How to Write a Causal Analysis Essay People's interest in causal relationships develops early -- that's why toddlers are constantly asking, "Why?" A causal analysis or cause-effect essay examines the causes or consequences of actions or events -- why they happen or what the effects are. Careful consideration of the topic, support and structure of the essay make the causal relationship clearer to the reader. Decide on a Topic To focus on causes, consider why events transpire as they do. You might write about why you chose your college, what events triggered World War II or why people choose online learning. Think carefully about what causes reasonably led to the result and why. To focus on effects, consider the consequences and their significance. Potential topics include the effects of a broken home on children, the impact an excellent or poor teacher or boss can have on you or the ramifications of dropping out of high school. Create a Thesis Explain the causal relationship your paper will focus on in a single sentence, your thesis statement. The thesis should explain the overall point of the essay and the ideas you will use for support in a logical, clear manner. An essay on causes might use the thesis, "The primary causes of World War II were the German invasion of Poland, the Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations." The statement reasonably does not assert these are the only causes, and it clearly establishes the concepts the paper will include. Develop and Organize Develop the paper with one body paragraph for each cause or effect listed in the thesis. Use specific examples to explain the connections, illustrating the chain of events in the causal relationship. For example, a paper focusing on effects might contain a paragraph about how exercise helps diabetics by increasing muscle mass. The paragraph would need to explain that muscles store glucose more effectively than fat does, helping to reduce blood sugar levels. Clarify the cause-effect relationship rather than presenting a comparison/contrast, explaining a process or defining categories. Add Finishing Touches Create an introductory paragraph that gets the reader's attention through a hook such as a quote or statistic -- any concept that sets up your causal connection. An essay about the causes of the American Civil War might begin by saying most people believe the cause was slavery, but the truth is more complex. Place the thesis at the end of the introduction. Then develop a concluding paragraph that summarizes the connections you have made and emphasizes your point about the cause-effect relationship. The Civil War paper might end with the idea that understanding the causes helps the country avoid another such conflict. Always proofread carefully after finishing your draft. The Conclusion of a Cause & Effect Essay A cause-effect paper, or causal analysis, explores the causes and/or consequences of actions and events -- such as why a story character fails in his mission or what will happen if you fail a class. The concluding paragraph for such an essay is important since it emphasizes the causal connection and often is the portion readers recall most readily. Include a Summary The conclusion should include a reminder of the cause-effect points in your paper. Create a summary that synthesizes the ideas, showing the reader how they relate to each other. An essay focusing on the relationship of proper sleeping habits to better health might summarize benefits such as improving concentration, repairing and preventing illness, and fighting depression. Emphasizing the primary beneficial effects described in the body of the essay provides the reader with a comprehensive picture of your argument and can underscore important connections. Return to the Introduction Return to the idea you presented as your introductory hook to make a strong conclusion. A causal analysis about World War II, for example, might open with the point that, while many people attribute the start of the war to Nazi activity, closer study reveals a more complicated set of factors. An effective way to conclude this cause-effect paper would be to refer to that misunderstanding again, emphasizing how the paper demonstrated why that explanation is too simplistic. Reminding the reader of that introductory hook in the conclusion creates a strong sense of closure. Make a Larger Point Many strategies are available to emphasize the importance of the cause-effect relationship. If the topic implies making a decision or taking an action, you might suggest a specific decision or action that follows from you argument. As part of a more general explanation of a cause-effect relationship, consider demonstrating broader applications or extending the topic to include different contexts -- such as predicting effects in the future. A rhetorical question can make a strong closer, too. A paper about the effects of global warming, for example, might plead with readers to take action to reduce their carbon footprint, emphasize the environmental destruction if preventative measures are not taken, describe a future world devastated by global warming or ask whether readers are willing, because of inaction, to jeopardize the future of their grandchildren and generations that follow. Avoid Common Errors An effective conclusion for your causal analysis does not simply repeat your thesis or topic sentences word-for-word. The summary explains why the ideas matter rather than restating them verbatim. Make sure your conclusion focuses on the causes and/or effects you covered since bringing up new ideas can confuse your reader. Apologizing for your lack of expertise about the causal relationship or adding phrases that minimize your argument (for example, "These causes represent just one opinion.") weaken the impact of your analysis.