



Cause and Effect

Have you ever wished you could walk into a science fiction or horror story? Suppose you go to school one day and there are no teachers anywhere. In fact, all of the adults seem to be gone. Out in the parking lot, you see your teachers' cars. But where are the teachers? You and your classmates finally get the nerve to go into the teachers' lounge. A message is scrawled on the wall in red. When you examine it, you find it is written in raspberry jelly from a filled donut. The message says: **THEY'RE HERE.**

A practical joke? Or visitors from space?

For the past week, there have been many UFO sightings in your town. Is there any connection between the strange lights in the sky and the disappearance of your teachers? What caused your teachers to disappear? Are they playing a joke on their students, or have they been kidnapped by aliens?

Do you call the police, or take a day off from classes?

Most stories and articles are attempts to explain how or why something happened. That's why reading material is filled with causes and effects. If the story above were to continue, the reader would want to learn the cause for the teachers' disappearance.

Connecting the details in a selection is the key to answering cause and effect questions. All you have to do is think about how the details relate to each other. Also think about whether one thing actually *caused* something else or simply happened before it. On the following page are some tips on how to do this.



Look for words that connect the details.

Sometimes a selection or a question will use linking words that make it easier to see a cause and effect relationship.

Examples of such words and phrases are:

led to	because of
due to	as a result of
in order to	in response to
so	for this reason
since	resulted in
therefore	was responsible for

When you see words like these, try to figure out if they define a cause and effect relationship. Look at the following sentences to see how this tip works.

The students' dislike of the school cafeteria food *resulted in* a lot of wasted food.
The students' complaints *led to* the hiring of a new cook.



Try to use the word "because" to connect events.

Sometimes connecting words are "understood" rather than directly stated. You will need to make your own connections to events. The most important cause and effect connecting word is "because." Try to add a "because" to the events described below to determine cause and effect.

The food in the cafeteria is incredibly delicious today. Some of the students noticed a new cook wearing a chef's hat. One of the teachers said that the new cook used to own a restaurant.

First pick out the main details:

1. The food is delicious.
2. There is a new cook.

The cause and effect relationship is clear if you say: The food is delicious *because* there is a new cook.



Learn to make predictions based on what you've learned about characters and events from the selection.

You may be asked to make predictions about what event is most likely to happen next or what a character in a story will most likely do next. Let's go back to the cafeteria and make a prediction.

For a while, the whole school was buzzing with the news about the delicious food in the cafeteria. Even the former sack-lunch students were enjoying hot cafeteria meals. Then one Friday the principal announced that Bob, the chef with the tall hat, would be leaving.

If you were asked what event is most likely to happen next, how would you respond? Even though it's never directly stated, you would be pretty safe to predict that students will start complaining again about the cafeteria food or stop eating it all together.

In summary:

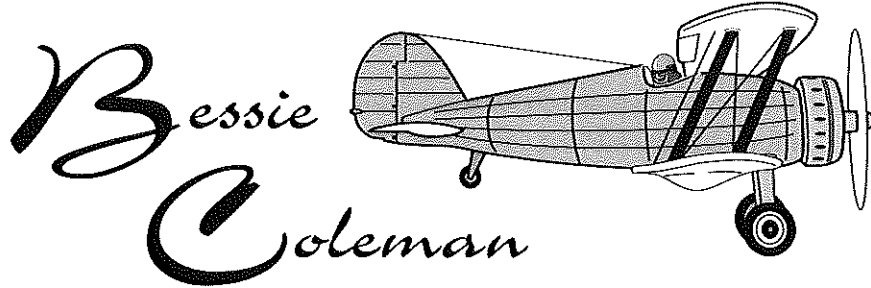
Cause and effect questions don't have to be hard. Let's keep it simple. As you practice, try to:

1. Look for connecting words (in the selection and in the question) that show a cause and effect relationship.
2. Try to relate details to each other to see if there's a connection.
3. Try to turn ideas from the selection into "because" statements that clearly show why things happen.

Practice these tips on the selection that follows. The more you practice, the easier it will be to see cause and effect relationships clearly and quickly.

PRACTICE
Reading Selection**Directions:**

Read the selection below and use it to answer the questions that follow.



by Doria Knebel

1 When Bessie Coleman decided she wanted to learn to fly, she had two obstacles to overcome: she was a woman, and she was an African American. It was the early 1900s, and flying airplanes was thought of as men's work. Female pilots were rare, and black female pilots were unheard of. Aviation schools in the United States flatly refused to accept Bessie as a student, but that didn't stop her from learning to fly.

2 Never one to give up easily, Bessie asked another flight enthusiast for assistance. Robert S. Abbott, the creator of the black newspaper *Chicago Defender*, helped Bessie realize her dream. He encouraged the young woman to learn French so she could study flying in France. Her friends and family were not supportive of this plan, but Bessie's determination to fly pushed her to take the steps necessary to become a pilot. Bessie returned to the United States a year later as the world's first licensed black pilot.

3 She could now pursue her other dream. Flying was a relatively new concept to the American public. Bessie felt that airplanes would change the world's future, and it was important to her that her people be part of this change. She wanted to promote the world of flying to as many young black men and women as she could. Bessie began giving flying exhibitions. She hoped not only to expose people to flying, but also to raise money to start an aviation school for African Americans.

4 Bessie's skills as a stunt pilot thrilled many audiences. Using a surplus army plane from World War I, she performed heart-stopping tricks that audiences loved. To give the crowd their money's worth, she would fly her plane directly toward the grandstand, or do a nose dive and spin seemingly out of control. The audiences screamed in fear thinking that she would crash into them, but Bessie had command of her machine, swooping the plane up into the air at the last minute.

5 This brave woman was not afraid to take risks. Her air shows were extremely dangerous and she had many close calls. At one show, the crowd was shocked when her motor died. Her plane started to nose down, dropping fast and out of control. This was not part of Bessie's act, but she remained calm. With only 200 feet remaining before she hit the ground, she managed to level out the plane and make a

safe landing. The audience was delighted with the stunt and had no idea that she had been in real danger.

6 Bessie Coleman's flying skills and ability to keep a clear head helped her avoid disaster on more than one occasion. She continued performing her daring show to raise money for an aviation school, hoping to gain the support and interest of African Americans. In 1926, during a practice run the night before a show, her control gears jammed. Bessie died in a plane crash from which her skills could not save her. 20

SAMPLE

Cause and Effect Questions

Directions: The questions below are based on the selection you have just read. Mark your answer choices by circling the correct letter.

- Bessie Coleman learned to fly in France because
 - she wanted to practice speaking French.
 - she had a friend who lived in France.
 - no one would teach her in the United States.
 - there were no aviation schools in the United States.
- Why did Bessie want to expose young black men and women to flying?
 - She needed help with her flying exhibitions.
 - She wanted others to attend the same school that she did.
 - She thought it would convince her family that flying was important.
 - She hoped to interest others in flying.
- Bessie performed at air shows in order to
 - earn money for an aviation school.
 - show her family she was successful.
 - teach others how to fly airplanes.
 - become the first licensed black pilot.
- The main reason that Bessie wanted to thrill her audiences was to
 - put them in danger.
 - give them their money's worth.
 - show them what the airplane could do.
 - have them praise her skills.
- Bessie avoided a crash at one of her flying exhibitions by
 - taking a daring risk.
 - doing a nose dive.
 - killing the plane's motor.
 - keeping a clear head.
- What was the main cause of Bessie's death?
 - Her plane was old and unsafe.
 - Her flying skills couldn't save her.
 - Her plane's control gears jammed.
 - Her stunts were too dangerous.

ADDITIONAL
Practice Questions

Directions: Now try answering some other types of questions about the selection. The various question types are explained in other units in this book. Circle your answers, then be prepared to discuss your choices in class.

7. In paragraph 2 of the selection, enthusiast means
- A. supporter.
 - B. expert.
 - C. student.
 - D. writer.
8. Which of the following was the author's purpose in writing the selection?
- A. to entertain the reader with facts about airplanes
 - B. to tell the reader about the dangers of flying
 - C. to encourage the reader to learn how to fly
 - D. to inform the reader about a person in history
9. Which of the following best describes Bessie Coleman?
- A. ordinary and sensible
 - B. brave and daring
 - C. reckless and foolish
 - D. shocking and dangerous