

FIGURE 19.5 Flowchart for Revising a Cause-and-Effect Essay

QUESTIONS

1. Highlight your thesis. Does it express a qualified, manageable assertion? (Can you prove your thesis?)

NO

YES

2. Place a ✓ by each cause. Mark an X by each effect. Does your essay clearly focus on causes, effects, or both?

NO

YES

3. Place [brackets] around the explanation for each cause or effect. Is each explained fully?

NO

YES

4. Write the method of organization (chronological, least-to-most, or most-to-least) you used at the top of your essay. Is it clear and effective? Do your ideas progress logically?

NO

YES

5. Circle any sections where you have recognized readers' assumptions and either supported or challenged them. Have you identified all likely preconceptions?

NO

YES

REVISION STRATEGIES

- Use a branching diagram to narrow your topic (see Chapter 5, pp. 101–02).
- Revise to focus on only primary causes or effects.
- Add qualifying words or phrases to your thesis.

- Reconsider whether you want to explain causes, effects, or both. Will the essay be skimpy if you focus on only one? Will it be too long or too complicated if you discuss both?

- Add anecdotes or observations from personal experience or other details and examples.
- Do research to locate facts, research studies, statistics, and expert opinions.

- Choose a different order if necessary.
- Rearrange your causes, effects, or both.

- Brainstorm popular ideas readers might assume about your topic and either support or challenge them.

QUESTIONS

6. Underline each topic sentence. Is each paragraph focused on a separate cause or effect?

NO

REVISION STRATEGIES

- Be sure each paragraph has a topic sentence and supporting details (see Chapter 7).
- Consider combining closely related paragraphs.
- Split paragraphs that cover more than one cause or effect.

YES

7. Reread your introduction and conclusion. Are they effective?

NO

- Revise your introduction and conclusion so that they meet the guidelines presented in Chapter 7 (pp. 146–51).