**Causal Analysis**Prepared by Theresa Yonker

Use causal analysis any time you make logical assumptions for why a particular situation has occurred. Often there is no single reason for why something happens; rather, there are a series of linked reasons. You analyze those reasons fully and logically connect them to the situation in question. Casual analysis may comprise an entire essay, or it may be one element that helps develop a longer essay.

**Example**

If you do poorly your first semester of college but you are determined to improve for the next semester, it is useful to think about possible causes for your performance. Most likely these causes will be linked. Perhaps you spent too much time with friends, which led to not enough time for study. Lack of time in turn affected your preparation for tests. In a causal analysis paper, you would address each one of those causes fully.

**Strategies to consider**

1. Choose words that signal cause relationships. Such words as *therefore, consequently, since, as a result, thus*, etc., indicate to the reader that you are connecting your ideas and linking them to show a “chain” of causes.
2. Analyze each cause fully and logically. The reader needs to understand each cause and its relation to subsequent causes.
3. Avoid dogmatism and/or ideology. An example of dogmatic reasoning would be to conclude that “All English teachers are emotional” simply because you once had an emotional English teacher. An example of assigning personal ideology, or set of beliefs, would be to state that “AIDS has been caused by God’s need to warn us against being sexually active.” Neither of those “causes” can be demonstrated. Rather, they are based solely on personal experience and opinion.

**Assignment**

Choose one of the options below:

1. Revise one of your essays, adding cause-effect as an element that helps develop that essay.
2. Think of a recent trend and/or fad in society and analyze the possible causes.
3. Question the result of sexual socialization in society—how we learn to act based upon being either male or female. Look at behavior and question its causes.