

Working with CAUSE AND CONSEQUENCE

According to Tim Lomas, history teaching works best when it is a mixture of the detective story and the soap opera.¹⁴ Students become engaged by both the puzzling questions in history and the interesting personalities involved. The analogy of a detective using clues to investigate crimes is apt for describing an historian or student interpreting evidence. It is especially suitable for describing a classroom inquiry about cause and consequence because the key questions we ask about the causes and consequences of history are *why* and *how*—exactly the questions a detective tries to answer.

Introducing Cause and Consequence

To introduce students to the various aspects of cause and consequence, we suggest a generic activity that will engage students by having them analyze causes and consequences in relation to their personal experience.

ACTIVITY: How I Got Here

In this activity, students consider events in their lives that have contributed to their arrival at the current situation in this exact moment. Further, they reflect on the consequences of being in this current place and time.

- Explain that the task is to create a personal timeline to explore why things happen in life.
- Ask students to make an X in the centre of a blank piece of paper, and label it “Present.”
- Encourage students to suggest various decisions or actions that they took to arrive at this present place and time. They may need prompting to consider immediate causes, for example, the causes that triggered them to come to class, such as the bell ringing; short-term causes, such as their timetable; and long-term causes or conditions, such as them passing last year’s history class or moving to the neighbourhood. Have students record these in their notebook, to the left of the X.
- Ask students for some underlying causes or influences that shaped their decisions or actions along the way. For example, Canadian laws require all school-aged children to attend school. They should record these on their timelines.

¹⁴ Cited in Brown, G. & Wrenn, A. (2005). It’s like they’ve gone up a year! Gauging the impact of a history transition unit on teachers of primary and secondary history. *Teaching History* 121, 7.

- Now ask students to imagine the consequences of being in class. Again, they might need prompting. For example, “You are here in class today, and what might that lead to? Are you likely to be sent to the principal’s office for skipping class? No? So making the decision to be here has consequences.” Ask students to complete a few short-term and long-term possibilities, and record these on their timelines to the right of the X.
- Prompt students to reflect on how causes and consequences interact with history, using specific examples from their own timelines. Encourage students to expand the discussion to include examples from the world around them. Depending on the level of the class and your learning goals, introduce key terms such as *underlying and immediate causes, conditions, triggers, agency, consequences, and human choice*.

Teaching Guidepost 1

As you recall from previous chapters, using a powerful inquiry question to jump-start a lesson, unit, or project will ignite students’ curiosity as well as guide their historical thinking along productive channels.

You may wish to simply rephrase the demonstrations of powerful understandings as questions, such as “What were the short-term and long-term causes of Confederation?” or “What were the consequences of the Klondike gold rush?” However, while these questions are a serviceable means to encourage an exploration of multiple causes and consequences, questions with some added intrigue and personality are more likely to spark students’ interest:

- Was it really the Fathers of Confederation who gave birth to Canada?
- What difference did Skookum Jim and George Carmack make to Yukon?

Some other possible question templates for inquiries on multiple causes are

- What lay behind X?
- How did X make a difference? (could be framed for investigating either cause or consequence)
- What kind of a difference did X make to Y? (could be framed for investigating either cause or consequence)

Some question templates for inquiries on multiple consequences are

- Was X a success? In what ways?
- How did X make a difference?
- Did X make any difference for Y?
- What kind of a difference did X make to Y?
- Whose lives were changed by X?
- What was the impact of X on our local area?

The following are possible question templates about different explanations of cause and consequence:

- How do these two explanations of X differ? Why do they differ? Which explanation of X is better?

DEMONSTRATION OF POWERFUL UNDERSTANDING 1

Student identifies **multiple short-term and long-term causes and consequences** of an historical event and recognizes their complex interrelationship.

PURPOSE

To help students understand that there are short-term and long-term causes and consequences of events

MATERIALS

- 1 blank sheet of paper per student

Causes have many shapes and sizes. Students will better understand the nuances of the causal relationship if we give them tools—a variety of words for describing change in different ways. Introduce students to vocabulary so they can better articulate their analysis of the causal process.¹⁵ The teaching of vocabulary need not be dictionary focused nor teacher directed. Begin by providing an explanation, description, or example of the new term (such as *underlying, long-term, short-term, trigger, immediate*). Ask students to write their own explanation of the word, and to use it properly in a sentence. Then, ask students to construct a picture, pictograph, or symbolic representation of the term. Periodically review and reflect on how the words are used in context.¹⁶

The sentence prompts below, and the consolidating activity **Concept Map about the Disappearance of the Bison** on page 127, help you explore the variety of causes and consequences with students.

Prompts for causes:

- The underlying causes were ...
- A contributing factor was ...
- The problems were exacerbated by ...
- Ultimately, the trigger was ...

Prompts for consequences:

- The immediate result was ...
- A long-term effect was ...
- An unintended consequence was ...
- Although X had planned for Y, the end result was ...

ACTIVITY: Champlain and Change

Focusing on consequences at the beginning of a unit can help establish the importance of the topic and provide an overview. A possible line of inquiry for this activity might be “How did Champlain change the New World? Does he alone deserve to be called the founder of New France?”

- Distribute **BLM 4.1: Champlain and Change** to pairs or small groups of students. Ask them to cut out a set of cards.
- Explain to students that the cards include (1) actions or conditions that are causes, and (2) consequences linked to the causes. Point out that there is considerable overlap of the two because a consequence of some causes may in turn be a cause of some other consequence. Tell students that, as a result, they should expect to have differences of opinion about identifying some of these causes and consequences.
- Use the cards to connect causes and consequences and thereby demonstrate how events might be linked. For example, show the two cards on the left in Figure 4.8 and point out that the founding of Port Royal is identified as a cause, or at least one cause, and Acadia as a consequence.

¹⁵ Woodcock, J. (2005). Does the linguistic release the conceptual? Helping year 10 to improve their causal reasoning. *Teaching History*, 119, 6-7.

¹⁶ Adapted from Marzano, R. (2001). *A handbook for classroom instruction that works* (pp. 293-295). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

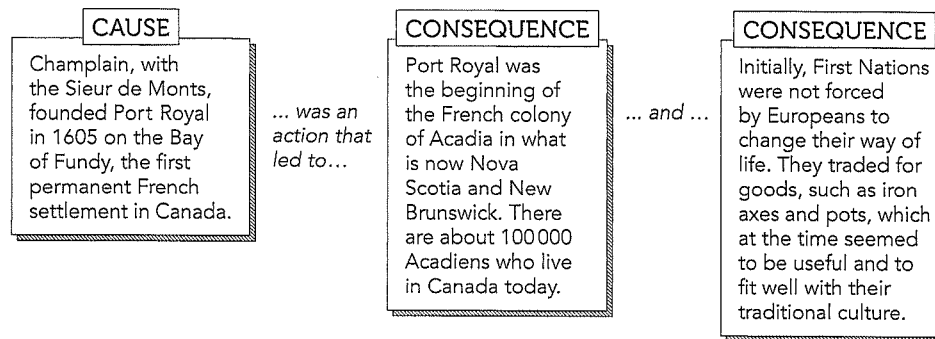


Figure 4.8 A cause and two of its consequences

- Continue by suggesting that the fur trade, described on the card on the right in Figure 4.8, could be another possible consequence that followed the cause, the settlement of Port Royal.
- After a few more examples, ask students to group the remaining cards into possible causes and related consequences. Ask questions such as the following to make explicit, and explore students' understanding of, the idea of multiple causes and consequences:
 - Which consequence cards seem to have more than one cause?
 - Which actions of Champlain resulted in several consequences?
 - Which cards are hard to classify? (These cards can be the best choices for a class discussion.)
 - Which ones do not seem related? (You could introduce the idea of antecedent events.)
- Direct students to do one or more tasks to extend their understanding of multiple consequences, as follows:
 - **Analysis Strategy 1:** Students can classify the cards into categories that reflect various types of consequences. If students develop categories on their own, you may wish to limit the number of categories to four or five to encourage some generalization and comparison. Alternatively, you can provide students with suggested categories, such as environmental and socio-cultural consequences.
 - **Analysis Strategy 2:** Students can classify the cards into short-term and long-term consequences. However, terms like *short-term* and *long-term*, though useful, are vague. Encourage students to define exactly what they mean by these terms before continuing the activity.
 - **Analysis Strategy 3:** To appreciate the interconnection of consequences and causes, that is, the ripple effect, students can link the consequence cards into series of direct and indirect consequences.

- **Analysis Strategy 4:** Students can arrange the cards in three piles: consequences that are clearly a result of Champlain's actions; consequences that are partly a result of Champlain's actions; and consequences that were only indirectly linked to Champlain.

In all of the strategies above, allow students the option of putting cards in more than one grouping and of having an "Uncertain" pile. Depending on the time allowed and context, it is very likely that several of the cards will elicit differences of opinion from students.

Teaching Guidepost 2

E. H. Carr wrote that "historians feel a professional compulsion ... to establish some hierarchy of causes."¹⁷ This is because the causes that lead to a particular historical change vary in their influence, with some being more important than others. It is necessary to identify which causes are more influential. However, establishing the relative importance of causes is a sophisticated thought process, and there is no easy template or algorithm to give students the right answer. Students, therefore, need ample opportunities to consider and weigh multiple underlying forces, and collective and individual agents of change. (Note that another activity that explores this process is **Counterfactuals in the Classroom** on page 126.)

A simple way to have students think critically about relative importance is to ask them to rank a list. For example, "What are the three most important consequences of...?" or "Rank these causes in order of importance." This is the form of inquiry of one of the MysteryQuests of the *Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History*; it begins with the question, "What was the biggest impact of the Klondike Gold Rush?"¹⁸

Some possible question templates for inquiries about causal webs are

- Why was X so shocking? (or surprising, horrible, popular, etc.)
- Why did X happen in year Y?
- Why did X happen so quickly? (or slowly, peacefully, violently, etc.)

The following are some possible question templates for inquiries about relationships or relative weights of causes and consequences:

- Did X make Y happen or did X just make Y more likely?
- What was the real cause of X?
- Was it only X to blame for Y?
- Which person/event/development did most to shape people's lives in the twentieth century?

¹⁷ Carr, E.H. (1987). *What is history?* (2nd ed.) (p. 89). Toronto: Penguin Books Canada.

¹⁸ Woytuck, W. Impact of the gold rush. *Great Unsolved Mysteries in Canadian History: MysteryQuest24*. <http://www.mysteryquests.ca/questions/24/indexen.html>

Introduce students to verbs such as the following for describing cause and consequence:

- **verbs to express short-term causes or catalysts:** incited, kindled, triggered, sparked
- **verbs to express long-term causes or underlying conditions:** led to, contributed to, made possible, resulted in, encouraged, blocked, prevented
- **verbs to express relationships among causes and consequences:** made worse, accelerated, exacerbated, strengthened, reinforced, increased, weakened, blocked

ACTIVITY: Weighing Causes of the Oka Crisis

Any number of graphic representations can be used to show causal webs and the relative importance of causes. In this activity, students use a "relevance square" to rank the relative importance of causes and then justify their rankings and ratings.¹⁹

- Distribute **BLM 4.2: Oka Crisis Causal Factors** and a large sheet of paper to each small group of students. The blackline master provides 12 causes of the Oka crisis. Ask students to cut these out to create 12 cards, and then distribute the cards equally within the group.
- Ask students to draw a square in the centre of the large sheet of paper, writing in it the words *Oka Crisis*.
- Students consider the question, What caused the Oka Crisis? They review the causes noted on their cards and decide which are the most important and which are the least relevant. They take turns placing a card on the paper. If the cause is important, they place it in the square. The greater the importance of the cause, the closer to the centre they place the card. If students determine a card is not relevant at all, they place it outside the square. As students place a card, they explain the reasoning behind their choice to their group. The group discusses the placement until it reaches a consensus.
- When the groups are finished, they defend the placement of their cards to other groups.

(Note that the Oka crisis is still controversial. There is no common consensus on the factors involved, and the list of factors included on the blackline master is not comprehensive. For example, it omits the women of the longhouse, the activities of the Mohawk Warrior Society, and the tactics of the Canadian Army. As a result, you may wish to include additional causes.)

PURPOSE

To help students understand and assess the varying importance of causes

MATERIALS

- **BLM 4.2: Oka Crisis Causal Factors** (1 per group of students)
- 1 large sheet of paper per student group
- scissors (1 per student or per student group)

¹⁹ Thanks to John Myers, Curriculum Instructor, OISE, University of Toronto, for the "Relevance Square" format.

DEMONSTRATION OF POWERFUL UNDERSTANDING 2

Student analyzes the **causes** of a particular historical event, **ranking** them according to their influence.

BLM 4.1a Champlain and Change²⁶

In 1611, Ochasteguin and other chiefs of the Huron Confederacy agreed to an alliance with the French and gave Champlain a wampum belt, a form of contract. The Algonquin, Mi'kmaq, and Montagnais (Innu) also allied with the French.	During the 1649 attack on the Wendat (Huron), the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) tortured and executed Jesuit missionaries, such as Jean de Brébeuf, who were living among the Wendat.
The French would only trade guns to First Nations people who had become Christian.	Jean de Brébeuf became a martyr for Catholics and in 1930 he was canonized, that is, he was recognized as a saint. He is one of the patron saints of Canada.
From 1647 to 1649 the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) massacred the Wendat (Huron) in a series of attacks. Surviving Huron fled their territory of Wendake (Huronia).	Many of the First Nations people died of European diseases, including smallpox. This was especially true of those people, such as the Wendat (Huron), who had close contact with the newcomers.
Champlain's exploration and trade later developed into a vast French fur-trading network across North America. At one point, French traders reached the mouth of the Mississippi in the south and the Rocky Mountains in the west.	Under pressure from France, Champlain sent out Christian missionaries to spread the Catholic faith among the First Nations.
Champlain explored and made accurate maps of the Great Lakes and present-day New York State and Ontario.	Champlain encouraged intermarriage between the French and First Nations saying, "Our sons shall marry your daughters and together we shall form one people."
At first the First Nations people were uninterested in changing religion, but over time many converted to Christianity and abandoned many of their traditional beliefs.	From intermarriage of French and First Nations people during the fur trade, the Métis Nation emerged and flourished.
Champlain sent out young French men called <i>coureurs de bois</i> to live among the Wendat (Huron). He urged them to learn the Wendat language and learn how to travel and live in the new land.	After 1609, the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) became the enemies of the French. They began a war against the French that lasted off and on for 150 years.

²⁶ Based on information from Fischer, D.H. (2008). *Champlain's dream*. New York: Simon and Schuster; Conrad, M., Finkel, A., & Jaenen, C. (1993). *History of the Canadian people* (Vol. 1). Toronto: Copp, Clark, Pitman.

BLM 4.1b Champlain and Change

In 1609, Champlain accompanied a Wendat (Huron) war party against the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois). Champlain and two French companions fired their harquebuses at the Iroquois, who had never seen guns before. The French killed two chiefs, and the warriors panicked and fled.	Initially, First Nations were not forced by Europeans to change their way of life. They traded for goods, such as iron axes and pots, which at the time seemed to be useful and to fit well with their traditional culture.
Before the arrival of the French, there had been ongoing wars between the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) and the Wendat (Huron).	After many years of trading, First Nations became dependent on European goods and stopped making their own traditional goods.
Champlain dreamed of finding a passage by sea to China, and explored to the west of the St. Lawrence River to find it. However, there was no inland waterway to the Pacific Ocean.	In 1608, Champlain founded a fort at what is now the city of Québec. When he died in 1635, it had a population of about 150.
At Port Royal Champlain established the Order of Good Cheer. The Order organized festivals and produced the first play in Canada, <i>The Theatre of Neptune in New France</i> .	Champlain, with the Sieur de Monts, founded Port Royal in 1605 on the Bay of Fundy, the first permanent French settlement in Canada.
Fur-bearing animals, killed in large numbers for trading, became hard to find. Many First Nations people moved to live near French settlements where they began to eat unfamiliar food, such as bread and peas.	Champlain published four books, including a treatise on seamanship and leadership. His leadership principles included respect and honesty. His books also described in detail the geography, wildlife, and First Nations of early Canada.
The fort at Québec was the beginning of New France. It grew to 70 000 Canadiens by 1760, when the British conquered it.	Port Royal was the beginning of the French colony of Acadia in what is now Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. There are about 100 000 Acadiens who live in Canada today.
New France evolved to become the province of Québec.	Port Royal developed into the village of Annapolis Royal with a population of about 500.

BLM 4.2 Oka Crisis Causal Factors²⁷

1 The town council of Oka decided to expand its golf course and build luxury housing on land that was traditionally used by the Mohawk and contained a burial ground of their ancestors.	7 When the police moved to dismantle the blockade, a gunfight started. During the battle, someone shot and killed Corporal Marcel Lemay of the Québec police.
2 The Mohawks of Kanesatake had been challenging the loss of their lands in the courts ever since 1868, but their claims had been rejected.	8 After the gun battle, the police withdrew, leaving behind their bulldozer and six police cruisers.
3 The Kanesatake Mohawk set up a blockade to stop construction of the golf course.	9 After a month of confrontation, Premier Bourassa called on the army for support.
4 On July 11, 1990, the Québec police tried to remove the blockade with a bulldozer, while using tear gas and concussion grenades to disperse the Mohawk.	10 The Mohawk Warrior Society, a controversial group inside Kanesatake, led the resistance to the police and army.
5 Few Canadians paid attention to the Mohawk land claims before 1990.	11 Two elderly Mohawks died from medical conditions exacerbated by the crisis.
6 Unemployment was high in Kanesatake at this time and living standards were in decline.	12 The Royal 22e Régiment of the Canadian Army took over from the police and surrounded Kanesatake for a month.

²⁷ Based on the following sources: The Oka crisis. *CBC Digital Archives*. Retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/archives/categories/politics/civil-unrest/the-oka-crisis-1/oka-stare-off.html>; Aboriginal people in the news. *Media Awareness Network*. Retrieved from <http://mediasmarts.ca/diversity-media/aboriginal-people/aboriginal-people-news>; Lackenbauer, P.W. (2008). Carrying the burden of peace: The Mohawks, the Canadian Forces, and the Oka crisis. *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* 10(2).