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Minnesota Public Radio

**TEMPLATE FOR Cause-and-Effect READING COMPREHENSION LESSON**

Use this template's cause-and-effect activity with *MPR's Morning Edition* website to supplement and support your reading instruction.

In this activity, students will read and analyze a news story for cause and effect and then check a partner's work while they listen to the story's audio segment.

Time: One 50 minute period plus 10 – 15 minutes of initial prep.

Materials:
- Computer with Internet connection and classroom speakers
- Real Audio Player 8.0 or higher
- Copies of the cause-and-effect chain for student use (see below)
- Blank cause-and-effect chain (transparency or drawn on classroom board).

**Objectives for Middle and High School Students:**

- Identify causes and effect relationships presented in a news story.
- Use listening skills to take and evaluate notes.
- Analyze a news report's objectivity and accuracy.

**Correlations to Grades 6 - 8 Minnesota Standards:**

- Grades 6: Language Arts – Reading and Literature – Comprehension – Benchmarks 1, 6, 9
- Grade 7: Language Arts – Reading and Literature – Comprehension – Benchmark 5.
- Grade 8: Language Arts – Reading and Literature – Comprehension – Benchmarks 4, 8.

**Correlations to Grades 9 – 12 Minnesota Standards:**

- Grade 9 – 12 Language Arts – Reading and Literature – Comprehension – Benchmarks 4, 6, 7, 8
- Grades 9 - 12 Language Arts – Speaking & Viewing – Media Literacy – Benchmarks 1 thru 3 and 6 thru 9.

PREP:

Estimated time: 10 – 15 minutes

1) Access MPR's *Morning Edition* website - http://news.minnesota.publicradio.org/programs/morninged/
2) Click on the regional highlight you want to use to make sure it has an audio segment.
3) Click on the 🔊 or 🔊Listen button to launch and load the Real Audio Player with the audio segment.
4) Preview the segment, checking that your speaker volume is high enough to reach all corners of your classroom.
5) Listen to the segment again and identify key vocabulary words your students might need help understanding. Type or write these words into the Cause-and-effect chain.
6) Print off and run copies of the cause-and-effect chain and article that accompanies the audio segment. Draw blank cause-and-effect chain on board (if using).

INSTRUCTION:

Estimated time: 30 - 50 minutes

1) As you distribute the copies of the article and cause-and-effect chain, query students on their awareness of the story's location and what, if any, significant event or issue is taking place there. Try to solicit from students why they think the event occurred.
2) Review cause-and-effect: every action has an effect. Assign students to work in pairs and explain that partners will check each other's work.
3) Give the class time to read the article, directing them to write down each cause and its effect as they read.
4) Direct students to switch papers and ask them to check and amend their partner's work as they listen to the segment. Play audio segment. Did their partner miss or need to change anything?
5) Ask students to return papers, look over their partner's comments, and mark any passage in the printed article that they missed. Direct students who didn't miss anything to identify what they think the primary cause was in the story and be ready to defend their choice.
6) Call the class together and fill out the cause-and-effect chain on the board or transparency. If there is disagreement on a cause or its effect, encourage the disagreeing students to cite specific clauses in the article to support their case.
7) Then solicit student opinions on the primary cause and ask the class to vote.
8) Finally, assign each student pair to write a fictional summary of what might have happened if the primary cause had not occurred or occurred differently.
9) If time allows, have class evaluate the story's objectivity and accuracy of information. Ask for any specific examples of bias, being sure to make the distinction between a source's bias and a reporter's bias.

EXTENSIONS & ALTERNATIVES:

1) After playing the segment again, review the vocabulary words. Coax students to figure out each word's meaning by thinking about how it was used in the story.
2) To focus more on listening skills, use this lesson in reverse: first play the segment, have students fill out cause-and-effect chain, then use article to check to see if they missed anything (NOTE: Text articles are not word-for-word transcripts but do contain the same major points that are presented in audio content).
3) For students who are not yet proficient readers, consider using this lesson over several periods and with several stories. For the first few periods, play the audio segments first and, as a class, compile the cause-and-effect chains, then asking students to find the appropriate passages in the article. After awhile, try the lesson as outlined above.

# Cause-and-Effect Chain

**Name:** _____ **Date:** _____ **Time:** _____

1. Cause:                        Effect:

2. Cause:                        Effect:

3. Cause:                        Effect:

4. Cause:                        Effect:

5. Cause:                        Effect:

Summary:

_____

_____

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Key words to know: