

Skill: Identifying Cause and Effect

One skill a historian must have is determining what are specific causes and effects of historical events. This can be very important if we wish to repeat (or prevent from repeating) a certain event. As a historian, identifying causes and effects can allow you to establish a relationship between events. Below you will find sets of two sentences. You must identify which of the two sentences is the CAUSE and place an "X" by it.

For example: _____ Luis was elected class president. _____ Luis campaigned every day.

You should understand that the 2nd sentence is the cause; because he campaigned every day, Luis was elected president. If you are having difficulty determining which sentence is the cause, here are some helpful hints:

- Determine which sentence could have happened by itself or is "independent" (like an independent variable) – that sentence will be the CAUSE.
- Link the sentences together by connecting them with the word "because". They should only make sense one of the two ways; whichever sentence follows "because" is the CAUSE. (For example, "Julie was elected class president because Julie campaigned every day" makes sense but "Julie campaigned every day because Julie was elected class president" does not.)

Identify the cause in the following sets by placing an "X" by the sentence:

1. _____ The early Egyptian civilization was surrounded by seas and deserts. _____ The Egyptians encountered fewer invaders than other early civilizations.
2. _____ During the Ice Age, people and animals migrated closer to the equator. _____ A region's climate is warmer if closer to the equator.
3. _____ Rivers provided a source of water as well as irrigation for agriculture. _____ The earliest civilizations were formed along the banks of rivers.
4. _____ Women gained greater rights after the war. _____ A high percentage left their jobs to defend their country in the war.
5. _____ Many people in occupations where they provide services -- such as travel agents and stock brokers -- have lost their jobs. _____ The Internet allows people to buy stocks and airline tickets from their computer.

6. _____ The people of Athens believed that all citizens were equal. _____ Athenians selected a democratic type of government.

7. _____ The continents are slowly drifting “away” from each other. _____ The earth’s surface – both land and water – is made of plates that continually move.