



TEACHER PAGE

CHAIN REACTIONS

CAUSE AND EFFECT

GRADE LEVEL: 5–8 **SUBJECT:** Language Arts **DURATION:** One 40-minute class period

NATIONAL STANDARD: Language Arts, Standard 3: Evaluation strategies

MATERIALS: Synopsis or list of the main events in *Holes*, ordered by occurrence in the story, student worksheet

Use this activity to help students learn to distinguish and/or choose important information from a text, and also begin to understand a narrative as a causal chain of events.

DESCRIPTION

Holes is a complicated story, spanning not only generations of Yelnatses but also numerous events and seemingly endless days of digging holes. The tangled plot, including countless flashbacks, presents a great opportunity to develop the ability to decode a written text or various story lines.

OBJECTIVES

- To reconstruct temporal order in a narrative
- To identify cause and effect relationships in the development of a narrative

ADAPTATIONS

For younger students, go to the *Holes* movie web site, www.holes.com, to download movie images of major events from the story. Students will cut out the pictures and paste them on a separate sheet of paper in chronological order. Discuss cause and effect.

ASSESSMENT

Design a five-point rubric to assess student success in correctly reordering events chronologically, and to assess the ability to identify and understand the cause and effect for each event.

EXTENSIONS

Guide a discussion to encourage students to think critically about cause and effect:

- Ask students to consider the process that a writer goes through in designing a story by asking the following question: would the *Holes* story have been better if it had been presented in straight chronological order?
- Explore the differences between cause and effect in a narrative and cause and effect in historical events. Which is more complex? Why? How can we understand history if no simple cause and effect chain exists?

PROCEDURES

1. Ask students to choose four or five major events from the story.
2. Direct students to select four final choices to use in the chain.
3. Students will write each event in the appropriate space of the chain, giving careful attention to the chronological order of events.
4. Last, students will write the cause and effect of each event in the related links of the chain.



USEFUL RESOURCES

Cause-and-Effect Writing Challenges Students, by Mary Daniels Brown, Education World®, 2001:
www.educationworld.com/a_curr/curr376.shtml

Methods of Development - Cause and Effect: www.accd.edu/sac/english/mgarcia/writfils/modcause.htm

Ready to Write More: From Paragraph to Essay, by Karen Blanchard and Christine Root, Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1997.



STUDENT PAGE CHAIN REACTIONS CAUSE AND EFFECT

NAME _____

DATE _____

Holes is a complicated story, spanning not only generations of Yelnatses but also numerous events and seemingly endless days of digging holes. Fill in the cause and effect chain below to recall important events from the story.

First, list four or five major **events** from the story, then pick four to write in the appropriate spaces of the chain. Then, identify each event's cause and effect, and put these in the appropriate spaces of the chain. Remember to give careful attention to the chronological order of events.

POSSIBLE EVENTS TO USE IN THE CHAIN

TOP FOUR EVENT CHOICES

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

CAUSE OF EVENT 1

EFFECT OF EVENT 1

CAUSE OF EVENT 2

EFFECT OF EVENT 2

CAUSE OF EVENT 4

EFFECT OF EVENT 3

CAUSE OF EVENT 3

EFFECT OF EVENT 4
