

ENGL 1010

Topic Worksheet

Causal Analysis Essay:

A causal analysis essay analyzes causes and/or effects. The essay explains why an event or phenomenon has happened (causes), the reasons for a trend or condition; and/or it explains the effects (results) of an event, phenomenon, trend, or condition.

Sociologists, for example, may seek to find answers to why a spouse would batter his or her partner—what **causes** a person to feel the need to batter someone they “love”? (Or what are the **effects** of abuse?)

A psychologist may wonder and research the causes of addictive behavior—why do some people handle potentially addictive substances just fine, while others become addicted?

Or police psychologists may investigate what factors lead to episodes of school violence, such as the Columbine event (or what the effects of school violence are).

Many questions make good topics for causal analysis essays:

- Why do only half of college students graduate?
- What are the effects of vaping on underage users?
- What is the cause of global climate change?
- Why is teen pregnancy trending downward?
- Why is the U.S. experiencing an increase in the number and intensity of forest fires?

The topic of your essay should be complex enough to lend itself to four pages of analytic discussion, and it should have authentic interest to you—something you truly want to know. **Remember that you are not *describing* a process but *analyzing* causes or effects:**

business	the environment	families	government
human rights	ethics	crime	religion
medicine	health	psychology	societal interactions
energy	politics	education	science

Some possible topic considerations—but START FROM YOUR OWN AUTHENTIC CURIOSITY in choosing a topic.

► **the causes and/or effects of:**

- a particular trend/product/activity
- fear of immigrants
- domestic violence
- peer pressure
- student cheating
- online classes
- racial/sexual/religious discrimination
- the increasing cost of attending college
- global warming
- the college dropout rate
- vanishing plant and animal species
- popular fascination with celebrities
- changing morality/behavior/attitudes

List three topics you feel an initial interest in (from this list or your own):

What would you like to find out about these topics?

Which topic are you MOST authentically interested in? What will the topic of your analysis be? When you decide, write a one-sentence answer to—I want to know:
