



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 why birds build their nests differently. Think about **cause** and **effect** as you read.

The Magpie's Nest

Of all the birds in the air, the magpie builds the very best nest. Long ago, all the birds came to Magpie and asked her to teach them how to build nests. So Magpie got them all together and began to show them how to do it.

First, she took some mud and patted it into the shape of a pancake. "Ah ha!" said Thrush, and away she flew. So Thrush still builds her nest out of mud.

Then Magpie arranged some twigs around in the mud. "Well of course," said Owl, and away she flew. Owls have never made better nests than that.

Magpie turned the edges of the pancake up into a bowl shape, and put more twigs around the outside. "What a good idea!" said Sparrow, and Sparrow makes messy nests to this day.

And so it went on. Each bird took away some knowledge of how to build nests, but none of them waited to the end. Finally, only silly Turtle-dove was left, and she hadn't been paying any attention all along. She had just been sitting there saying her silly cry. "Take two, take two-o-o-o. Take two, take two-o-o-o."

Magpie was adding the last twig to her lovely nest. "Take two, take two-o-o-o" cried Turtle-dove.

Magpie looked at Turtle-dove. "One's enough," she said.

But the Turtle-dove kept on saying, "Take two, take two-o-o-o."

Then Magpie got angry. "One's enough, I tell you."

Still Turtle-dove repeated, "Take two, take two-o-o-o. Take two, take two-o-o-o."

At last, Magpie got even angrier. No one but silly Turtle-dove was left to see her lovely nest that she had worked so long to build. She flew away to find some worms, and refused to show the birds how to build a nest again. And that is why different birds build their nests differently.

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

cause	effect
1. Magpie makes the very best nest. What happened because Magpie makes the very best nest?	Long ago, all the birds asked Magpie to teach them how to build nests.
	Magpie did not want to teach the other birds how to build nests.

cause	effect
2. Thrush watched Magpie pat some mud into a pancake shape, and flew away. What happened because Thrush flew away after watching Magpie shape the mud?	Thrush still makes her nest out of mud.
	Thrush still doesn't know how to build a nest.

cause	effect
3. Sparrow flew away before Magpie's nest was finished. What happened because Sparrow flew away before Magpie's nest was finished?	Sparrow still makes messy nests.
	Sparrow came back and said she was sorry.

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4. Here is a **cause**: Each bird took away some knowledge of how to build nests, but none of them except silly Turtle-dove waited until the end. What was the **effect**?

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5. Here is a **cause**: No one but silly Turtle-dove was left to see the lovely nest that Magpie had worked so hard to build. What was the **effect**?

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**Answer Key**

1. Long ago, all the birds asked Magpie to teach them how to build nests.
2. Thrush still makes her nest out of mud.
3. Sparrow still makes messy nests.
4. Accept any reasonable response, such as, none of the birds learned to build a nest as nice as Magpie's.
5. Accept any reasonable response, such as, Magpie got angry, and refused to show the birds how to build a nest again.