

SPECULATING ABOUT THE CAUSES OF A TREND

For your last paper, you will speculate about the causes of a trend. Papers that analyze the causes of a trend call for all the academic writing skills we have practiced during semester: summary, synthesis, analysis, and evaluation of the divergent points of view expressed in multiple sources. This assignment, however, is more challenging and difficult than the previous ones because you have to pick a significant topic and to find several credible sources in the library. Feel free to choose any trend as long as it is complex enough to lend itself to an analysis of several possible causes (at least 3 causes). Since this paper is a culmination of all that you've learned this semester, you should have high hopes and standards for it. To write a paper analyzing the causes of a trend, you might want to think about the following suggestions:

1. In your first part of the body of your essay, demonstrate that the trend exists, drawing on statistics, specific cases, and references to experts, and presenting details about the trend, answering questions such as: When did it start? Is it completed or continuing? Is the increase or decrease decelerating or accelerating?
2. Identify the potential causes to which the experts refer, organizing the remaining sections of the body of your paper around these subtopics.
3. In each of these remaining sections, synthesize the pertinent authors' perspectives on the possible causes.
4. In addition to synthesizing the authors' perspective, compare and contrast them in terms of evidence and reasoning, using your analysis to reflectively reach and persuasively justify your own argumentative stance toward each cause, a stance that should be supported with your own reasons, evidence, and examples that prove which causes are more likely than others.
5. Be sure to use parenthetical citations to indicate where one author's viewpoint ends and another author's view begins.
6. After drafting the paragraphs in the body of your paper, write an introduction that reviews the controversy over your topic. To review the controversy, briefly define the trend, summarize the causes suggested by the authors of your sources, state the thesis of your essay (the cause or causes you find most significant) and sketch an essay map of the important subtopics (possible causes) around which you will compare and contrast the authors' viewpoints to justify your judgment authoritatively, thoroughly, and persuasively.
7. Write a conclusion that explains the significance of the trend, ending perhaps with a provocative quotation, analogy, or question.
8. Include a "Works Cited" page that provides full bibliographical information for the sources cited in your paper, and be sure to use the correct forms for different types of sources.

The suggested length for this paper is 6-7 pages, and it is worth 20% of your final grade. You need to have decided on three possible trend topics by the next class meeting. Also, we will hold student-teacher conferences to discuss the introductions and sources for your papers, so make sure you read over your syllabus to note the dates for those conferences. Finally, even though this is a substantial paper, you have all the needed tools to write this essay, so relax and do your best!

TREND PAPER OUTLINE

- I) Introduction (Trend and Causes)
- Take a side—Pick one Cause that you think best explains the reason for the particular trend.
- II) Body:
- a) Define/Explain Trend (*This should be the first paragraph in the body of your essay*)
- When did the Trend Start?
 - Is it continuing?
 - Is it increasing or decreasing?
- b) Synthesis of Causes (3-4 Causes)
(*These 3-4 Causes should make-up the remaining paragraphs in the body of your essay*)
1. Cause #1
 - Author #1
 - Author #2
 - Author # 3 (Maybe)
 - Your View
 2. Cause #2
 - Maybe just Author #1
 - Your View
 3. Cause #3
 - Maybe all or none of the authors
 - Maybe just a cause that you come up with based on reading the arguments
- III) Conclusion

TOPICS:

- Must lend itself to several causes (subtopics).
- Use a minimum of 4-5 articles.
- Begin with your major field of study for possible topics, and then move outside of school topics.