

Exercise walk-through

Causation in the Renaissance and Age of Discovery ■ 1.11

eXercise

You must be able to

- distinguish a cause from a condition and from a trigger
- rank causes and justify the ranking
- handle a question asking for the most important cause
- avoid a list of causes with no argument

Method — Three kinds

A **condition** must be in place for the outcome to be possible. A **cause** actively produces it. A **trigger** determines the timing. Exploration required ship technology (condition), commercial demand (cause) and state rivalry (which often set the timing).

Method — Ranking

A ranking needs a criterion: without which cause would the outcome not have occurred at all? Name your criterion before ranking, or the ranking is only a preference.

Method — Most important

Answer the question asked: name one cause, argue for it against a named rival, and concede what the rival explains better. A list is not an answer to 'most important'.

Practice 2.1 ■ 2 marks

State the difference between a condition and a cause.

Solution 2.1

Method: Three kinds

Worked steps

a condition must be in place for the outcome to be possible **B1**; a cause actively produces it **B1**.

Practice 2.2 ■ 2 marks

State what a ranking of causes requires.

Solution 2.2

Worked steps

a stated criterion **B1**, such as: without which cause would the outcome not have occurred at all **B1**.

Practice 2.3 ■ 2 marks

Question: “What was the most important cause of European overseas expansion?”

- (a) Name your cause and your criterion.
- (b) Name the strongest rival cause.

Solution 2.3

Method: Most important

Worked steps

(a) a named cause with a stated criterion **B2**. (b) a genuine rival, e.g. state rivalry or technological capacity **B1**.

Exam-style 3.1 ■ 1 mark

Ship design suitable for ocean voyages is best classified as

A a trigger

B a condition

C an outcome

D a criterion

Solution 3.1

A a trigger

B a condition 

C an outcome

D a criterion

Worked steps

B. it makes voyages possible without producing them.

Exam-style 3.2 ■ 1 mark

A list of five causes with no argument answers a “most important” question

- A** fully
- B** not at all
- C** better than one cause
- D** if the list is long enough

Solution 3.2

Method: Most important

A fully

B not at all



C better than one cause

D if the list is long enough

Worked steps

B. the question asks for a judgment, which a list does not give.

Exam-style 3.3 ■ 1 mark

A student argues commercial demand was the most important cause.

- (a) State one concession they should make.
- (b) Explain how conceding strengthens the answer.

Solution 3.3

Worked steps

(a) that without the ship technology no demand could have been met **B1**. (b) conceding what the rival explains shows the criterion is being applied rather than assumed **B1**, and the argument then rests on comparison rather than assertion **B1**.