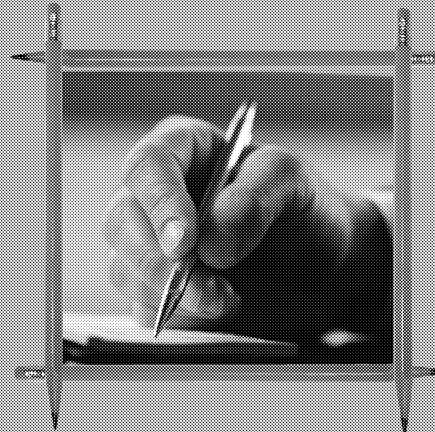
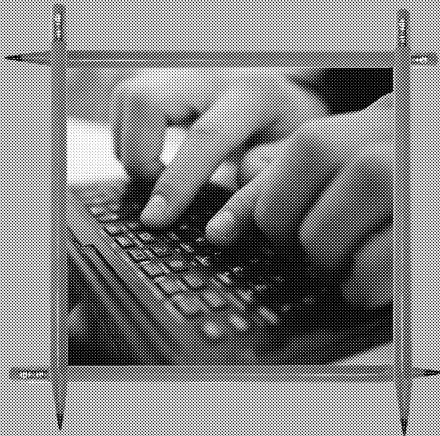


8 Kinds of Writing

Lessons and Practice for
Writing Tests and Samples

SECOND EDITION



ALLEN S. GOOSE

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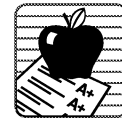
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Chapter 8: Speculation About Causes or Effects

Most science fiction stories are based on the question “What if . . . ?” We write in this fashion when we want to propose differences in actual current or past situations. This type of writing generally calls for using higher-level thinking skills.

As always, the opening of the prompt is very important. In the past, I’ve worked hard at getting students to write unique openings. You might also want to read the beginning of a few classic novels when teaching this type of writing. *A Tale of Two Cities* and *Moby Dick* are two that I’ve used successfully as models. Students often find it hard to think of original ways to begin these prompts, and use a few tried-and-true openings. I sometimes kill common beginnings in the hope that students will be forced to think of better ones. When students hand in a good prompt with a poor beginning, I give it back. I tell them I can’t accept their work without a better introduction, leading to a better essay.

Another secret to good speculative writing is linking the causes or effects to the speculative situation. Students often want to link them only with opinion. This is a good time to give a lesson about the difference between fact and opinion. Of course, students must use their opinions, but they must learn to back their opinions with fact. If you get papers laden with opinion and light on fact, suggest that students include some facts to prove the correctness of their opinions.

In the prompts included here, I ask students to write about changes in their

lives. Prompts asking about changes in society—like “What if the South had won the Civil War?”—could also be used here; it’s the “What if?” that’s important. If the question is “What if?,” you are into speculative writing.

Middle school students find this type of writing very demanding. Students of this age tend to be conformists and can find it difficult to think in ways that are different. They can also be rather provincial and unable to think globally. As the teacher, you have to work hard to give students permission to think differently. They need to feel free to express themselves without the fear of being shot down for being different.

These prompts often produce the most interesting papers from students. The prompts should be introduced only when you’re sure that most of your students will succeed in this style of writing.

Graphic Organizer

The important characteristic of this writing type is the speculation. In the prewriting organizer, students are asked to focus in on this characteristic. Students need to be sure they have a clear speculation and some idea of where they want to go with it. The three circles in the graphic organizer will help them determine either causes or effects. They need to finish their thoughts with the results of their speculations and the causes and effects in the rectangle at the bottom.



Speculation About Causes or Effects Prompt Notes

The Big Change

- This is a good prompt to lead you into talking about the changes middle school students go through.
- In prewriting exercises, talk about the changes people go through in their lives.
- Talk about the effects of personal changes.
- Get students to talk about how they see themselves.

Grounded

- Remind students that they need to be very specific, limiting their thoughts to just one grounding. They should not write in general terms.
- Encourage students to fully develop their thoughts about what they might have done differently.
- This essay provides a good opportunity for students to think about and discuss various principles of living. Varying opinions can lead to lively class discussions on this topic.
- Students must clearly delineate the lessons they have learned.

If You Cheat, You're Abased

- This should be written as a letter—a good opportunity to talk about letter forms.
- Get students to see the big picture.
- Work on the tone of the argument.
- Recognition of the friend's point of view is important.
- Encourage students to establish links between the speculations and the effects.

Detention

- Some of your students may never have had a detention. In this case, they will need to talk with classmates who have received a detention in the past.
- Remind students that how they *begin* their writing often determines whether the reader enjoys it or not. They will need to work hard at starting their essays in unique ways.
- Students should describe the cause and the effects in the greatest detail possible.
- Encourage students to write about any changes in the way they think now versus how they thought before the detention was assigned.



Five-Paragraph Essay: Speculation About Causes or Effects

Directions: Write a “what if” statement in the speculation box. In the octagons below, note your ideas of what might be different because of your “what if” statement. Each

octagon should contain thoughts about only one difference. Write the final result in the box at the bottom.

The Speculation

Cause or Effect One

Cause or Effect Two

Putting it together

Cause or Effect Three

This is my idea of the result.



REVISION GUIDE AND GRADING RUBRIC

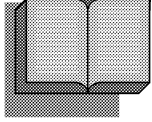
Name _____

Date _____

Speculation About Causes or Effects

<p>Title: The Big Change _____ Grounded _____ If You Cheat, You're Abased _____ Detention _____</p>		
<u>Revision Guide</u>	Y/N	<u>Grading Rubric</u>
<p>You have identified the cause and its effect(s). Your writing proceeds with logic. You have engaged your reader with conviction.</p>		<p>1 = minimal 5 = exceptional</p> <p>1. You have engaged your reader with purpose and conviction. You use a variety of methods to prove your point. The speculation is clear and logical.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>2. You successfully describe the cause or situation. You are aware of your reader's feelings and thoughts and possible objections.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>3. You link the cause and its effects with purpose and logic. You maintain the proper tone.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>4. You have a strong introduction and conclusion. Your writing contains at least five paragraphs. You use good spelling and grammar. The neatness of the paper shows great care.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5</p>
<p>Suggestions:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>		
<p>You clearly describe the situation. You show awareness of your readers. Your writing is intelligent.</p>		
<p>Suggestions:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>		
<u>Final Draft Checklist</u>		
<p>Check the essay's needs:</p> <p>Spelling check _____</p> <p>Grammar check _____</p> <p>Verb usage _____</p> <p>Paragraphs _____</p> <p>Organization _____</p> <p>Speculation _____</p> <p>Cause _____</p> <p>Effect _____</p> <p>Logic _____</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">First Draft Grade</p>
		FINAL GRADE





Chapter 8

Speculation About Causes or Effects

Most science fiction stories are based on the question “What if . . . ?” We write in this fashion when we want to propose differences in actual current or past situations. This type of writing generally calls for using higher-level thinking skills.

As always, the opening of your piece of writing is very important. It can be hard to think of original ways to begin writing. Look at books by other authors to see the different approaches that are possible.

Another secret to good speculative writing is linking the causes or effects to the speculative situation. It can be tempting to link them only with opinion. Think about the difference between fact and opinion. Of course, you must use your opinions, but you must learn to back your opinions with fact. As you write your first draft, make sure you include some facts to prove the correctness of your opinions.

Another challenge in this kind of writing is learning how to think differently. You should feel free to express yourself. Your teacher will not shoot your ideas down for

being different; in fact, this type of writing is based on being able to see things differently. Think globally, not just locally, and you’ll do well at this type of writing.

Graphic Organizer

The prewriting organizer for this kind of writing focuses on the importance of your speculation. You need to have a clear speculation and some idea of where you are going with it in your writing. The graphic organizer will help you determine either causes or effects and how they relate to your speculation. Finally, you will be asked to summarize the result.





Chapter 8: Speculation About Causes or Effects

Detention

Writing Situation

It seems as if it happens in a flash. One moment you're enjoying yourself. The next thing you're being given a detention.

Directions for Writing

Write an essay for your English teacher describing a time when you were given detention. Your teacher will want to know all the details of how this detention was assigned: who else was there to observe the incident, what was the behavior that caused it. Your teacher will also want to know all the effects of the detention. You need to complete at least five paragraphs. The first paragraph should be an introduction and the last a conclusion. Use your best spelling and grammar.

Prompt Notes

- If you have never had detention, ask someone who has had it.
- Work hard at starting this essay in a unique way.
- Remember that the way you begin a piece of writing often determines whether the reader enjoys it.
- Don't forget to give the cause and the effect in the greatest detail you can.
- Don't forget any changes in the way you think as a result of the detention.

