Organization:

* Begin with an introduction that defines your topic. At the end of your introduction, include a thesis with the causes you will discuss (you must include the precipitating cause as the last point).
* Develop each of the points in your thesis statement (body paragraphs)
* End with a concluding paragraph that restates your thesis (overarching causes of your topic) and makes a larger point (i.e. a specific decision or action that follows from your argument; extending the topic to include different contexts; ideas, perspectives, and solutions about your topic, etc.)

Tips: Be sure to distinguish between the different types of causes. Show the complexity of causation and not just simple cause and effect. Demonstrate causality, not just correlation or a time relationship. Present believable causal agents consistent with known human behavior and scientific laws. If your causal analysis is valid, what are the implications? Is your analysis convincing? Have you avoided errors in reasoning? Have you provided sufficient evidence and specific details to support your claim?

A successful essay will:

* Conform to APA guidelines
* Have a focused thesis
* Be organized logically and coherently, in emphatic order
* Avoid using first- and second-person personal pronouns (I, you, me, we, us, etc.)
* Demonstrate smooth transitions between paragraphs
* Refrain from getting caught in the recap trap; make sure to offer your own original ideas. When utilizing other people’s ideas, be sure to properly cite and credit them!
* Be relatively free of mechanical and grammatical errors

Additional requirements for research essays:

* Your argument must be supported (use direct quotations/paraphrases with correct APA parenthetical citations)
* You must have an APA style reference page with **a minimum of two sources**
* Do not use a quotation over 40 words/three typed lines in length