

Grades 9–10 Playlist: Relationship Between Events

Aligns with CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.3:

- Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.

Welcome

All literary texts contain events or major actions that join together to form the larger story. The same is true for historical texts; history itself is a long sequence of events—one thing happens, and then another, and so on. However, this doesn't mean that one event necessarily causes another. Historical events can be related in several different ways. By analyzing in detail how a series of events in a text relate to one another, readers can gain context that is vital to their understanding of history.

Objectives

In this playlist, students will learn how to:

- analyze a series of historical events.
- determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.

Exploring the Standard

Historical events cannot be revisited or altered, but by studying primary sources from the corresponding era, historians and readers alike can form theories and arguments to explain how specific events are connected. Sometimes, two or more events have a cause-and-effect relationship. Other times, events that occur in sequence are unrelated. Assuming that one event is the result of a previous event can lead to major misinterpretations of history. This is why it is important for readers to analyze how a series of events is presented in a historical account to determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.

Watch!

Watch this video to review how to identify major events in a sequence and their relationship to one another:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y6-zUfJ1qqM>

A Closer Look: Determining How Events in a Series Are Related

It can be difficult to identify how the events in a series are connected to each other. Historians do so by interpreting primary sources, many of which frequently offer different explanations of a single event. The uncertainty of this approach can be troubling, but it also allows for a more dynamic study of history.

Rather than merely memorizing given facts, students of history must make logical interpretations of evidence to establish connections between historical events. This sometimes means recognizing that, because history is an uninterrupted sequence of events, there are some cases in which one action follows another with no evidence of direct causality.



The first step when analyzing a sequence of events is to determine which ones matter most in the text. These are often notable occurrences or moments, such as a war, discovery, rebellion, declaration, or the signing of an important document. Once these are established, the reader can break down the relationships between these events to discover how each one relates to those around it.

While reading about, watching, or listening to a historical account, readers can answer the following questions about the events in the account:

- Which of the events are most important?
- How does a certain event or moment relate to those that come before or after it?
- How does the speaker or author arrange the events? Why does this arrangement work?

Example 1

Watch the following video about how the Mexican-American War affected efforts to abolish slavery in the United States:

- <http://www.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/amex25.socst.ush.mexwar/how-the-mexican-american-war-affected-slavery/>

While watching, try to determine how the sequence of events is presented in this historical account. Are the cause-and-effect relationships between certain events clearly defined? Are there any events listed that do not have a causal connection?

Now read the following chart, which identifies the events from the video and analyzes their relationships.

Event	Analysis
The war between Mexico and the United States	The narrator states that the United States went to war with Mexico in 1846, “hoping to gain vast territories in the Southwest.” This early statement establishes a cause for the event: American citizens’ strong desire to grow the country as much as possible. The effect of this desire is the Mexican-American War, which nearly doubled the size of the United States.
“A political fight”	The fight is over whether to turn the newly won land into slave states or free states. This dispute is a cause; its effect is the adoption of the Great Compromise of 1850.
Great Compromise of 1850	The compromise itself also served as the cause of several other historical effects, including the admittance of California to the Union as a free state, the allowance of slavery in the New Mexico and Utah Territories, and the establishment of the highly controversial Fugitive Slave Act.

