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Understanding Multiple Causes and Effects

Sometimes a cause may have several effects. For instance, a long period without rain can dry up wells, kill crops, and turn lawns brown. Similarly, an effect may have several causes. A character in a story may be worried because her dog is sick, she has to take a test, and her family is planning to move to another city.

Read the passage. Then complete the chart to show the cause-and-effect relationships.

Placing electric lights around the outside of a home used to be costly and inconvenient. The yard would have to be dug up to place wires in the ground. There had to be an outdoor power source so that the lights could be plugged in. And the whole system had to be heavily insulated for safety in wet weather.

Now there is a cheaper and more convenient way to light a yard. Solar lights don't need wires. They run on power from the sun. They have panels of cells that work like rechargeable batteries. The cells store

energy from the sun and convert it to electricity. The lights turn on automatically when it gets dark and off in daylight. In the northern United States, solar lights can stay on for about five or six hours before the electricity runs out. In the South, where sunshine is stronger, they can stay on for seven or eight hours. And they are recharged by the next day's sunshine.



CAUSES	EFFECTS
<p>1. _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>1. Outdoor lighting is cheaper and more convenient than it used to be.</p>
<p>2. Solar lights are powered by the sun.</p>	<p>2. _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

For the causes of item 1, did you write that the ground does not have to be dug up, and there is no need for an outdoor power source or heavy insulation? For the effects of item 2, did you write that solar cells are recharged by sunshine, they don't need wires, and they last longer in sunnier places? Again, your answers may be worded differently, but they should include this information.

3 Cara Finsterman gets stung occasionally because—

- A** she works with bees all the time
- B** “smoking” the bees doesn’t work
- C** she isn’t an experienced beekeeper
- D** she doesn’t wear protective clothing

What is causing the great honeybee die-off? Honeybee colonies have been disappearing in many parts of America. In the fall of 2006, more than a quarter of the country’s 2.4 million bee colonies collapsed. That has some people worried because more than a third of America’s food crops depend on bees for pollination. In rural areas, beekeepers truck their hives from farm to farm all summer to perform this essential service.

Some bee experts believe that this is part of the problem. Domesticated bees are overworked. Being moved so often by truck stresses them out. But there are other possible causes of what beekeepers call “colony collapse disorder.” A major one may simply be a shortage of food. Much of the United States has experienced dry weather for several years. Drought means fewer

flowering plants and less nectar. By the end of summer, there may not be enough food to keep a colony going through the winter. Poisoning by chemicals used by farmers to control harmful insects is also a possibility. So are bee mites—tiny spider-like creatures that take nourishment away from bees. Any or all of these causes may be weakening the bees so that some as yet unknown germ kills them. And then there’s global warming. In some places, flowers are blooming in the spring nearly a month earlier than they did 30 years ago. The bees may be having trouble adjusting to the change.

All bee experts agree, however, that radiation from cell phones and other wireless electronic devices are not what is harming the bees. That’s an idea that has been spread on the Internet, but there is no evidence to support it.

1 Complete this chart to show cause-and-effect relationships.

Multiple Causes and Effects

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CAUSES	EFFECT
1. _____	One-quarter of American honeybee colonies have collapsed.
2. _____	
3. _____	
4. _____	
5. _____	

2 Why couldn't pineapples be grown in Europe?

- A It was too cold.
- B They were too expensive.
- C They were eaten by animals.
- D European pineapples tasted bitter.

3 Why did people rent pineapples and *not* eat them?

- A They made their tables look pretty.
- B They impressed their guests.
- C They were not available for sale.
- D They upset people's stomachs.

Life could be hard for children in early America. In the 1700s, nearly all people lived on farms. There was plenty of work to be done. Fathers taught sons how to plow and reap, hunt, handle livestock, and build tools for the home. Mothers taught daughters how to cook, sew, and plant and tend a garden. There were no furnaces to keep houses warm, until late in the century not even a wood-burning stove. A fire was kept burning in a fireplace to heat the home and cook the food. It was often the children's job to gather firewood. As there was no running water inside the home, children would fetch it from a well or a nearby stream. They also helped keep the house clean and take care of smaller children.

Schooling was not a part of every child's life as it is today. In many communities there



were no schools. Families who wanted their children to read taught them at home. Few families owned many books, but nearly all had a Bible. Some children attended one-room schoolhouses where they were taught reading, writing, spelling, and "figuring." Yet America back then may have had the highest rate of literacy in the world.

1 Draw a line to match each cause with its effect.

CAUSES	EFFECTS
<p>Most families lived on farms.</p> <p>Homes had no stoves or furnaces.</p> <p>In many communities there were no schools.</p> <p>There was no running water inside the houses.</p>	<p>Children gathered wood to keep a fire burning.</p> <p>Children learned to feed animals and to plant and pick crops.</p> <p>All farms had a well or were located near a stream.</p> <p>Children were taught to read at home.</p>