

Comprehension Activity

Introduce: Cause and Effect

Activity Type: Introduce

Grade: K-3

Group Size: Small Group, Large Group, Whole Class

Length: 15 minutes

Materials: A fiction, nonfiction, or picture book to read out loud; chart paper or board

Goal: Given a book, students will be able to identify cause and effect relationships in it.

Prepare:

Choose a book that appeals to early readers.

Model/Instruct:

1. Show students the book you have chosen (front cover, back cover, and a quick flip through the pages) and ask them to make guesses as to what it's about.

Today we are going to read a book entitled _____. What do you think might happen in this book?

2. Record the students' comments on the chart paper or board.

3. Explain the meaning of cause and effect.

Cause and effect is the name we give to a type of relationship. One thing causes something else to happen in this relationship. The cause is why something happens and the effect is what happens. Think about the following situation: A girl is carrying a tray full of food in the cafeteria. She accidentally trips over a backpack and drops the tray. There is food everywhere. It might be helpful to think about the effect first. What was the end result?

Call on students to answer.

That's right. There is a big mess because food spilled on the floor. What caused the food to spill?

Call on students to answer.

That's right. The cause is that she tripped over a backpack. This is what made her drop the tray.

Thinking about cause and effect can help you understand your reading better.

4. Give examples of the ways students have already used strategies to understand cause-and-effect relationships.

What might be an acceptable cause for not finishing a homework assignment? Have you ever done something that had a different effect than you wanted? Can you tell about a cause and effect that you read in a book or saw in a movie?

5. Read the first half of the book, pausing at appropriate places to point out a cause and its effect in the book.

Practice:

6. Introduce key words that will help students identify causes and effects.

There are some words that help us find cause and effect relationships in a book. They are not always there but sometimes they can help us find the cause and effect. The words are: *because, so, if, then, and as a result.*

Write the key words on the board or chart paper.

Which of these words do you think is a clue about cause? Which of these words might give a clue about effect?

Call on students. Circle the words that help identify cause and star the words that help identify effect.

7. Read the rest of the book, identifying causes and effects with students.

I am going to read the rest of the book. When you hear one of these words or think you have identified a cause or effect, raise your hand. I will call on you to share.

8. Record students' comments about causes and effects on the chart paper or board. You may wish to write causes in one column and effects in the other.

9. Check and confirm causes and effects using the information from the chart paper or board.

Now let's look back at our list of causes and effects. It looks like we were able to gather some good information about our topic. We will draw an arrow from each cause to its effect.

Go through each cause and ask students to identify the effect. Draw an arrow from the cause to the effect. Continue until all effects have arrows to them.

When you find causes and effects, you think about the book in a different way. You are focusing on an important relationship. Finding causes and effects helps us to understand books better.

Adjust:

For advanced students:

Encourage these students to identify the cause-and-effect relationship that is most important to understanding the book. Ask them to think of a new scenario that uses the same cause and effect.

For struggling students:

Some students may have difficulty finding causes and effects at the same time. In this case, it is helpful to identify the effect first. Then, get students to think about causes by asking students questions like:

What made this happen? Why did this happen? Who did something that caused this? What did s/he do?

For ELL students:

Before reading the book, explain the meaning of any key vocabulary or concepts that they may need to understand the book. You may need to provide additional examples from students' everyday lives to make the concepts of cause and effect clear.

This lesson is shared by <http://www.freereading.net>



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