**Directions**: Read the story of Alphonse the Camel. As you do, make a list of the causes and consequences in the story using the chart below. Then, categorize your causes and answer the questions at the bottom of the worksheet.

**The Story of Alphonse the Camel**

Once upon a time, there was a camel (called Alphonse). For various reasons (relating to an unfortunate accident during his birth) the camel had severe back problems and had trouble carrying heavy objects. This was not the end of his misfortune, however, because he also had an evil, exploitative owner (called Frank the Camel Killer) who took advantage of Alphonse because no one was looking out for him. Frank had hated camels ever since he experienced a nasty incident in his childhood involving a camel’s hoof and his rear end. He was very bitter and hadn’t trusted camels since. Frank regularly overloaded his camels prior to taking them on grueling and totally unnecessary round trips up and down mountains on his way to deliver goods to his customers, so Alphonse and his fellow camels were overworked and in poor health. These customers, shockingly, were completely indifferent to these frequent and gross violations of the rights of camels and even found Frank and his antics vaguely endearing. Because of this, Frank’s abuse not only continued, but became more intense when the customers were present. On top of it all, Alphonse was sometimes his own worst enemy. Camels are very proud creatures, and he would act tough in front of his camel friends, and on his rare breaks he would show off how much he could carry. Thus, Alphonse was not getting the rest that he badly needed. Plenty of camels had died doing similar work to Alphonse and his friends. After a particularly nasty few weeks when camels were keeling over left, right, and center, the camels decided to form a union to defend their rights and protect them from evil owners. However, when it comes down to it, camels are selfish creatures who don’t trust each other. They were more worried about looking after themselves than about working together, and the union soon fizzled out. One Friday, Frank had just finished loading up Alphonse and his poor exploited fellow creatures for yet another grueling and totally unnecessary round trip up and down the mountains. He had piled and piled and piled up the goods onto Alphonse’s back and was taking a break, chewing a straw while thinking smugly about his handiwork. At this point, Alphonse was weak, run down, and near collapse. On a whim, he decided to add the bedraggled straw he had been chewing to Alphonse’s load. Alphonse groaned obligingly. He eyed his owner with disgust. He keeled over and died of radical and irreversible back collapse.

**Longer-term, shorter-term, and intermediate-term causes**

Once you’ve made a list of all of the causes and consequences, think about each cause with respect to how long it preceded Alphonse’s demise. Mark each cause with an::

“L” for a longer-term cause

“I” for an intermediate-term cause

“S” for a shorter-term cause

“T” for the Trigger Event

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| **Causes** | **Consequences** |
| Alphonse was born with a back defect. |  |
|  | No one was looking out for Alphonse. |
| Frank was kicked in the rear by a camel as a child |  |
|  | Alphonse was overworked and in poor health. |
| Frank’s customers are indifferent to frequent and gross violations of camels’ rights. |  |
|  | Frank’s abuse was more intense when customers were present. |
| Alphonse is a proud creature and would act tough in front of his camel friends. |  |
|  | Alphonse was not getting the rest he badly needed |
| Many camels died over several weeks. |  |
|  | The union fizzled out |
| Frank overloaded Alphonse for another trip up the mountains. |  |
|  | Alphonse collapsed and died. |

Once you’re finished, answer each of the following questions:

1. What are some of the longer-term causes that might not have been listed in the story of Alphonse?

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2. If there was one cause that could have been removed and saved Alphonse, what was it?

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3. What are some causes that, in the end, don’t actually change the outcome of the story?

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4. Was it the straw that broke the camel’s back? In other words, was the straw the triggering event? Why or why not?

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