

Exercise walk-through

Causation in the Age of the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment ■ 4.7

eXercise

You must be able to

- distinguish intellectual from social and political causes
- explain how a method spread from one field to another
- rank causes against a stated criterion
- avoid treating ideas as causes with no mechanism

Method — Kinds of cause

Intellectual: the content of the arguments. **Social:** literacy, print, the public sphere.

Political: rulers with reasons to sponsor or suppress. A strong answer uses all three.

Method — How a method spreads

A method spreads when it visibly succeeds where an older one failed, and when institutions exist to carry it. Say both: the success and the channel.

Method — Ideas need mechanisms

“The Enlightenment caused reform” is not an explanation until you name how: who read what, in what institution, with what power to act. The mechanism is the argument.

Practice 2.1 ■ 3 marks

Name three kinds of cause relevant to this period.

Solution 2.1

Method: Kinds of cause

Worked steps

intellectual **B1**; social **B1**; political **B1**.

Practice 2.2 ■ 2 marks

State the two things needed for a method to spread.

Solution 2.2

Worked steps

visible success where an older method failed **B1**; institutions able to carry it **B1**.

Practice 2.3 ■ 1 mark

A student writes: “Enlightenment ideas caused reform.”

- (a) State what is missing.
- (b) Write a version with a mechanism.

Solution 2.3

Method: Ideas need mechanisms

Worked steps

(a) the mechanism — who read what, where, with what power to act **B1**. (b) a version naming a channel and an actor, e.g. “Ministers educated in these arguments used them to justify codification a crown already wanted” **B2**.

Exam-style 3.1 ■ 1 mark

A method spreads when it

- A** is decreed
- B** visibly succeeds where an older one failed and has institutions to carry it
- C** is kept secret
- D** is untested

Solution 3.1

Method: How a method spreads

- A is decreed
- B visibly succeeds where an older one failed and has institutions to carry it 
- C is kept secret
- D is untested

Worked steps

B. success plus a channel.

Exam-style 3.2 ■ 1 mark

“Ideas caused X” becomes an explanation once you name

- A** the date
- B** the mechanism
- C** the author
- D** the country

Solution 3.2

Method: Ideas need mechanisms

- A the date
- B the mechanism 
- C the author
- D the country

Worked steps

- B. the mechanism is the explanation.

Exam-style 3.3 ■ 1 mark

Rank intellectual and political causes of eighteenth-century reform.

- (a) State your criterion.
- (b) Give your ranking and one concession.

Solution 3.3

Method: Kinds of cause

Worked steps

(a) a stated criterion, e.g. which cause the outcome could not have occurred without **B1**. (b) a ranking with a genuine concession to the other cause **B2**.