ENGL 102 GUIDELINES FOR ESSAY #2: THE CAUSAL ESSAY

General

The general goals of the causal essay are (1) to show the causes of a controversial effect or (2) to show the potential positive or negative effects of some present or proposed action. In the first instance, we look back in time to discover the causes of a present situation to increase our understanding of it; in the second instance, we look forward in time to speculate about possible positive or negative effects of a present or proposed action.

Recommended Topics (Cause to Effect)

1. What good or bad effects come from stricter voter identification laws?
2. What are the effects of the “Black Lives Matter” campaign on race relations in the USA?
3. How will widespread legalization of marijuana affect the USA in the long term?
4. How will football in particular and sports in general be affected by the greater awareness of the dangers of long-term brain damage from concussions?

Recommended Topics (Effect to Cause)

1. Were there causes for the Iraq War of 2003-2013 other than “eliminating weapons of mass destruction”?
2. Why is there such an unequal distribution of income in the US?
3. Why has the political culture of the United States become so divided and angry?

You can choose another topic, but make sure that it follows the basic pattern mentioned above and matters to you. Also, remember that your thesis needs to take a stand on the topic that you choose.

Logistics

1. Your first draft is due in class on February 22. Treat the first draft as a “dress rehearsal.” Turn it in typed and printed, and written to full 750-word length. You will sign up in class for 15-minute conference with the instructor to be February 24 (No class meeting that day.). Your final draft of the essay will due on Monday, February 29.
2. Don’t forget the fundamentals of coherent, well-organized writing: claim (based on clearly stated causes or effects), subtopics that develop the main idea in distinct paragraphs, concrete evidence for all your assertions, and accurate use of writing mechanics.
3. A good way to conclude the essay is to reflect on the significance of the issue that you are discussing and why it should be important to others.