

This Kibbitzer is based on a sentence from an essay by a Chinese-speaking postgraduate student of Tourism. The version of the sentence labelled 'Original' has been subjected to certain revisions not discussed here.

Original	Revision
Although economic improvement may be caused by tourism, the investment and operational costs of tourism must also be considered.	Although tourism may lead to economic improvement, the investment and operational costs of tourism must also be considered

Is **cause** an appropriate verb to use here? And if not, what alternatives are there? In the course of the consultation we did a 'quick trawl' of **cause***, with results similar to the following (the 'Deep Object' appearing after the verb in citations 1-20 and before the verb in citations 21-30):

1 iumph, because the Home Secretary had been caused a few moments of **discomfort**. Here was one of th
2 return of the money. The main charges will cause a **furore** among MPs on the Commons Public Account
3 been carefully balanced, "which should not cause a **haemorrhaging** of building society deposits". !
4 pened, "the resultant explosion would have caused a major **disaster** involving a considerable loss
5 the east German city of Halle. The report caused a public **outcry** against neo-Nazi violence in Ge
6 y condition of the digestive tract. It can cause abdominal **pain**, severe **diarrhoea**, **constipation**,
7 oss domestic product. Such a measure would cause acute **embarrassment** to the UK, which would need
8 of VAT on domestic heat and lighting will cause administrative **chaos** unless it is defeated this
9 Temple, other journalists and athletes has caused **anger** and **bitterness**, Radford, who only took up
10 e trial Three men accused of conspiring to cause **explosions** on or before October 9, last year, an
11 main story has been the wet weather which caused **flooding** over parts of southern Britain, as well
12 satisfaction. On one visit to the city he caused great **offence** by using the word "aesthetics".
13 y effect, if any, of legal sanctions is to cause **grief** and **ignorance**. The morality or immorality
14 nfall for February. Another tropical storm caused **havoc** over the Australian state of Queensland
15 realise, of course, that your actions will cause his **death**. But this is not why you remove the or
17 ed discussions of male harassment that may cause **resentment** among male workers. Often, experts sa
18 le buying 'impure' substances that could cause serious physical **harm**. Dabbling, evidently, does
19 fs quoted by ministers. Unemployment could cause **tension** at home. "But my main worry is financial
20 ladder to office: "Gimme a job or I might cause **trouble**. "It is a time-
honoured tactic, so that,

21 woman joins the team to replace a **casualty** caused by a frozen sprout, brings in a murder mystery
22 a director, Chris Muir. "A **delay** has been caused by differences of opinion and interpretation be
23 the claim that the American **Revolution** was caused by disagreements over the doctrine of the Trini
24 d bribes for official contracts. The **shock** caused by Mr Portillo's 'exaggeration' was so great th
25 phed if the West had financed the **hardship** caused by Russia's speedy transition to a market econo
26 claims from people suffering from **illness** caused by stress at work, the Association of British I
27 will see a rebound from the heavy **setback** caused by the weakness of the Do-It-All joint operatio
28 rective of the terrible **injuries** and **scars** caused by this repulsive attack." In Bonn the federal
29 story for some people. **Alarm** is also being caused by tighter contracts being laid down by local a
30 wn to the department. Her brain **damage** was caused by whooping cough vaccine, for which the then

It is worth noting that

1. The Deep Objects ('Effects') of **cause** highlighted in red are overwhelmingly **negative** in connotation, from the relatively mild **discomfort** (1) and **resentment** (17) through to the more powerful **havoc** (14) and **death** (15). (c.f. Stubbs 1995). The one exception in this sample would appear to be the **American Revolution** (23), though, given the effect of all the other contexts in which we find **cause**, we may suspect that the writer does not think that that was such a Good Thing after all.
2. With this verb the relation between the Cause (which may be human - see citations 10, 12, 20 etc.) and Effect is relatively **direct** and **immediate**.

Is there another verb in English that could take the place of **cause**, without its overwhelmingly negative connotations? We decided to investigate **lead to**, which produced a set of citations similar to the following:

31 to ignite a civil war that would certainly lead to a complete **destruction** of Yemen as a single
sta
32 r to Mrs Bottomley. "Further cuts can only lead to the **loss of life**." But the authority, which fa
33 cle to take them to court. 'This will also lead to a **delay** in getting a settlement and fixing
thei
34 verseas to satisfy demand in Britain. That leads to a **deterioration** in Britain's trade balance,
wh
35 not envisaged as a total ban, which would lead to **accusations** that the TCCB was merely
maximising
36 ny retreat from free market policies could lead to economic **collapse**, and renewed confrontation
wi
37 er, Thwaites warns that the decision could lead to further **miscarriages** of justice. "Anyone who
th
38 mong the three classroom organisations may lead to more problems in schools than last year. Then,
39 n the 12th February 1938, a northerly gale led to severe **flooding** down the east coast. The
Februar
40 arguments behind the present conflict also led to the first world **war**, which was ignited by the
as

41 h good if his disconcerting outburst is to lead to a **frank discussion** about the future of Zionis
42 odle from this man's pen might, one feels, lead to a **great discovery**. Galileo is as global as hi
43 omic deregulation and free- market reforms led to a massive **boom** on the Bombay stock market;
infla
44 ng and searching. It reports that this has led to a notable **improvement** in drug finds in the
priso
45 e flexible working arrangements. This will lead to a relatively strong **growth** in productivity and
46 le His indomitable spirit was a force that led to great **successes** on the field in later years,
cli
47 ence of any gains. Claims that trusts have led to **greater efficiency** are difficult to
substantiate
48 to the customer. It is not as if subsidies lead to **lower prices**. If they did, then why is it that
49 vember. It concluded that the courses have led to 'significant **benefits** to parents in terms of
con
50 tc) and to believe that free markets would lead to some sort of rural **utopia** is a delusion. As
the

The results show:

1. The split between negative and positive (or at least non-negative) contexts is now 50/50 (this has been emphasised in the printout above, citations 31-40 being negative, and 41-50 being positive). In other words, an expectation of a negative result does not seem to be 'built into' **lead to** as it is built into **cause**. The approximately 50/50 split between negative and positive contexts was confirmed from an examination of 500 contexts of **lead to**.
2. Apart from the difference in connotation, **lead to** differs both syntactically and semantically from **cause**:
 - o **lead to** is not used with a human subject, and does not appear in the passive.
 - o **lead to** is less direct than **cause**, implying a series of steps between cause and effect.

These features of **lead to** seemed to make it entirely suitable to replace **cause**, the bar on the passive making it necessary to re-write the sentence in the active, as shown above.

As an afterthought to the work during the consultation, I decided to investigate the contexts of the passivisable **bring about** as an alternative substitute for **cause**: a random sample of 500 citations showed a large preponderance (>80%) of positive contexts, a figure which dropped to rather less than 50% when the passive contexts were examined. These results indicated that 'Although tourism may bring about economic improvement, ...' would also have been an excellent revision in this context.

Reference M. Stubbs, 'Collocations and semantic profiles: on the cause of the trouble with quantitative studies', in *Functions of Language*, 2, 1: 23-55. 1995.

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