

CAUSE vs PROVOKE

CAUSE

To make something happen, especially something bad: The difficult driving conditions caused several accidents. [+ obj + to infinitive] The bright light caused her to blink. Most heart attacks are caused by blood clots. [+ two objects] I hope the children haven't caused you too much trouble.

- ▶ Sitting hunched over a computer all day can cause problems.
- ▶ Some types of paint on toys can cause lead-poisoning in children.
- ▶ The bomb was designed to cause the maximum amount of damage.
- ▶ He's always trying to cause trouble between us.
- ▶ Smoking can cause respiratory diseases.

PROVOKE

1) Stimulate or incite (someone) to do or feel something, especially by arousing anger in them:

- ▶ A teacher can provoke you into working harder
- ▶ Her best jokes could not provoke a smile from him.
- ▶ She is also comfortable following a traditional line with novels that do not seek to challenge or provoke the reader.
- ▶ There are times when you have to provoke people, challenge them to go further.

[WITH OBJECT]

2) Stimulate or give rise to (a reaction or emotion, typically a strong or unwelcome one) in someone:

- ▶ The decision provoked a storm of protest from civil rights organizations
- ▶ Deconstructionism is one of the words that provokes a strong reaction from both sides.
- ▶ Her decision to leave her child provoked outrage.
- ▶ The Minister's speech has provoked a furious reaction.

3) Deliberately make (someone) annoyed or angry:

- ▶ Rachel refused to be provoked
- ▶ She couldn't provoke him into arguing.
- ▶ I was provoked into hitting him.
- ▶ Nathan was looking at her with a wild expression, the kind he got whenever she had deliberately provoked him.