

Aristotle's categories for the causes of phenomena:

1. **The material cause:** the stuff something is made of, for example the clay of a pot.
2. **The formal cause:** the form a thing takes, for example the shape of the pot
3. **The efficient cause:** something acting externally upon it, as the potter to the clay)
4. **the final cause:** the thing's purpose, or the goal the potter had in mind.