



Cause and effect

Reading Comprehension Worksheet

Practice

A parent or tutor should read along with the student, helping as needed.

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**Cause and effect** are about how one thing can cause something else to happen.

The **cause** is *why* something happened.

The **effect** is *what* happened.

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Here is a story about a “lucky” young man. Think about **cause** and **effect** as you read.

Hans in Luck

The blacksmith gave Hans a bag of gold coins as payment for the year of work, and Hans set off to visit his mother. The bag of gold coins was heavy, so Hans threw it over his shoulder to make walking easier. A horseman came along, and Hans said aloud, “How nice it would be to have a horse to ride!”

The rider stopped. “Then why do you travel on foot, my fine fellow?” he said. “Because I have no horse,” said Hans. And I must carry this bag of gold that is so heavy it hurts my shoulder.”

“If you like, we can trade,” said the rider.

“Hurrah!” cried Hans. But soon the horse began to trot, and it pitched Hans into a ditch. A farmer who was walking with his cow helped Hans to his feet.

“What a bad thing riding is!” Hans exclaimed. “You are lucky to have a cow to walk behind, and you also have milk every day.”

“Well,” said the farmer, “if you like, we can trade.”

Hans was overjoyed, and the farmer rode off in a hurry. But the cow kicked Hans every time he tried to milk her. So he traded the cow for an old woman’s pig. But the lazy pig kept sitting down by the side of the road. So Hans traded his pig for a herder’s goose. After a while, Hans came to a grinder who was sharpening some knives with a grindstone. As you might guess, Hans traded his goose for the grindstone which was, in fact, just an ordinary stone.

Hans walked along. The stone seemed to get heavier by the minute. He stopped at a stream to get a drink of water, and accidentally dropped the stone into the water. It quickly sank to the bottom and was buried in the muddy depths.

Hans jumped for joy. He was free of that heavy stone, and every other problem besides. “I am the luckiest man under the sun!” he cried. And he hopped and skipped happily along the road until he reached his mother’s house.

In this story, what is the **effect** of each **cause**? Circle your answer.

| cause | effect |
|--|--|
| 1. The bag of gold was heavy, and Hans thought it would be nice to have a horse to ride. What happened because Hans thought it would be nice to have a horse? | Hans traded his gold for the horse. |
| | Hans asked the blacksmith for a horse. |

| cause | effect |
|---|---|
| 2. The horse pitched Hans into a ditch. What happened because the horse pitched Hans into a ditch? | Hans stopped by a stream to get a drink of water. |
| | Hans traded his horse for a cow. |

| cause | effect |
|---|----------------------------------|
| 3. The lazy pig kept sitting down by the side of the road. What happened because the lazy pig kept sitting down? | Hans took the pig to his mother. |
| | Hans traded his pig for a goose. |

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4. Here is a **cause**: Hans came to a grinder, who was sharpening some knives on his grindstone.  
What was the **effect**?

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5. Here is a **cause**: Hans stopped at a stream to get a drink of water, and dropped the grindstone into the water.  
What was the **effect**?

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## Answer Key

1. Hans traded his gold for the horse.
2. Hans traded his horse for a cow.
3. Hans traded his pig for a goose.
4. Accept any reasonable response, such as, Hans traded his goose for a grindstone.
5. Accept any reasonable response, such as, Hans was happy because now he was free from all his problems.