Grade 6 – Expository Writing Work Sample: Exceeds

Task: Your class is studying about the Chicago World's Fair of 1893 and the remarkable exhibits and inventions that would make history. You are given four articles about the Chicago World's Fair of 1893.

*Read the sources carefully to **develop a thesis/controlling idea** to explain the impact of the 1893 World's Fair. Using more than one source, select the most relevant information to support your thesis/controlling idea.*

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

Ideas and Content: 5

The essay presents a clear and well-focused controlling idea about the lasting impact of the 1893 World's Fair. The student uses well-chosen, accurate details from multiple sources to develop the topic, and explanations show a solid understanding of the fair's inventions, historical context, and influence on modern life. Several explanations could be more precise, but overall development is strong.

Evidence from Student Work: Ideas and Content	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Ideas and Content
✓ **Clear Controlling Idea and Purpose** ○ Establishes a clear controlling idea in the introduction: the fair "influenced a huge change in everyday life" and "helped spark a creative fire in the hearts of America's inventors." ○ Maintains purpose throughout the essay by consistently linking examples back to the idea of long-term impact, such as stating that the fair prepared people "for the modern world."	➢ **Clarify Your Controlling Idea With More Precision** ○ Add a short phrase in the introduction explaining *which* types of impact you will discuss (inventions, electricity, rebuilding Chicago). This will help guide the reader more clearly from the beginning.
✓ **Relevant and Accurate Details** ○ Uses accurate information from Source 1 about inventions: "dishwasher," "fluorescent light bulb," "zipper," and the Ferris wheel being "a new invention at the time." ○ Incorporates precise historical context from Source 4: the Great Chicago Fire "destroying nearly 17,450… buildings" and that Chicago wanted to show it had "really and truly been reborn." ○ Includes accurate details about Edison, Tesla, and AC power from Source 3: "Nicola Tesla… won the competition by using long distance AC power." ○ Selects information that directly ties to the essay's purpose, such as technology becoming "significant parts of American life and culture."	➢ **Strengthen Accuracy and Specificity of Details** ○ Recheck and revise any details that imply the lightbulb was invented at the fair; the sources say it was *displayed,* not invented there. ○ When mentioning the Ferris wheel or other inventions, include one more precise detail (such as why it was designed or how visitors reacted).

Evidence from Student Work: Ideas and Content	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Ideas and Content
✓ **Development and Elaboration** ○ Provides explanations showing why inventions mattered: describes how they "made life simpler, tasks easier to accomplish." Connects the Industrial Revolution to the fair's ○ Innovation by explaining how making goods "faster, safer" supported economic growth. ○ Explains the significance of AC power by noting Tesla's method "made it possible to light large areas up," showing understanding of why the lighting competition was impactful. ○ Adds commentary on long-term influence by stating that inventions "further benefited the Industrial Revolution" and " moved America… into modern times."	➢ **Deepen Your Explanations to Show Clearer Impact** ○ After listing inventions, explain how each one specifically changed life in the 1890s (e.g., saved time, improved safety, increased production). ○ When discussing the Industrial Revolution, add a sentence explaining how factory innovation and fair inventions influenced each other.
✓ **Focus and Relevance** ○ Stays focused on the impact of the fair by ending most paragraphs with a statement tying back to progress or innovation ("They were getting ready for a new era"). ○ Avoids unrelated details and consistently selects information that supports the thesis. ○ Some statements overgeneralize impact ("spark a creative fire in the hearts of America's inventors"), but overall relevance is strong.	➢ **Maintain Focus by Reducing Broad Claims** ○ Replace general statements like "spark a creative fire" or "huge change in everyday life" with more concrete descriptions of the impact supported directly by source information. ○ Strengthen your concluding statements by summarizing specific ways the fair shaped technology rather than repeating broad ideas.

Organization: 5

The essay is well structured with a clear introduction, purposeful sequencing of ideas, effective transitions, and a strong conclusion. Some paragraphs could tighten focus, but the overall organization meaningfully supports reader understanding.

Evidence from Student Work: Organization	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Organization
✓ **Clear and Purposeful Introduction** ○ Opens with a hook and identifies the essay's purpose: "When you flick on the light switch at home…it feels so natural." ○ Establishes the topic and sets up the idea of inventions shaping modern life.	➢ **Increase Precision in Introduction** ○ Add one sentence previewing the three major areas you discuss. This will help frame the essay's structure more clearly.
✓ **Logical Sequence of Ideas** ○ Moves from describing the fair's sights and inventions to historical context, then to electricity, and finally to long-term impact. ○ Paragraph order supports understanding by building background before introducing source comparisons.	➢ **Tighten Sequencing Within Paragraphs** ○ Some paragraphs combine many ideas; consider grouping similar inventions or focusing each paragraph on one major concept.

Evidence from Student Work: Organization	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Organization
✓ **Effective Transitions** ○ Uses transitions that guide the reader through sections ("To really understand the influence…," "There was also another reason…," "If you look deeper into the details…"). ○ Transitions connect ideas across paragraphs and help maintain momentum.	➢ **Strengthen Transitions Between Ideas** ○ Add transitions that show relationships (such as cause-and-effect) instead of introducing new details immediately.
✓ **Clear and Purposeful Conclusion** ○ Conclusion reinforces the controlling idea by stating inventions "moved people into the modern day." ○ Summarizes main points without introducing new unrelated ideas.	➢ **Refine Conclusion for Specificity** ○ Restate the specific impacts rather than repeating broad phrases like "moved people into the modern day."

Voice: 4

The voice is mostly appropriate, formal, and engaged. The writer demonstrates interest in the topic but occasionally uses overly dramatic or emotional language.

Evidence from Student Work: Voice	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Voice
✓ **Appropriate Voice for Purpose and Audience** ○ Maintains an academic tone in most places, especially when discussing history or inventions. ○ Demonstrates understanding of informational purpose.	➢ **Strengthen Authoritative Voice** ○ Focus on precise explanations rather than enthusiastic reactions.
✓ **Consistent Formal Style** ○ Uses a formal tone: "These crazy ideas led to the invention of items such as the light-bulb and the dishwasher," despite occasional informal phrasing.	➢ **Maintain Formal Tone Across Draft** ○ Replace conversational phrases with more academic wording to support the informational purpose.
✓ **Sincere and Engaged** ○ The writing reflects investment in the topic: "helped spark a creative fire in the hearts of America's inventors."	➢ **Align Tone Across Paragraphs** ○ Review each paragraph to ensure tone and style are consistent.
✓ **Occasional Shifts in Tone** ○ Some language is exaggerated ("Amazing, I know") and contrasts with the otherwise formal style.	➢ **Use Neutral, Objective Language** ○ Remove emotional or dramatic expressions, especially when discussing historical context.

Word Choice: 4

The writing uses clear and generally precise vocabulary with some domain-specific language. Occasional vague or exaggerated words reduce clarity.

Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Word Choice
✓ **Effective and Precise Vocabulary** ○ Uses academic and topic-specific terms: "Industrial Revolution," "long distance AC power," "reborn."	➢ **Increase Use of Academic Vocabulary** ○ Use terms from the sources such as "innovation," "electrical systems," or "manufacturing efficiency."
✓ **Domain-Specific Word Use** ○ Accurately names inventions and technologies from sources, such as "fluorescent light bulb" and "zipper."	➢ **Ensure Accuracy in Word Choice** ○ Confirm that all terms match the sources (for example, fluorescent vs. incandescent lighting).
✓ **Some Vague or Exaggerated Language** ○ Uses general phrases like "huge change" and "creative fire," which weaken precision.	➢ **Replace Vague Words with Specific Terms** ○ Move from general descriptors like "huge" to more precise descriptors that show the historical or cultural impact.
✓ **Strong but Sometimes Overstated Descriptions** ○ Words like "crazy inventions" or "amazing" shift from objective to subjective.	➢ **Avoid Emotional Language** ○ Remove words like "crazy" and replace them with clear descriptions of what made the inventions innovative.

Sentence Fluency: 4

Sentences are generally smooth and readable, with varied structures. Some long or repetitive sentences reduce flow.

Evidence from Student Work: Sentence Fluency	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Sentence Fluency
✓ **Readable and Natural Flow** ○ Complex and simple sentences are used effectively.	➢ **Use Strategic Combining** ○ Combine shorter sentences to improve rhythm where appropriate.
✓ **Varied Beginnings and Structures** ○ Uses diverse sentence openings: "To really understand…" / "There was also another reason…" / "If you look deeper…"	➢ **Vary Sentence Patterns Further** ○ Check for repeated structures and adjust beginnings or lengths.
✓ **Some Repetition and Length Issues** ○ Some sentences are long and combine too many ideas, reducing clarity.	➢ **Break Up Long Sentences** ○ Split multi-clause sentences into two or more clear statements.
✓ **Occasional Awkward Phrasing** ○ Repetitive transitions and extended clauses create minor fluency issues.	➢ **Read Aloud for Flow** ○ Listen for places where pacing slows due to long or complex structures.

Conventions: 4

The writing demonstrates generally strong control of grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Errors are minor and do not impede readability.

Evidence from Student Work: Conventions	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Conventions
✓ **Consistent Sentence Construction** ○ No major run-ons or sentence fragments appear.	➢ **Review Complex Sentence Grammar** ○ Double-check comma placement in longer sentences.
✓ **Accurate Punctuation** ○ Dialogue and quotations from sources are punctuated correctly in most cases.	➢ **Check Punctuation Around Quotations** ○ Ensure commas and parenthetical citations follow standard conventions.
✓ **Mostly Correct Spelling and Grammar** ○ Spelling of domain-specific words is accurate throughout.	➢ **Verify Spelling Accuracy** ○ Recheck key terms from the sources for consistent spelling.
✓ **Minor Errors** ○ Occasional punctuation and phrasing inconsistencies appear but do not disrupt meaning.	➢ **Conduct a Final Proofread** ○ Catch small inconsistencies that affect polish.

Use of Sources: 5

The student integrates relevant information from multiple sources with accurate quotations and paraphrasing. While some interpretations could be more precise, the overall use of sources demonstrates strong understanding.

Evidence from Student Work: Use of Sources	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Use of Sources
✓ **Relevant Use of Multiple Sources** ○ Draws from Source 1 (inventions), Source 3 (electricity and AC power), and Source 4 (Chicago Fire and Industrial Revolution).	➢ **Increase Precision in Paraphrasing** ○ Revisit paraphrased claims to ensure they reflect source ideas accurately.
✓ **Accurate Evidence Integration** ○ Uses direct source details such as “destroying nearly 17,450 buildings” and Tesla “using long distance AC power.”	➢ **Add Citations or Attribution Phrases** ○ Use signal phrases when referencing paraphrased information.
✓ **Correct Quotation Punctuation** ○ Quotations are integrated correctly and support key ideas.	➢ **Clarify Interpretation When Needed** ○ Add one sentence explaining how the evidence connects to your controlling idea.
✓ **Minor Interpretation Issues** ○ Occasionally generalizes the inventions’ impact beyond what sources state.	➢ **Avoid Overgeneralization** ○ Stick closely to what the sources demonstrate about each invention or innovation.

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:

Impact-Focused Evidence Expansion

- Students take one fact from a source and write two sentences explaining how it influenced people at the time and how it connects to the controlling idea.
- This helps deepen the "why it mattered" reasoning that appears in strong informational writing.

Source Accuracy Verification Routine

- Students compare their statements directly to source excerpts to confirm factual accuracy (e.g., what was invented vs. what was displayed).
- This supports more precise development and avoids common overgeneralizations.

Focused Detail Mapping

- Students create a table with three columns: source fact, what it means, and why it matters.
- This supports clear elaboration and ensures each detail directly connects to the thesis.

Organization:

Paragraph Purpose Strips

- Students sort paragraph summaries into logical order to reinforce how sequencing supports meaning.

Transition Bank Development

- Have students categorize transitions by function (contrast, cause, emphasis) and apply them to their drafts.

Conclusion Revision Workshop

- Provide models of strong informational conclusions and guide students to revise theirs with more specific synthesis.

Voice:

Tone Transformation Practice

- Students rewrite informal or opinion-based sentences into formal informational language.

Academic Voice Modeling

- Use mentor texts to highlight how informational authors communicate with clarity and authority.

Voice Consistency Checks

- Students highlight any language that breaks informational tone and revise accordingly.

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:

Vocabulary Precision Revision Pass

- Students mark vague adjectives and replace them with specific, accurate terminology.

Domain-Specific Word Wall

- Build a list of topic-related vocabulary students can draw from.

Context-Checking Routine

- Students check each content word against the source to ensure accuracy.

Sentence Fluency:

Fluency Read-Aloud Stations

- Students practice reading their drafts aloud while marking awkward spots.

Sentence Variety Analysis

- Students mark beginnings and patterns, then revise to create variety.

Complex Sentence Modeling

- Teacher models how to structure complex sentences clearly.

Conventions:

Conventions Mini-Lesson Rotations

- Stations for quotation punctuation, comma rules, and capitalization.

Peer Editing Checklist

- Students use a structured list to catch common errors.

Modeled Proofreading

- Teacher demonstrates how to scan writing for conventions accuracy.

Use of Sources:

Source-to-Claim Annotation

- Students annotate where each piece of evidence supports a specific claim.

Paraphrasing Practice with Source Lines

- Students paraphrase short excerpts and compare for accuracy.

Citation Sentence Frames

- Provide structures like “According to Source 3…” to encourage proper attribution.