

## DEV 110 Sample Essay: Causal Analysis(Cause and Effect)

### Four Years of College: Why?



Before entering college, I worked for a year as a security guard, a cashier in a liquor store, an orderly at New England Deaconess Hospital, and an art assistant at a Barnes and Noble Bookstore. As a guard I worked nights, slept days, and soon felt I was sleeping my life away. At the liquor store I often had to serve unruly customers who were always right, and at the Deaconess I got some of the worst jobs, with no real chance of advancement. At Barnes and Noble I was happiest, especially making signs and displays for the store, but I was eventually displaced by a former worker with a degree in art. This was enough for me, and I didn't want it to happen again, so for this reason and several others, I signed up for four years of college.

I knew that I would finally be making my parents happy. Both college graduates, they wanted me to be one also. They told me for years about the advantages of a college degree over a high school diploma. I can still hear my mother saying, "Go to college and get a degree. You need a degree now, and besides, you'll be proud of yourself." I can still hear myself, though, saying I wanted to see if I could make it on my own--without college. They were persistent but not demanding, and they allowed me my year of discovery. Now I know that they were right and can see they are relieved that I decided on more school.

Another important reason for returning was my desire to learn more about many subjects. I have always loved reading, especially Richard Wright and Langston Hughes, and so I hoped to enjoy the literature courses. I'm curious about the literature of other countries, in particular Africa, and I plan to select some black studies courses during the four years. In physical education, I hope to continue with scuba diving, and I want to spend more time running track as I did in high school. For my science requirement, I'll probably take biology because I sometimes think of becoming a veterinarian. Possibly studying biology will help me make a final decision.

At this time, however, I seem most sure about my choice of an art major--a very important reason for my coming to college. I started drawing when I was very small; cats, dogs, reindeer, and Santa Claus were my specialties then. In high school I often had my work displayed, and when I was a junior, my watercolor of the Boston Marathon won \$100 in a citywide contest. My plan right now is to go into commercial art, possibly drawing magazine advertisements for clothing. I know this will take a commitment, though, because many people have artistic talent, but only a few are able to carry out the extra effort to make it pay off. Right now, the Art Department seems to be where I belong.

I have one more reason for coming to school--myself. I want to feel better about myself and more optimistic when I look to the future. I have seen my parents struggle for their degrees while rearing six children, and I have seen how much their effort improved our standard of living. Being younger than they were when they started, and without anyone yet to take care of, I should be able to make good use of my time now and improve my life. For me, just working from job to job wasn't enough. College is a place for me.

Assignment: Why is the above essay a causal analysis?

Label the lead-in and the thesis statement.

Write an essay map for the introductory paragraph.

How could you improve the above essay?

## Team Terrible



When I decided to play hockey for the Charlestown Civics, my thoughts were all positive: teamwork, goals, and wins. The negatives didn't really cross my mind, not right away anyway. Eventually, however, I had to let them cross. Oh yes, we had teamwork, goals, and wins in every game--not ours, though, the other team's. From day one of the season to turn-in-our-T-shirts day, we easily rated as the worst team in league history simply because we were overconfident, under-prepared, and overmatched.

First, we had trouble with our attitude--overconfidence. Before our first game, we didn't even bother to practice because we convinced ourselves that we had the depth and power to blow away any opponents. (Why, I'm not sure, because we had never played as a team before.) Unfortunately, the opponents felt differently, and we got beat 10-0. It was then that I sensed a long year coming, but not the rest of the team. They just rolled over the loss, claiming, "We were caught on an off night; we'll destroy 'em next time!" Next time was destruction all right. I think they beat us twenty goals to our zero, but I stopped counting after fifteen. Our overconfidence was fast becoming defeatist, and so we decided on a little polishing up at practice.

Practice, if that's what you could call it, was our next team problem. The overconfident ones (believe it or not, we still had some) thought that practice was beneath them, and the defeatists couldn't take themselves seriously enough for a real workout. In fact, we spent most of our once-a-week session taking shots at the goalie, something we rarely got to do at games. Occasionally, we'd practice our skating, passing, and stickhandling, but most of the time was spent shooting in the general direction of the net. At least our goalie got a workout; that is, when we weren't at the candy machine or resting on the bench.

We didn't get him in good enough shape for our opponents, though--the third major cause of our disastrous season. We always played against better-prepared, more talented, and more experienced foes, who came out on the ice with a will to win. They were already through their warm-up drills before we got our team to the rink and our skates tied. It is not at all surprising that all our games had one thing in common--defeat. We lost fifteen straight (I like consistency), with the opposition teams always ringing up at least ten goals against us. It was as if we were playing football; we lost every game by a touchdown, a field goal, and more. We also made ordinary teams look like the Boston Bruins. They loved to see us straggling out onto the ice because we were a sure "W" in their win column.

The only relief for the entire season's misery was our playoff game (in which the league organizers foolishly allowed us to compete). In this game, we got as far as the third period with a 1-0 lead (the other team must have been napping), but their five quick goals turned off our dim hopes of a victory. It didn't really matter, though, because it seemed just like a victory to us. After all, we had lost by a countable score, and we had done what escaped us all year. We scored a goal! As promising as this final performance may have seemed to the optimists among us, however, we have not regrouped this winter. (1)

Can you label the lead-in, thesis statement, and essay map in the introduction?

Why is the above essay a causal analysis?

Which sections of the essay could use more details?

(1) The essay was written by Michael Doherty, from Short Model Essays by Ann Taylor.