

Writing L4WLO6

Speculating About Cause and Effect

Learning Outcome 6: Construct a reasoned argument speculating about causes and consequences

EXPLORING WRITTEN ENGLISH

LANGUAGE FOR WRITING Speculating

When you speculate, you say what you think happened in the past or what you think could happen in the future. There are some words and phrases you can use when you are speculating to show that what follows is only what you think, and not things you know.

For example, when you are talking about the past, you can write: ... *could/might have been caused by ...* or ... *could/might have caused/led to ...* .

When you are talking about the present or future, you can write: ... *could/might cause/lead to ...* .

A Read the sentences. Write *P* for the sentences that speculate about the past and *F* for the sentences that speculate about the future.

1. The problems with the roof might have been caused by a storm. _____
2. Taking an investment course could lead more young people to invest their money. _____
3. The increase in sales could have been caused by more effective marketing. _____
4. His health problems could have led to changes in his feelings and emotions. _____
5. Further increases in global temperatures might cause some parts of the country to be covered in water. _____

B Read the situations. Write sentences that speculate about each situation.

1. It's the morning. Your friend (another student) tells you that he/she is tired. What could be the reason(s) why he/she is tired and what could the consequences be in the present and future?

2. You're working in an office. The office is usually quite noisy, with lots of people talking to each other, but today it's very quiet. What could be the reason(s) for this and what could the consequences be in the present and future?

EDITING PRACTICE Structuring an Argument

When you are presenting an argument about the causes and consequences of an event or situation in a paragraph, check that you have structured your argument in an appropriate way. Start by presenting the event or situation you are writing about. Then focus on the possible causes of it and speculate about that. After that, you can speculate about its consequences in the past and, finally, its consequences in the present and future.

C Work in pairs. Read the text in the Goal box below. Discuss how you could present your ideas from exercise B in an appropriate way in a paragraph.

WRITING TASK

GOAL You are going to write a paragraph which speculates about the causes and consequences of an event or situation.

