

## ACADEMIC LANGUAGE

### Cause and effect language (1) Different structures

There are many ways to express cause and effect relationships. You can use verbs: *transform affect lead to disrupt modify facilitate alter contribute to*

You can also use nouns: *impact change disturbance*

Sometimes cause and effect relationships do not have specific nouns or verbs to highlight the relationship between phenomena:

*Avalanches are released by either an increase in stress (fresh snow or weight of a climber/skier) or a decrease in strength of the snowpack ...*

Either the cause or effect can come first depending on whether the verb is active or passive. Compare:

*Avalanches are released by ... an increase in stress (effect ← cause; passive verb)*

*An increase in stress releases avalanches (cause → effect; active verb)*

A phenomenon can also be a cause and effect at the same time:

*Avalanches are released by either an increase in stress ... or a decrease in the strength of the snowpack caused by the heat of the sun. (effect ← cause / effect ← cause)*

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### Cause and effect language (2) Result

The grammatical subject of a sentence is typically the main focus. The same message can be expressed by changing the focus of the sentence and using appropriate cause and effect language to clarify the meaning. Compare the examples using the word *result* and notice the word class:

*One key **result** of rising house prices is unaffordability. (noun)*

*Rising house prices is a significant phenomenon. **As a result**, houses become unaffordable for many people. (adverbial)*

*The phenomenon of unaffordability, whereby potential buyers are priced out of the market, may occur **as a result of** rising house prices. (preposition)*

*Rising house prices can **result in** unaffordability. (verb)*

*Unaffordability may **result from** rising house prices. (verb)*

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### Cause and effect language (3) Nouns, verbs, and prepositional phrases

Cause and effect language can be very complex. The same message can be expressed in different ways using key cause and effect nouns, verbs, and prepositions. You can focus on either the cause (highlighted in the examples) or the effect by putting it first in a sentence.

Key cause → effect language includes:

*Limited supply is one **cause of / reason for / source of** price increases. (nouns)*

*Limited supply tends to **cause / lead to / result in / affect** price increases. (verbs)*

*One **cause of / reason for / source of** price increases is limited supply. (nouns)*

Key effect → cause language includes:

*One **effect of / result of / consequence of** limited supply is price increases. (nouns)*

*Prices increased **because of / due to / on account of / as a result of** limited supply. (prepositional phrases)*

*Price increases **result from / are caused by / are brought about by** limited supply. (verbs)*

Notice also that hedging language is often necessary when expressing cause and effect relations. For example, the sentence *Smoking causes lung cancer* is not factually correct because smoking does not always cause lung cancer. The statement needs rephrasing using hedging language, e.g. *Smoking can cause lung cancer* or *Smoking often causes lung cancer*.

### TASK 3 Using cause and effect language

1 Join sentence halves 1–5 with a–e using the cause and effect language below.

result in because of are caused by effect of may result from

- 1 Commodity price rises
  - 2 Compared to most other regions in the UK, London appears very ethnically diverse
  - 3 Unemployment
  - 4 Improvements in food hygiene and food preparation clearly
  - 5 Although the main
- a unique influences on the capital city including its status as a 'world city' and high international visitor numbers.
  - b GPS satellite navigation systems is a reduction in journey time, drivers may come to rely too heavily on such technology.
  - c a number of causes, including low economic growth and population growth.
  - d notable reductions in bacterial outbreaks and poisoning.
  - e greater demand than supply.

### TASK 2 Using the word *result in* cause and effect sentences

1 Complete the cause and effect relationships in the sentences with the correct preposition *in*, *of*, or *from*. Use each preposition twice.

- 1 Millions of homeowners across the USA saw the value of their houses drop significantly as a result ..... the property crash.
- 2 Headaches may result ..... stress and dehydration; alternatively there may be other causes.
- 3 One result ..... improving secondary school education is likely to be greater competition for university places.
- 4 This essay investigates whether increased trade liberalization actually results ..... more consumer choice.
- 5 Sudden adoption of a low-calorie diet may not result ..... weight loss as intended.
- 6 Arguably the phenomenon of low bone mass results ..... three major causes.

2 Now highlight the cause in each sentence in 1.

3 Write at least four sentences containing cause and effect relationships about your area of study. Use the phrases *result in*, *result from*, *as a result*, and *as a result of*.

### TASK 4 Expressing cause and effect relationships

1 Identify the nouns and verbs relating to cause and effect in sentences 1–7.

- 1 Sea fishing on an industrial scale has led to a considerable transformation of the marine environment.
- 2 The safety of modern wards in hospitals owes much to early pioneers in hygiene such as Lister.
- 3 The financial collapse was triggered by a computer failure.
- 4 Education can alter not just the way people behave, but the way they think.
- 5 Ideas and discoveries from past civilizations such as the Greeks and Sumerians still have a huge impact on our lives today.
- 6 The main cause of change in the modern world is not technological advances, but human imagination.
- 7 Human behaviour has contributed most to the changes that we see in the planet today.

2 Write sentences showing the cause and effect relationships between the phenomena. Use the cause and effect language in brackets.

Example: *natural phenomena / earthquakes / other catastrophes (trigger)*  
*Natural phenomena such as earthquakes can trigger other catastrophes.*

- 1 a range of marine processes / constantly / marine environment (change)
- 2 science and medicine / well-being / society (impact)
- 3 many illnesses / general public / pollution / accidents (cause)
- 4 a knowledge / marine ecosystem / planet / future generations (save)
- 5 people's lives / greatly / science and the arts (improve)