Grade 6 – Argumentative Writing Work Sample: Exceeds

Task: Your class is studying about the environment and recycling. You are given four sources about community service and recycling efforts.

*Read the sources carefully to **write an argumentative essay** in which you give your opinion about whether the school should agree to clean a section of a highway or host a technology recycling day as your school's community service project. Make sure you clearly state your opinion and write several paragraphs supporting your opinion with reasons and details from the sources.*

Scores, Justification of Student Evidence, and Suggested Areas of Student Improvement

Ideas and Content: 5

The essay presents a clear, well-reasoned claim in favor of hosting a technology recycling day and consistently supports that claim with accurate, relevant evidence from multiple sources. Explanations show strong understanding of environmental impact, and reasoning is well developed. A few explanations could be more concise or more explicitly tied to the argument, but overall, the writing demonstrates strong clarity, accuracy, and purpose.

Evidence from Student Work: Ideas and Content	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Ideas and Content
✓ **Clear Claim & Purpose** ○ The claim is explicit and well-framed: "our school should host a technology recycling day, rather than a highway cleanup." ○ Purpose is reinforced throughout the piece: "This way, lead poisoning or other harmful effects… can be prevented." ○ Reasserts claim clearly in the conclusion: "That is why our school should host a technology recycling day…"	➢ **Strengthen Your Claim by Adding a Brief Preview** ○ Add a sentence in the introduction that previews the three reasons (environmental risk, volume of tech waste, lack of awareness).
✓ **Relevant, Accurate Reasons & Evidence** ○ Uses Source 3 accurately: "If crushed and put into landfills, the lead from CRTs could seep into groundwater and rivers, contaminating the water supply." ○ Provides another source-based point: "It's better for the planet if we keep using an electronic for as long as it keeps working…" (Barbara Kyle quote). ○ References national recycling laws: "In 2013, only half of the states in the U.S. had passed laws about recycling and disposing of electronics." ○ Compares technology litter vs highway litter using accurate reasoning from the sources. ○ Evidence is well-chosen and directly supports the claim.	➢ **Integrate Source Evidence Even More Explicitly** ○ Add citation phrases such as "According to Source 2…" to strengthen attribution.

Evidence from Student Work: Ideas and Content	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Ideas and Content
✓ **Development, Reasoning & Explanation** ○ Explains environmental impact in detail: ▪ Technology waste poses greater environmental danger: lead contamination, air/water pollution. ▪ Highway litter has declining rates due to existing programs: "many acts to stop highway littering… the amount of litter is becoming smaller." ○ Offers reasoning tied to consequences ("if water supply is contaminated, it can have terrible effects on humans and animals"). ○ Provides extended explanation of why recycling electronics is difficult due to changing technology ("new versions… cause problems when recycling materials"). ○ Minor areas could be even more precise (e.g., removing some repeated statements about popularity of devices).	➢ **Tighten Explanations by Linking Back to the Claim More Often** ○ After each environmental example (CRTs, lead, recycling laws), add a sentence explaining why this proves a tech recycling day is the more urgent project.
✓ **Focus & Relevance to the Argument** ○ Stays consistently focused on comparing the two service options and arguing why tech recycling is better. ○ Every paragraph supports the central claim with new evidence or reasoning. ○ Maintains relevance even when explaining background context (Act of 1965, RePC, CRTs). Occasional minor drift into general statements about technology popularity, but still connected to the argument.	➢ **Reduce Minor Repetition to Maintain Sharp Focus** ○ Trim repeated statements about technology becoming more popular and instead emphasize why popularity increases waste volume.

Organization: 5

The essay is well-structured and easy to follow. The introduction clearly frames the issue, body paragraphs each develop distinct reasons supported by evidence, and the conclusion provides clear closure. Transitions and sequencing effectively scaffold the reader through the argument. Minor areas could be even more streamlined, but overall, the structure is strong and enhances comprehension.

Evidence from Student Work: Organization	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Organization
✓ **Clear, Purposeful Introduction** ○ Opens with a compelling setup: "Did you know that your computer, tablet or phone could be harming the planet?" ○ States claim and introduces rationale for comparing service projects.	➢ **Add a More Explicit Preview Sentence** ○ Introduce your three major reasons briefly in the introduction to strengthen advance organization.

Evidence from Student Work: Organization	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Organization
✓ **Logical Sequencing of Ideas** ○ Well-ordered structure: introduction to environmental danger of electronics to recycling system weaknesses to comparison to highway litter to conclusion. ○ Each section builds on the previous one, deepening the argument.	➢ **Refine Paragraph Boundaries for Efficiency** ○ Combine or tighten any slightly repetitive statements (e.g., repeated references to technology popularity).
✓ **Effective Transitions** ○ Uses transitions such as "To begin with," "According to one of the articles," "Another way…," "Also," and "Lastly." ○ These signal shifts in reasoning and help create a smooth argumentative flow.	➢ **Deepen Connections Between Paragraphs** ○ Add bridging sentences that show how one reason leads logically into the next.
✓ **Conclusion Provides Strong Closure** ○ Reasserts claim clearly: "That is why our school should host a technology recycling day…" ○ Provides a final persuasive appeal rooted in earlier evidence.	➢ **Strengthen the Final Synthesis** ○ Tie the conclusion more explicitly to the urgency implied in the evidence (e-waste scale, lead contamination).

Voice: 4

The voice is confident, persuasive, and shows clear concern for environmental responsibility. Tone is appropriate for an argumentative audience and purpose, though occasionally conversational phrasing slightly weakens academic authority. Nevertheless, the voice effectively conveys urgency and commitment.

Evidence from Student Work: Voice	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Voice
✓ **Confident, Purpose-Driven Tone** ○ Uses assertive statements such as "Technology recycling day is the better way instead of highway cleanup." ○ Maintains a persuasive tone throughout.	➢ **Increase Authoritative Tone** ○ Strengthen voice by integrating more source-based precision to support claims.
✓ **Appropriate Engagement With Audience** ○ Appeals to readers' sense of responsibility: "We need to protect our community." ○ Uses a motivational closing line: "Let's save our environment."	➢ **Avoid Overgeneralizations** ○ Replace broad statements (like "very bad for the environment") with more detailed, evidence-based phrasing.
✓ **Occasional Conversational or Informal Phrasing** ○ Phrases like "This could be really bad" or "People just throw away their old devices without thinking" lean informal.	➢ **Replace Conversational Language With Academic Voice** ○ Revise phrases like "This could be really bad" to more formal expressions (ex: "This poses a significant environmental hazard").
✓ **Consistent Perspective** ○ Maintains argumentative stance; no shifts into narrative or unrelated commentary.	➢ **Maintain Consistent Persuasive Intensity** ○ Add more direct call-to-action sentences grounded in evidence.

Word Choice: 4

The writing uses clear and effective vocabulary, with several strong phrases and persuasive word choices. At times, wording becomes repetitive or slightly vague, but overall the piece demonstrates solid, purpose-driven language.

Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Word Choice
✓ **Effective Persuasive Vocabulary** ○ Uses strong verbs and descriptors like "contaminating the water supply," "preventing harm," "destroying our environment."	➢ **Use More Nuanced Terms** ○ Apply vocabulary such as "ecosystem impact," "e-waste," or "sustainable disposal."
✓ **Domain-Specific Terms** ○ Includes environmental and technological terms such as "recycling," "groundwater," "pollutants," and "disposing of electronics."	➢ **Increase Precision With Environmental Vocabulary** ○ Use more specific descriptors (e.g., "toxic metals," "hazardous runoff").
✓ **Occasional Vague Phrasing** ○ Phrases like "really bad" or "hurts the community" are less precise.	➢ **Clarify General Statements** ○ Replace general adjectives with specifics tied directly to source information.
✓ **Repetition of Key Terms** ○ Repeats "harm," "bad," and "dangerous" rather than expanding vocabulary for variety.	➢ **Replace Repetitive Words With Synonyms** ○ Vary terms like "harmful" or "bad" with more descriptive alternatives.

Sentence Fluency: 4

Sentences generally flow well, with clear structure and readable pacing. Some sentences are long or slightly repetitive in pattern, but overall the essay demonstrates effective fluency.

Evidence from Student Work: Sentence Fluency	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Sentence Fluency
✓ **Varied Sentence Structures** ○ Mix of complex, compound, and simple sentences supports rhythm. ○ Example: "If crushed and put into landfills, the lead from CRTs could seep into groundwater and rivers, contaminating the water supply."	➢ **Use More Purposeful Transitions Within Paragraphs** ○ Add transitions that show relationships ("As a result," "Consequently").
✓ **Generally Smooth Flow** ○ Sentences connect logically and maintain readable pacing.	➢ **Strengthen Rhythm Through Read-Aloud Revision** ○ Listen for places where pacing becomes heavy and adjust accordingly.
✓ **Some Repetition in Sentence Beginnings** ○ Several sentences begin with "This," "It," or "Also," creating minor monotony.	➢ **Add More Variety to Sentence Beginnings** ○ Start sentences with prepositional or adverbial phrases or content-specific terms.
✓ **Occasional Lengthy Sentences** ○ Some sentences carry multiple ideas; could be split for clarity.	➢ **Split Lengthy Sentences** ○ Break multi-clause sentences into two clear statements.

Conventions: 4

Conventions are strong with only minor errors in punctuation or grammar. Spelling and capitalization are accurate. Errors do not impede understanding and are infrequent.

Evidence from Student Work: Conventions	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Conventions
✓ **Accurate Spelling** ○ Words such as "contaminating," "recycling," "groundwater," and "electronic" are spelled correctly.	➢
✓ **Mostly Correct Punctuation** ○ Commas used appropriately in most complex sentences.	➢ **Review Comma Placement in Complex Sentences** ○ Add commas after introductory elements when needed. ➢ **Check Consistency in Citation Formatting** ○ Use uniform style when referencing sources if required.
✓ **Minor Errors** ○ Occasional missing comma or slight sentence-level awkwardness, but meaning remains clear.	➢ **Proofread for Minor Errors** ○ Conduct a slow read to fix occasional small mistakes.
✓ **Clear Grammar and Agreement** ○ Uses consistent subject–verb agreement and clear sentence boundaries.	➢ **Maintain Sentence Boundary Accuracy** ○ Ensure each sentence contains a complete and clear idea.

Use of Sources: 5

The essay uses multiple sources accurately and convincingly. Evidence is well selected, contextually appropriate, and integrated into reasoning. While citations are not formal, the writing clearly and accurately reflects information from at least two sources.

Evidence from Student Work: Use of Sources	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Use of Sources
✓ **Accurate Use of Multiple Sources** ○ Draws on Source 3 for CRT/lead contamination and water pollution. ○ Uses Barbara Kyle's statement from Source 1 about continuing to use electronics until they wear out. ○ References legislative information about state recycling laws.	➢ **Balance Evidence Across Sources** ○ Ensure that each source used supports a distinct reason.
✓ **Evidence Directly Supports the Argument** ○ Each chosen detail is connected to the central claim favoring a tech recycling day.	➢ **Include Brief Explanation After Each Evidence Point** ○ Add a clarifying sentence showing how the evidence proves the recycling day is more beneficial.
✓ **Effective Integration** ○ Evidence is woven into sentences rather than dropped in isolation.	➢ **Use Evidence in Counterargument Section** ○ Consider adding evidence to rebut the highway cleanup option more directly.
✓ **Room for Greater Explicit Attribution** ○ Sources are referenced by description, not numbered attribution, but accuracy is maintained.	➢ **Add Explicit Attribution to Strengthen Credibility** ○ Use "According to Source 2…" or "The article states…" to clarify evidence origin.

Suggestions for Teaching Strategies to Support the Student Sample:

The following contain suggestions for teaching strategies and do not encompass a complete list of possible strategies.

Ideas and Content:

Evidence–Reasoning Chain Routine

- Students practice turning each source detail into a full chain: evidence to explanation to connection to claim.

Counterargument Integration Mini-Lesson

- Teach students to acknowledge the merits of highway cleanup but rebut with stronger tech-waste reasoning to further improve depth.

Focused Claim Preview Workshop

- Students write a one-sentence preview summarizing their three reasons to provide clarity at the start of the essay.

Organization:

Reason-Preview Modeling

- Students practice crafting one-sentence previews to frame their argument structure.

Transition Function Workshop

- Students analyze how transitions guide readers and then revise drafts to use stronger cause/effect transitions.

Conclusion Synthesis Lesson

- Teach students to synthesize—rather than repeat—evidence in their final paragraph.

Voice:

Formal vs. Informal Tone Sort

- Students identify sentences that sound conversational and revise them to academic voice.

Authority-Building Phrasing Workshop

- Teach students sentence structures that position them as informed advocates (ex: “The evidence clearly demonstrates that…”).

Purposeful Appeals Mini-Lesson

- Students practice rhetorical appeals (logical, ethical, practical) appropriate to argument writing.

Suggestions for Teaching Strategies to Support the Student Sample:

The following contain suggestions for teaching strategies and do not encompass a complete list of possible strategies.

Word Choice:

Domain Vocabulary Expansion

- Build vocabulary banks related to environmental responsibility and waste management.

Replace-and-Refine Practice

- Students revise vague words with more descriptive academic language.

Synonym Variety Exercise

- Students create synonym charts to strengthen variety in word choice.

Sentence Fluency:

Sentence Variety Mapping

- Students highlight first words of sentences and revise repeating patterns.

Combining/Splitting Workshop

- Practice transforming overly long or short sentences into more balanced structures.

Read-Aloud Fluency Checks

- Students revise based on how well sentences flow aloud.

Conventions:

Comma Usage Mini-Lesson

- Focus on comma placement after introductory phrases and in compound sentences.

Targeted Proofreading Checklists

- Students use checklists for capitalization, punctuation, and sentence boundaries.

Conventions Warm-Up Practice

- Daily editing exercises mirroring the pattern of errors seen.

Use of Sources:

Citation Language Workshop

- Teach students how to credit evidence with clear attribution (e.g., Source 1, Source 3).

Evidence–Analysis Pair Practice

- Students practice pairing each piece of evidence with an explanation sentence.

Counterargument Evidence Routine

- Model how to use sources to strengthen rebuttals to alternative viewpoints.