

Making Predictions

What is it? By analyzing cause and effect, you can often make **predictions**. Making predictions means making an educated guess about the likely outcome of certain events or actions.

How to do it. Here are three ways to make predictions:

1. Look for patterns. Do the causes and effects over time seem to follow any regular pattern?
2. Consider what might come next in a sequence. Where does this chain of events seem to be leading?
3. Look for correlations (connections) between historical events. Are there other events in history or other places in the world with a similar situation?

Try it. Often new inventions trigger a chain of events with a variety of outcomes. Consider the example of the cotton gin.

In 1793, the United States produced about 180,000 pounds of cotton. Seventeen years later, the harvest had grown to an astounding 93 million pounds. What spurred this incredible change? It was the invention of the cotton gin by Eli Whitney in 1793.

The cotton gin is a machine that removes the seeds from cotton. Before the gin, one person took all day to clean one pound of cotton. In contrast, one small cotton gin could clean 50 pounds in a day. Later horse-driven gins could clean thousands of pounds per week. With cotton in high demand by textile mills in the North and in Britain, this crop quickly became extremely profitable for southern farmers.

Answer these questions to predict other impacts of the cotton gin.

