction. Guide students to understand that most historical events are like the dominoes in the middle of the row. They can be viewed as both an effect (a result of other events or forces) and a cause (a reason for other events). Explain that, in reading this play, students will learn about such an event.

TEACH

1. Help students brainstorm signal words that will help them recognize cause and effect.

SOME CAUSE-AND-EFFECT SIGNAL WORDS

<i>because</i>	<i>so</i>
<i>due to</i>	<i>then</i>
<i>for that reason</i>	<i>therefore</i>
<i>since</i>	

2. Assign roles and have students read the play aloud. Then have them work in pairs to find and mark examples of cause and effect. Have pairs underline the cause and circle the effect for each example. Clarify that the cause and effect may not be described in the same sentence.
3. Invite pairs to share their examples. Create a cause-and-effect chart on the board or interactive whiteboard (see *partial example below*). For each example, have pairs tell how they identified the cause and effect, sharing signal words and other clues.

CAUSE	EFFECT
Spanish-American War was being fought	People bought papers to get war news (p. 11)
War ended	Newspaper sales dropped (p. 11)
Publishers charged newsies more	Newsies lost money (p. 11)

4. Use your completed chart to recap the causes of the newsboys' strike. Review that the decline in news interest after the Spanish-American War was one cause. The publishers' refusal to restore the

previous price for each stack of papers was another.

5. Use your chart to sum up the strike's effects. Point out that the strike had both short-term effects (things that happened right away) and long-term effects (things that happened years or even decades later). As students cite effects, have them identify whether each effect was short- or long-term.

Short-term effects:

- Scabs were hired to sell papers.
- Newsies were arrested.
- Newspaper sales dropped by $\frac{2}{3}$.
- Publishers agreed to buy back unsold papers.

Long-term effects:

- Attention was drawn to poor working conditions for kids.
- Other child workers were inspired to strike.
- The Fair Labor Standards Act was passed.

ASSESS

As an exit-ticket activity, have each student describe one way kids' lives are better today because of the 1899 newsboys' strike.