CAUSES and EFFECTS

PART 1: THE RHETORICAL STRATEGY
BACKGROUND:

- To reinforce the complexity & non-linearity of Causality & Consequence
- To rectify certain misconceptions concerning Causality & Consequence
NO OVERSIMPLIFICATION:

- A cause often has \textit{more than 1} effect
- An effect often has \textit{more than 1} cause
- Causes can \textit{be effects} from other causes
- Effects can \textit{become causes} of other effects

\textbf{THUS}, causes & effects = \textit{plural}

\textbf{THUS}, their relationship = \textit{complex, non-linear}

\textbf{THUS}, the pictures of the \textit{spider webs}
BACKGROUND

NO OVERSIMPLIFICATION:

- Life is too complex, too complicated
- For events to have but 1 cause, 1 effect
  - such singularity, simplicity is quite rare

- **THUS**, it would be an oversimplification to claim that a situation had but a *single* cause leading up to it and *single* effect flowing away from it
NO VACUUM:
- Further, no event happens in a vacuum
  - unrelated or unconnected to any other situation
  - past and present
- HENCE, causes and effects have a certain interconnectedness *(like a web!)*
- Ask yourself:
  - *Where did those causes come from?*
    - causes as effects of other causes
  - *Where do those effects go?*
    - Effects as causes of other effects
BACKGROUND

NO VACUUM:

CAUSE → EVENT → EFFECT

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NO COUPLES:

- Also, causes & effects do not pair up like animals marching to Noah’s Ark
- Causes & Effects have no 1:1 ratio
- A cause does not have a corresponding effect
  - a “soul mate,” partner, companion, spouse
  - As a matter of fact, the idea of correspondence is doubtful itself
- Hence, in an essay, you wouldn’t discuss in a single paragraph a cause-effect pair
BACKGROUND

NO LINEARITY:

- Nor do Causes & Effects regularly queue up to form a neat chronological line
  - this happened $\rightarrow$ which led to this $\rightarrow$ which led to this $\rightarrow$ ...
  - What some call “causal chains”

- Oftentimes, unrelated or independent causes coalesce to create a series of effects
  - Think “a perfect storm”
    - 3 separate storm systems converged to create one monster storm, which had disastrous consequences
**DEFINITIONS:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAUSES</th>
<th>EFFECTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• “Why did this happen?”</td>
<td>• “What happened as a result of this?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <em>Precede</em> the event, condition, behavior</td>
<td>• <em>Follow</em> the event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Precipitating factors, roots,</td>
<td>• Consequences, results, outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Motives, antecedents, bases, origins, sources, derivations</td>
<td>• Effects <em>can</em> become the causes of other events, conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Positive and/or Negative</td>
<td>• Positive and/or Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ <em>More than one</em> cause to an event, condition, behavior</td>
<td>❖ <em>More than one</em> effect to an event, condition, behavior</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*CAUSES* refer to factors that *precede* the event, condition, or behavior, while *EFFECTS* refer to outcomes that *follow*.
**EVENT:**

*Your car ran out of gas on the way home from school.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAUSES</th>
<th>EFFECTS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor time management</td>
<td>Long walk home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irresponsibility</td>
<td>Late for work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of money</td>
<td>Pulled a muscle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Broken gas gauge</td>
<td>Fell in a ditch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unfamiliarity with new car</td>
<td>Ruined your favorite shoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preoccupation with your relationship</td>
<td>Lost your (priceless) school notes and (overpriced) text books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking about writing your cause-effect essay</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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BACKGROUND

PURPOSE:

- Questions answered =
  - What happened and why?
  - What is happening and why?
  - What will happen and why?
PURPOSE:

- By tracing causes → we can
  - understand an event, condition, behavior
  - appreciate an (+) event, condition, behavior
  - replicate an (+) event, condition, behavior
    - assure that it happens again
  - prevent an (-) event from happening again
PURPOSE:

- By tracing effects → we can
  - persuade people to care about an issue
  - convince them to take some action
    - to address the problem
  - teach/learn a moral
    - life lesson
    - scientific truth
    - anthropological, sociological, psychological principle
  - replicate an (+) event, prevent an (-) event
BACKGROUND

PURPOSE:

- **C&E and Proposal Arguments:**
  - Before proposing a solution, look at causes.
  - Before attacking or supporting proposal, look at effects.
  - Before making a decision, look at effects.

- **C&E and Critical Thinking:**
  - Forethought, foresight,
  - Prudence, precaution, planning
  - Consideration, conscientiousness
Logical Fallacies and Causality:

- *Post hoc ergo propter hoc:*
  - Precedence confused with causality
  - Chronology
  - Just because A precedes B, does not necessarily mean that A caused B.
Logical Fallacies and Causality:

- **Hasty generalization:**
  - Too few cases considered
  - Too little consideration of other causes, of alternative explanations (*Occam’s Razor*)

- **Overgeneralization:**
  - “universal quantifier” = “all”
  - “existential quantifier” = “some”
  - OG = *All* of the blame falls on X.
Logical Fallacies and Causality:

- **Oversimplification:**
  - Reducing a complex situation to a single cause

- **Fallacy of Oversimplified Cause:**
  - Multiple causes
  - Number of factors
  - No single cause
FINAL THOUGHTS
FINAL THOUGHTS

- Causes *precede* the event.
- Effects *follow* the event.
- You’ll need both Causes & Effects
- Causes & Effects = *plural*
  - a cause often has *more than 1* effect
  - an effect often has *more than 1* cause
- Causes & Effects = *inter-related, complex*
  - causes can *be effects* from other causes
  - effects can *become causes* of other effects
THE END