

A Student's Model

The following excerpt from a cause-and-effect essay is by student writer Gwen Miller of Fairmont Junior High School in Boise, Idaho. Her parenthetical citations refer to the sources she used as support for her essay.

TV Baby Sitters: Help or Hindrance?

The TV blaring disrupts the peace of the apartment complex. A child's eyes are glued to the character dancing on the screen. He has been sitting there for hours. The child's father sits exhausted, not sure what to do when the children's shows are replaced with the evening news. His built-in baby sitter is about to quit its job, so he makes the decision to buy a video machine. However, is feeding his child a diet of nothing but TV really good for his child? Along with the many reasons parents leave their children to be baby-sat by the TV, there are also many negative effects of this electronic caregiver.

TV is the only way many parents know to keep their children entertained. They are not aware of the many dangerous sides of television. For example, according to the Center for Media Education, children who watch an abundance of TV have a greater chance of obesity and increased alcohol and drug use (Jones 22). The Center also states that the American Medical Association, the American Psychological Association, and others believe that viewing TV violence can have lifelong harmful effects on children's health (Jones 33). A 1999 policy statement from the American Academy of Pediatrics suggests parents avoid all television for children under two. The statement says, "While certain television programs may be promoted to this age group, research on early brain development shows that babies and toddlers have a critical need for direct interactions with parents and other significant caregivers for healthy brain growth and the development of appropriate social, emotional, and cognitive skills" (26). Instead of turning on the TV for entertainment, parents can do other fun activities with their children. . . .

INTRODUCTION
Interesting opening

Hypothetical scenario
to set the stage

Thesis statement

BODY
Major support for
thesis statement

Expert testimony as
support

More expert
testimony as support

Alternatives to
negative effects

A Writer's Model

The following short essay, which is a final draft, closely follows the framework on the previous page. As you read the essay, notice how the highlighted words—cause-effect clue words—help communicate the writer's explanation of the causes and effects of sleeping in class.

School Daze

In the middle of presenting a lesson to the class, your teacher unexpectedly stops speaking. Everyone in the class becomes expectantly silent—nothing is heard except a faint sound from somewhere in the back of the room, a noise that sounds like . . . snoring? Suddenly, with a loud *thwack!*, your teacher claps a book shut, and the snoring culprit is jarred from his sleep, lifting his head from his desk with a startled, bleary-eyed look on his face. Read old comic strips or watch really old TV shows, and you will see a similar scene. There is a history of schooltime dozing. You would think times have changed. Unfortunately, though, falling asleep in class is actually an all-too-common occurrence among today's active teenagers—one which has both complex causes and serious consequences.

Why do students sometimes fall asleep in class? An obvious reason is lack of sleep. However, there are also causes for getting too little sleep. Homework is a daily occurrence for most students, one that can take three to four hours per night. A teenager who wants to be able to participate in any activity besides homework must frequently stay up late in order to fit everything in. Club activities, sports, computer-game playing, and TV viewing, for example, all contribute to teens having less time for both homework and sleep. Sometimes teens lack sleep because of after-school jobs that are taken on to earn extra money for college, family expenses, or simply for clothes and recreation. For students with jobs, losing sleep is often preferable to quitting their jobs or even cutting back on their hours.

Physical problems are another factor that can cause students to fall asleep in class. For example, insomnia—the inability to sleep—may keep a student up at night, causing exhaustion during class hours. Insomnia, which may be triggered by stress and

INTRODUCTION

Interesting opener

Background information

Thesis

BODY

Cause 1

Support for cause 1

Facts

Cause 2

Support for cause 2

(continued)