Topic Selection Worksheet (CARS Framework)

Use this worksheet to evaluate and refine cause and effect essay topics using the **CARS framework**: **Causality, Adequate Research, Right Scope, and Student Interest**. Complete each section before finalizing your topic.

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1. Brainstorming Prompts

Answer the following to generate potential topics: □ What recent social, technological, environmental, or educational issues interest you?

- What problem, trend, or change have you noticed that seems to have clear causes or effects?
- Are there any cause-and-effect relationships discussed in your course materials?
- Can you think of situations where one factor clearly led to multiple outcomes—or multiple factors led to one outcome?

List 3_5 possible topics:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

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2. Topic Evaluation Scoring System (CARS)

Score each topic from **1 (weak)** to **5 (strong)** in each category.

Criteria	Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3
Causality (clear cause–effect link)	☐	☐	☐
Adequate Research (credible sources available)	☐	☐	☐
Right Scope (not too broad or narrow)	☐	☐	☐
Student Interest (genuine engagement)	☐	☐	☐
Total Score (out of 20)	☐	☐	☐

Guideline: Topics scoring **15 or higher** are strong candidates.

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3. Research Availability Test

For your top-ranked topic, answer the following:

- Can I find **at least 7–10 credible sources** on this topic?
- Are there **peer-reviewed studies, reports, or expert analyses** available?
- Do sources explain **how** the cause leads to the effect (mechanism)?
- Are multiple perspectives or contributing factors discussed in the research?

☐ Yes to most questions ☐ No → Consider refining or changing the topic

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4. Scope Assessment Questions

Evaluate whether your topic fits the assignment requirements:

- Can this topic be effectively covered within the required word count?
- Can I focus on **2–4 major causes or effects** without oversimplifying?
- Is the topic specific enough to allow deep analysis?
- Does the topic avoid absolute or unprovable claims?

☐ Scope is appropriate ☐ Topic needs narrowing/broadening

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5. Final Topic Justification

Final selected topic:

Type of essay:
☐ Cause-focused ☐ Effect-focused ☐ Combined cause and effect

Brief justification (3–4 sentences):
Explain why this topic meets the CARS criteria and is suitable for a cause and effect essay.

_____
_____
_____

Completing this worksheet ensures your topic is clear, researchable, appropriately scoped, and engaging—setting a strong foundation for a successful cause and effect essay.