Basic Features

SPECULATING ABOUT CAUSES
Cause Essays need to:

- Establish that the phenomena or trend exists
- Present causes and show they are the most plausible
- Provide reasons and support
- Counter readers’ objections and preferred causes
Definitions

- **Phenomenon**: a single situation—an attitude or behavior among people
  Salmon return to the imprint area to spawn.
  The Beatles changed the direction of popular music.

- **Trend**: a significant change over time. Example: The number of women achieving advanced degrees has increased over the past decades.

- **Plausible**: seemingly true, acceptable-causes likely to bring about the effect
Basic features of a Cause essay

- A Well Presented Subject
- A well-supported causal analysis
- An Effective Counter-Argument
- A Clear Logical Organization
- A Well Defined Purpose
- Knowledge of Audience
A Well Presented Subject

- Establish the existence of the trend or phenomenon
- Concrete examples
- Scenarios and anecdotes that fit the reader
- Authorities, research findings, statistics
A Well-Supported Causal Analysis

- The thesis should make clear what causes are being proposed.
- Then provide supporting evidence and show the causes would bring the effect
  - Statistics
  - Research from studies
  - Anecdotal evidence
  - Avoid false cause from chronology or correlation
An Effective Counter-Argument

- Acknowledge causes others prefer
- Concede a cause and accommodate
- Refute objections and alternate causes
A Clear Logical Organization

- Thesis with a forecast of the argument
  - Needs show subject exists and set up the cause-effect
- Topic sentences setting up each paragraph
- Repeated key words and use of synonyms
- Clear transitions
A Well Defined Purpose

- Convince the reader the causes are plausible
- Convince the reader that your causes are more logical than others
- Get readers to view trend or Phenomenon in a new way
- Change the reader’s behavior
Knowledge of Audience

- Knowledge about the subject
- Attitude toward the trend, phenomenon, and causes: curious, opposed, or supportive