

Understanding Cause and Effect What made that happen, and how far back does it go?

6 days · 6 books · 201 min in full · 106 min short · Grade 1

The idea Grade 1 can usually say what happened. This unit asks what made it happen, and then whether the cause they named has a cause of its own. Six books are chosen because in each of them the relevant events and evidence are visible on the page, so a class can be held to evidence. The unit moves from causes stated in the same sentence as their effect, to causes a class can test because the book runs them more than once, to chains where each link causes the next, and finally to effects that nobody intended. The last idea is the valuable one and the reason the unit exists. A cause does not have to be a plan, and an effect does not have to be what somebody wanted. Two of these books are built on exactly that.

The arc

1. A cause and its effect can sit in the same sentence
2. The same cause repeated is a cause you can test
3. Changing one word changes the effect
4. A cause can have a cause of its own
5. An effect need not be what anybody intended
6. Each step can depend on the one before rather than just follow it

The 6 days

DAY 1

Because Of The Ponytail Find what causes what in this book, and say the reason in your own words.

Why here. First because the cause and the effect are printed on the same page. The cause is stated directly, so the class can learn the sentence shape before it has to infer a relationship.

From Stephanie's Ponytail by Robert Munsch · Causes and effects stated on the same page 33 min full · 17 min short · Makes: Three pairs of boxes joined by 'because'

DAY 2

Telling Her To Stay Find the pattern in Coriander's replies, and explain what causes each one and what it causes in turn.

Why here. Second: the same cause and effect four times with one word changed each round. That is a controlled experiment a Grade 1 class can actually run.

From *Coriander the Contrary Hen* by Dori Chaconas · A repeated cause and effect where only one word changes 34 min full · 18 min short · Makes: A table of what was said and what she cackled back

DAY 3

Opened It Just A Little Find what causes the stampedes in this book, and prove it from the three doors.

Why here. Third, and the first real test - the book runs the same cause three times and the class predicts the third from the first two.

From *Pigs* by Robert Munsch · A cause you can test, because the book runs it three times 34 min full · 18 min short · Makes: A table of the three doors and the three steps

DAY 4

Is It True, Is It True Explain how each thing Elizabeth says causes something the dragon does, and what it costs him.

Why here. Fourth. The first chain: each cause is asked for politely and produces the next. The class stops naming one cause and starts naming a sequence of them.

From *The Paper Bag Princess* by Robert Munsch · A chain of causes, each one asked for politely 34 min full · 18 min short · Makes: A table of questions, boasts and costs

DAY 5

What Her Threats Do Work out what each of the girl's attempts actually causes.

Why here. Fifth, and the turn of the unit. Every effect here is real and none is what was intended, which is where 'because' stops meaning 'in order to'.

From *Don't Forget to Come Back* by Robie H. Harris · Causes and effects that never match what was intended 34 min full · 18 min short · Makes: A three-row table of attempts and effects

DAY 6

From *One Dot To A Wall* Put Vashti's dots in the order she made them, then mark and explain two places where an earlier event made the next step happen.

Why here. Last: a sequence where the class must distinguish mere order from dependence. It is not enough to say what came next; children have to identify and explain two places where an earlier event made the next step happen.

From *The Dot* by Peter H. Reynolds · A sequence where each step depends on the one before 32 min full · 17 min short · Makes: A labelled strip of dots in order, with two causal links marked and

explained from the book Words to use Word How it is used because The unit's word. Every answer is said as a 'because' sentence, all six days. so Introduced on day 4 for the forward direction: this happened, so that happened. on purpose / by accident

Day 5. This is the distinction the unit is built to produce.

What to prepare Checkpoint 1 page, one per child Checkpoint 2 page, one per child A strip of four blank boxes per pair for the performance task Checkpoints After day 3 · One because, pointed at A single page from a book the class has met. The child says what happened and what made it happen, and points at the words that told them. Without a book. No - it needs the page, which can be photocopied. Look for. The finger lands on text that states the cause. A child who gives a plausible cause the page does not carry is reasoning, not reading, and days 4 to 6 will tighten it. Say to the child. What happened? What made it happen? Show me where it says so.

After day 6 · Cause, chain, and intention Give the child three short effect statements from Don't Forget to Come Back, each with enough surrounding context to identify the cause. At least one item should also support a second causal link. Ask what caused the effect, what caused that when a second link is available, and whether the result was what the character wanted. Without a book. Three sentences on a page are enough. Look for. The child can name a cause, follow at least one cause back one further step when the text supports it, say whether the effect was intended, and explain what was wanted instead when it was not. A child who can name only the effect, cannot follow a supported second link, or treats every effect as

intentional has not yet separated cause from intention. Say to the child. What made this happen? And what caused that? Did she want that result? If not, what did she want? The task at the end The chain, in four boxes Each pair takes one of the six books. If the book supports a genuine causal chain, use three boxes for the events - what happened last, what caused it, and what caused that - then use the fourth box to judge whether the final effect was intended. If the book does not support three linked causes, use the four boxes for two evidenced cause-and-effect pairs instead. Pairs read their work backwards to the class, who check each link against the book. Collect. The four-box sheet, and the class's check on whether every causal link or cause-and-effect pair is supported by the book. Time. One session of about 35 minutes.

Teacher key

Checkpoint 1: in Stephanie's Ponytail the relevant cause is stated directly on the page - she wears it a new way, so they copy it. Students should not need to invent a cause. Checkpoint 2: none of the three effects is wanted. The threats produce compliance she did not ask for and attention she did not want; what she wanted was to be left alone. Task: three events connected by two supported causal links is a strong answer at Grade 1. Two supported causal connections beat a longer chain with invented steps. For books built from repeated pairs rather than a true chain, two accurate cause-and-effect pairs are the stronger response. What a strong answer looks like Strand What to see Cause Names what made something happen. Evidence Points at the words or picture that carry the cause.

Strand What to see Chain Follows a cause back at least one further step when the text supports it.

Intention Says whether the effect was what anybody wanted. Keeping the daily evidence Keep each child's 'because' sentence from day 1 and their two marked causal links from day 6. The change to look for is length and evidence: one explicit cause-and-effect connection on day 1 and two supported causal links by day 6, each tied back to the book. What to pass on A child still answering 'yes, she wanted it' at checkpoint 2 will struggle with the Grade 2 perspective unit, which opens with a book that names an intention and withholds the other side.

Day 2 needs the four rounds read consecutively. Splitting Coriander across two

sittings loses the

controlled comparison entirely. The books this unit uses The Paper Bag Princess by Robert Munsch · 1 lesson The Dot by Peter H. Reynolds · 1 lesson Pigs by Robert Munsch · 1 lesson Don't Forget to Come Back by Robie H. Harris · 1 lesson Stephanie's Ponytail by Robert Munsch · 1 lesson Coriander the Contrary Hen