Morales/Spring 2019 Investigating Causes and Effects (150 points)

Write 4-5 page essay (1000-1250 words) in which you investigate common/provable causes or effects of one of the issues/topics listed below.

Research: Consult a minimum of 4 reliable, academic articles. In addition to the print sources, you may also use documentary films and/or audio or visual news segments. Your paper must include a works cited page AND your essay must contain parenthetical citations to identity your sources within your essay.

To begin, educate yourself on the subject at hand by reading related articles from academic/scholarly databases such ProQuest, Opposing Viewpoints, and CQ Researcher (available through GCC’s Library webpage). Find facts, first. Get an overview of your subject. Who is affected? How are they affected? Take some time to view documentaries and to listen to audio reports such as those studied in class. Once you have learned about your topic, you must decide which major causes or effects are most significant or most crucial to our understanding of the issue.

Next, begin to look for causes/effects. Can you see patterns in the data? What do the experts say about the causes/effects? Have you circled around your topic and tried to understand the complexity of it from many points of view?

One reason why we examine causes and effects is to find solutions to social/scientific problems and to gain a deeper understanding of our communities and the world in general so that we can more effectively create new laws, policies, and institutions. Therefore, each topic outlined below is written with a specific job/context to help you scope out your audience and write with a distinct purpose. As you write your paper, write with the intent of *teaching* your audience about important aspects of this social issue and with the goal that our improved understanding of the problem will result in positive changes for all of us. Therefore, in your conclusion, you should briefly offer simple solutions or changes that we can make to help improve this problem. Let your readers know why such awareness or change is important. (This is called a “call to action”).

TOPICS: (CHOOSE ONE)

1. High School Drop Outs

You have volunteered for a committee for the City of Los Angeles and your job is to write a report in which you determine the three most common reasons why LAUSD students are dropping out of high school. In 2017 LAUSD reported a dropout rate of 24% percent and they are hoping to decrease that rate as quickly as possible. Given the data and demographics, what can we learn about who is dropping out and why? We might find a that a decision to drop out reflects a causal chain (working part time, no time for homework, grades dropping, feeling discouraged, dropping out, which might lead us back to the fact that the student needed to earn extra money to help his mother pay the bills which indicates that poverty and financial instability is the primary cause). Write an essay in which you determine three common causes of students dropping out and then make brief recommendations for solutions/changes that might help to retain those students. Use models/programs from actual schools when possible.

2. Child Abuse Awareness

Why would a parent ever harm her child? Most parents, even loving ones, can often lose their tempers and discipline their children too harshly, sometimes with physical violence and sometimes with cruel words and neglect. Sometimes when a parent crosses the line, he or she is are unaware and don’t know where the line has been drawn to begin with between acceptable discipline and abuse. Your job is to write a pamphlet for new parents to help them understand the essential causes of child abuse. Provide some facts and statistics about child abuse and include a clear definition of child abuse. The primary content of this pamphlet should inform readers about the causes of child abuse, both immediate and remote. Finally, provide practical tips and advice to new parents so that they do not cross that line.

3. Suicide Prevention for Teens

You have just been hired to be a student counselor/advocate at a local high school in which three teenagers have committed suicide in the past three years. Your first task is to produce a document for the students in which you help them understand the a few of the effects of depression especially serious depression that could lead to suicide. What happens to a person when he or she is depressed? What warning signs or red flags might help them to help each other? To whom might they turn for help if they can’t talk to their parents? Yours is an important job since, in the past, we have not taken mental health as seriously as we should, and many teenagers have suffered alone without any understanding of the problem.

4. Growing up Online

Many children, nowadays, from the time they walk and talk, are learning how to use the Internet and iPhones and are, essentially, growing up online, exposed from a young age to social media and an explosion of digital information. But how is growing up online affecting children’s behavior, their minds, how they view themselves, how they view society? In your opinion, after doing your research, are there more benefits to growing up online, more drawbacks/dangers? To make your article as interesting as possible, illustrate the effects with specific/real examples. Your job is to investigate these questions in an informative article published in an online parenting magazine.

5. Helping the Homeless

 Recent estimates put the LA homeless population at 50-60,000 people. Many of those people do not want to be homeless and are trying to stabilize their lives and would welcome any help they can get. You have been hired by a local nonprofit organization called Loaves and Fishes to find some of the most prevalent causes of homelessness in our city. After doing the research, you are to write a report for the organization’s board members in which you outline the primary causes of homelessness in LA, citing facts and statistics about the people affected. Based on your research, you might also make recommendations regarding possible solutions, especially those solutions that seem to be working in other cities.

6. Propose your own a topic: Must be an observable social problem and you must create a writing context for your research (i.e. an informative pamphlet, etc.) Proposals due May 8, Wednesday and must be approved before you begin.

DUE DATES: SEE SYLLABUS

SAMPLE OUTLINE (Keep in mind that this is one variation of what your paper might look like. Your outline will look different, however, if you are examining one major cause or a causal chain. The point of an outline is that it should be a logical plan of your thought process, one that allows you to see the blueprints of your discussion ahead of time. Imagine that you will need to present this report to a group of people on a committee. Will they be convinced by your points and will they find your analysis easy to follow?

1. Introduction (Can be more than one paragraph)
2. Hook illustrating very clearly the issue at hand
3. Overview of the issue to be discussed
4. Facts
5. Why it’s an important issue
6. Thesis Statement (Example: In addition to the well-known health problems associated with obesity, perhaps most devastating effect of childhood obesity is a low self-esteem, which can, in turn, lead to self-destructive habits such as binging and purging, depression, and isolation.)
7. Examination of first cause/effect
8. Explanation of the cause/effect and why it’s important
9. Proof that this cause/effect exists
10. Analysis or discussion of your evidence/proof
11. Examination of second cause/effect

A. Explanation of the cause/effect and why it’s important

B. Proof that this cause/effect exists

C. Analysis or discussion of your evidence/proof

IV. Examination of third cause/effect and why it’s important

1. Explanation of the cause/effect and why it’s important
2. Proof that this cause/effect exists
3. Analysis or discussion of your evidence/proof
4. CONCLUSION
5. Restatement of the main points
6. Predictions? What might this problem/situation look like in the future?
7. What should we do about it? Solutions?