

22 Cause, reason, purpose and result

A Cause and reason

You probably know how to use words like **because**, **since** and **as** to refer to the cause of or reason for something. Here are some other ways of connecting clauses to express causes and reasons. Note how verbs and nouns can do the same job as conjunctions.

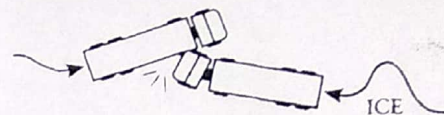
Look at the picture of an accident, on the right. Here are several ways of talking about it.

Owing to the icy conditions, the two lorries collided.

The collision was **due to** the icy conditions.

The collision was **caused by** ice on the road.

The **cause of** the collision was ice on the road.



Here are some other 'cause' words and typical contexts they are used in.

The rise in prices **sparked off** a lot of political protest. [often used for very strong, perhaps violent, reactions to events]

The President's statement gave rise to / **provoked** / **generated** a lot of criticism. [slightly less strong than **spark off**]

The new law has **brought about** / **led to** great changes in education. [often used for political/social change]

This problem **stems from** the inflation of recent years. [explaining the direct origins of events and states]

The court-case **arose out of** allegations made in a newspaper. [the allegations started the process that led to the court-case]

B Reasons for and purposes of doing things

Her **reason** for not going with us was that she had no money. **or** The **reason** she didn't go with us was that... [less formal]

I wonder what his **motives** were in sending that letter? [purpose]

I wonder what **prompted** him to send that letter? [reason/cause]

She wrote to the press **with the aim of** exposing the scandal. [purpose]

I've invited you here **with a view to** resolving our differences. [sounds a bit more indirect than **with the aim of**]

He refused to answer **on the grounds that** his lawyer wasn't there. [reason]

The **purpose** of her visit was to inspect the equipment.

Results

He did no work. **As a result** / **As a consequence** / **Consequently**, he failed his exams.

The **result/consequence** of all these changes is that no-one is happy any more. [The examples with **consequence/consequently** sound more formal than **result**]

His remarks **resulted in** everyone getting angry. [as a verb + in]

The events had an **outcome** that no-one could have predicted. [result of a process or events, or of meetings, discussions, etc.]

The **upshot** of all these problems was that we had to start again. [less formal than **outcome**]

When the election results were announced, chaos **ensued**. [formal]

34 Describing people – character

Intellectual ability

Ability: intelligent bright clever smart shrewd able gifted talented brainy (colloquial)
 Lacking ability: stupid foolish half-witted simple silly brainless daft dumb dim (the last four are predominantly colloquial words)
 Clever, in a negative way, using brains to trick or deceive: cunning crafty sly

Attitudes towards life

Looking on either the bright or the black side of things: optimistic pessimistic
 Outward-looking or inward-looking (i.e. to the world around one or to one's own inner world): extroverted introverted
 Calm or not calm with regard to attitude to life: relaxed tense
 Practical, not dreamy in approach to life: sensible down-to-earth
 Feeling things very intensely: sensitive

Attitudes towards other people

Enjoying others' company: sociable gregarious
 Disagreeing with others: quarrelsome argumentative
 Taking pleasure in others' pain: cruel sadistic
 Relaxed in attitude to self and others: easy-going even-tempered
 Not polite to others: impolite rude ill-mannered discourteous
 Telling the truth to others: honest trustworthy reliable sincere
 Unhappy if others have what one does not have oneself: jealous envious

D

One person's meat is another person's poison

Some characteristics can be either positive or negative depending on your point of view. The words in the right-hand column mean roughly the same as the words in the left-hand column except that they have negative rather than positive connotations.

determined	→	obstinate stubborn pig-headed
thrifty/economical	→	miserly mean tight-fisted
self-assured	→	self-important arrogant full of oneself (colloquial)
assertive	→	aggressive bossy (colloquial)
original	→	peculiar weird eccentric odd
frank/direct/open	→	blunt abrupt brusque curt
broad-minded	→	unprincipled permissive
inquiring	→	inquisitive nosy (colloquial)
generous	→	extravagant
innocent	→	naive
ambitious	→	pushy (colloquial)

(See also Units 12, 73 and 78.)