

## Cause/Effect Plotting

Exercise: Organize the events below into a logical, compelling, chronological outline that builds to a satisfying climax and denouement.

**Basic character/plot:** Jed is a high school senior whose dad died six months ago and his mom just remarried after a whirlwind courtship. Here are the events: (\*Note: you may either omit one event *or* add one.)

Jed's step-dad is arrested for DUI

Jed asks someone for a job

Jed's girlfriend dumps him

Jed comes home sick mid-day and catches his step-dad drunk

Jed's girlfriend Amy's father confronts Jed about his relationship with his daughter

Jed's mom slaps him

Jed visits Dad's grave

**Follow these steps to compose your outline:**

- I. Choose the event which will be the climax
- II. Sequence all the events in order to build to the climax (adding one event or omitting one, if you like)
- III. Compose the outline by including brief descriptions that answer how and why things happen when they do (use *because*, *after*, *then*, and other linking words.)
- IV. Finally, ask yourself: can I sequence events better way to achieve a more satisfying result? If not, stick to your guns! 😊