Beginning in the very early grades, students are asked to identify why something happened and then to explain what happened as a result. For example, in *The Story of Ruby Bridges*, students learn that because school segregation was controversial (the cause), the government sent U.S. Marshals to protect Ruby (the effect). The importance of understanding cause and effect is reflected in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Beginning in Grade 3, for example, the standards for Reading (Informational Text; see RI.3.3) require students to describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas, or technical procedures in a text using language that pertains to cause and effect. By grade 6, the standards for Writing (see W.6.2A.6.1) require students to use cause/effect in their compositions.

When you are ready to teach your students about cause and effect or review that concept, display the following page and discuss the information. Print out a copy and encourage students to refer to this reference.

Grammar Gallery users ...
Click here to go to the Reading Gallery and have students practice identifying cause and effect as they answer the “Think Critically” questions associated with each reading.

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Understanding Cause and Effect

When we talk about “cause and effect,” we are referring to the relationship between two events. The first event is the cause. It tells the reason why the second event occurred. The second event is the effect. It is the consequence of the first event. The effect tells what happened as a result of the first event.

**Key Words:** These words and phrases often signal that what you are listening to or reading about is a cause and effect relationship: *if, then, because, since, so, as a result, resulting from, therefore, leading to, due to, consequently.*

**Examples:**

- If it rains, then my flowers will grow.
- Because school segregation was controversial, U.S. Marshals had to protect Ruby Bridges.
- Since it snowed all night, we can’t get to school this morning.
- The equations were very easy to solve. As a result, all the students passed the test.