Grade 6 – Expository Writing Work Sample: Meets

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: 4

The essay presents a clear and relevant controlling idea that the 1893 Chicago World's Fair was historically important. It includes accurate details from multiple sources and offers some explanation of significance. However, several explanations are general, some factual statements lack precision, and the final paragraph combines unrelated ideas without fully developing impact.

Evidence from Student Work: Ideas and Content	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Ideas and Content
✓ **Clear Controlling Idea and Purpose** ○ Establishes a clear purpose in the introduction: "The Chicago World's Fair in 1893 was one of the most remarkable fairs in history." ○ Connects main ideas to impact by noting the fair had "brand new things: new inventions, new foods… and Nikola Tesla's new lighting system."	➢ **Clarify and Strengthen Your Controlling Idea** ○ Add a short preview sentence identifying the specific impacts you will explain, such as inventions, electricity, and rebuilding Chicago.
✓ **Relevant and Accurate Details** ○ Includes accurate historical reasons for the fair's location: "the Great Chicago Fire in 1871 had destroyed this magnificent city…" ○ Uses correct details from sources about inventions still used today: "fluorescent light bulb, the zipper and the dishwasher." ○ Describes AC vs. DC lighting accurately: Tesla's "AC… could power more energy over large distances unlike Thomas Edison's lights which used DC."	➢ **Add More Precise and Relevant Details** ○ Correct any inaccuracies (e.g., Thomas Jefferson did not attend the fair). ○ Add one more specific supporting detail about inventions or exhibits to deepen accuracy.
✓ **Development and Elaboration** ○ Provides some explanation of the fair's significance: for example, stating Chicago wanted "to prove that they had cleaned up the city" after the fire. ○ Adds elaboration on the Industrial Revolution: "build items in factories instead of by hand to be more efficient." ○ Some reasoning is general (e.g., "thousands came just to see the marvelous lights"), and the final paragraph shifts to listing famous visitors without explaining their connection to the fair's impact.	➢ **Deepen Your Explanations of Impact** ○ After listing inventions, explain how each invention changed daily life in the 1890s. ○ Expand your discussion of the Industrial Revolution by explaining how the fair showcased mass-produced goods.

Evidence from Student Work: Ideas and Content	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Ideas and Content
✓ **Focus and Relevance** ○ Stays mostly focused on explaining important aspects of the fair: inventions, lighting, reasons for the fair. ○ Occasionally includes less relevant or inaccurate details, such as listing "Thomas Jefferson" as a visitor. ○ The final sentence becomes overly broad and evaluative ("should be remembered as one of the most important fairs in history") without supporting explanation.	➢ **Maintain Clear Focus on Impact** ○ Replace general statements like "thousands came just to see the marvelous lights" with explanations that show why this mattered. ○ Strengthen the final paragraph by returning to your controlling idea instead of adding unrelated details.

Organization: 4

The essay has a clear introduction, logical sequencing of major ideas, and a concluding statement. Some paragraphs contain too many ideas at once, and internal organization could be strengthened, but overall structure supports reader understanding.

Evidence from Student Work: Organization	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Organization
✓ **Clear and Purposeful Introduction** ○ Opens with a strong topic sentence: "The Chicago World's Fair in 1893 was one of the most remarkable fairs in history." ○ Identifies the key areas the essay will discuss (inventions, foods, lighting).	➢ **Tighten the Introduction** ○ Add a short preview that clearly names the key ideas you discuss to strengthen structure.
✓ **Logical Sequence of Ideas** ○ Follows a clear order: historical reasons for Chicago, inventions and lighting, and then concluding evaluation. ○ Each paragraph addresses one broad aspect of the fair, helping the reader follow the overall structure.	➢ **Improve Internal Paragraph Structure** ○ Keep one main idea per paragraph and avoid combining unrelated content (e.g., visitors + companies + inventions).
✓ **Transitions Support Flow** ○ Uses connecting phrases such as "Few people actually know why the fair was in Chicago…" and "The two biggest attractions at the fair…" to move between sections. ○ Transitions sometimes introduce too many ideas in a single sentence, which can weaken clarity.	➢ **Add More Precise Transitions** ○ Use transitions that explain relationships (such as cause or contrast) instead of listing multiple concepts together.
✓ **Conclusion Provides Closure** ○ Ends by returning to the main idea: "should be remembered as one of the most important fairs in history." ○ However, conclusion combines unrelated ideas (famous visitors, famous companies) which weakens focus.	➢ **Refine the Conclusion** ○ Summarize the main impacts instead of adding new information about visitors.

Voice: 4

The writer maintains an appropriate formal tone with enthusiasm for the topic. Voice is mostly consistent, though some evaluative phrases show mild shifts toward opinion rather than informational explanation.

Evidence from Student Work: Voice	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Voice
✓ **Appropriate Voice for Audience and Purpose** ○ Formal and clear tone throughout: "Few people actually know why the fair was in Chicago." ○ Avoids second-person address and guides the reader through informational ideas.	➢
✓ **Mostly Formal Style** ○ Uses academic language ("produced in factories," "alternating current system"). ○ A few phrases are evaluative or subjective ("ginormous Ferris Wheel," "marvelous lights").	➢ **Support Evaluative Statements with Evidence** ○ If you call the fair "very important," add evidence explaining why. ➢ **Remove Subjective Descriptions** ○ Replace emotional phrases like "marvelous lights" or "ginormous Ferris Wheel" with precise descriptions.
✓ **Engaged and Interested Tone** ○ Expresses interest with controlled enthusiasm ("brand new things," "very important to the world").	➢ **Maintain Consistent Academic Tone** ○ Keep focus on explanation rather than evaluation.
✓ **Minor Tone Shifts** ○ Occasional exaggeration ("one of the most important fairs in history") softens academic tone.	➢ **Ensure Final Paragraph Retains Informational Style** ○ Avoid persuasive language in conclusion unless supported by analysis.

Word Choice: 4

The writing uses clear, generally precise vocabulary with some domain-specific terms. Occasional exaggeration and imprecise words weaken clarity, but overall word choice supports meaning.

Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Word Choice
✓ **Effective and Accurate Word Choice** ○ Uses domain vocabulary: "alternating current," "Industrial Revolution," "factories," "direct current."	➢ **Add More Domain-Specific Vocabulary** ○ Incorporate terms from the source such as "exhibit," "manufactured goods," or "electric illumination." ➢ **Ensure Word Accuracy** ○ Verify historical names (e.g., avoid adding "Thomas Jefferson" as a visitor).
✓ **Specific and Relevant Terms** ○ Includes correct invention names such as "fluorescent light bulb," "zipper," and "dishwasher."	➢ **Clarify Technical Descriptions** ○ Explain AC vs. DC with accurate vocabulary from the source.
✓ **Occasional Vague or Excessive Words** ○ Uses phrases such as "ginormous Ferris Wheel" and "marvelous lights," which are imprecise.	➢ **Replace Vague or Exaggerated Words** ○ Use precise academic words instead of exaggerated adjectives.
✓ **Mostly Controlled Language** ○ Shows understanding through phrases like "could power more energy over large distances," demonstrating an attempt at technical precision.	➢

Sentence Fluency: 4

Most sentences are varied and readable, with generally smooth flow. A few sentences are long, crowded with information, or use repetitive structures, which slightly weaken fluency.

Evidence from Student Work: Sentence Fluency	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Sentence Fluency
✓ **Readable and Varied Sentences** ○ Uses a mix of simple and complex sentences throughout the paper.	➢ **Combine Choppy Sentences** ○ Merge short sentences when ideas are closely related.
✓ **Variety in Sentence Beginnings** ○ Paragraphs begin with different structures ("Few people actually know…," "The two biggest attractions…").	➢
✓ **Some Sentences Contain Too Many Ideas** ○ For example: "Chicago wanted to prove that they had cleaned up the city and were trying to help the city's population grow, so they had planned for the fair to be here." ○ Could be split for clarity.	➢ **Break Up Long, Multi-Idea Sentences** ○ Split sentences that include unrelated ideas to improve clarity.
✓ **Occasional Repetition or Wordiness** ✓ Phrases like "just as important as the others had been" repeat ideas unnecessarily.	➢ **Eliminate Repetition** ○ Avoid repeating phrases by choosing more concise wording. ➢ **Conduct a Read-Aloud Check** ○ Listen for spots where pacing feels heavy or repetitive.

Conventions: 4

The writing shows generally strong control of grammar, spelling, and punctuation with occasional errors. Mistakes do not impede meaning.

Evidence from Student Work: Conventions	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Conventions
✓ **Correct Sentence Construction** ○ Sentences are complete with no run-ons or fragments.	➢ **Proofread Carefully** ○ Conduct a final read-through to catch small errors.
✓ **Mostly Accurate Spelling** ○ Spells key terms correctly: "Industrial Revolution," "alternating current," "fluorescent."	➢ **Verify Spelling of All Names** ○ Ensure correct spelling of historical figures (e.g., removing "Thomas Jefferson").
✓ **Generally Correct Punctuation** ○ Uses commas and periods correctly in most sentences.	➢ **Check Comma Placement** ○ Review long sentences for missing or extra commas.
✓ **Minor Errors Are Present** ○ Occasional issues such as incorrect capitalization ("fair is still very popular today"), small punctuation inconsistencies, or overuse of commas.	➢ **Review Capitalization** ○ Ensure all proper nouns (World's Fair, AC, DC, Chicago Fire) are capitalized.

Use of Sources: 4

The student uses relevant information from multiple sources accurately, including correct AC/DC explanation and historical context. Some details are misapplied or inaccurate, and citations are not provided, but overall source use is solid.

Evidence from Student Work: Use of Sources	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Use of Sources
✓ **Use of Multiple Sources** ○ Uses Source 4 to explain the Chicago Fire and Industrial Revolution. ○ Uses Source 1 for inventions and Source 3 for AC/DC lighting.	➢ **Explain Each Source Detail Clearly** ○ After each fact, add reasoning that shows how it supports your controlling idea.
✓ **Accurate Evidence Integration** ○ Includes correct information about AC power traveling long distances. ○ Incorporates accurate inventions such as the dishwasher and fluorescent light bulb.	➢ **Improve Integration of Information** ○ Keep the final paragraph focused on impact rather than listing unrelated facts.
✓ **Lack of Citation or Attribution** ○ No attributions such as "According to Source 1" or in-text citations appear.	➢ **Add Clear Source Attributions** ○ Use signal phrases such as "According to Source 4…" before presenting factual information.
✓ **Some Inaccuracies or Unnecessary Additions** ○ Incorrectly lists "Thomas Jefferson" as a visitor, which weakens credibility. ○ Final paragraph shifts to unrelated information without explanation.	➢ **Correct Inaccurate Details** ○ Remove or fix incorrect visitor names.

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:

Detail–to–Impact Expansion Routine

- Students practice writing two sentences of explanation for each fact to show significance and deepen development.

Source Accuracy Verification

- Students compare each factual statement in their drafts to lines from the source to correct inaccuracies (such as visitor names).

Impact Mapping Organizer

- Students map each section of their essay to a specific type of impact (technological, historical, social) to ensure tight focus.

Organization:

Paragraph Focus Practice

- Students identify the "main idea sentence" of each paragraph and check alignment with supporting details.

Transition Purpose Sort

- Students match transitions to functions (time, example, cause) and revise drafts accordingly.

Conclusion Revision Workshop

- Students rewrite conclusions with sentence frames that require synthesis rather than new details.

Voice:

Voice Consistency Highlighting

- Students highlight emotional or subjective words and revise them for a formal tone.

Informational Mentor Text Analysis

- Students compare tone in mentor essays to identify academic voice features.

Explanatory vs. Evaluative Sorting

- Students sort sentences into "explain" vs. "evaluate" categories to improve tone control.

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:

Precision Vocabulary Revision

- Students replace vague adjectives with accurate, topic-specific vocabulary.

Domain Word Wall

- Build a class word bank from the sources to support precise usage.

Technical Word Practice

- Students practice using AC/DC vocabulary in accurate explanatory sentences.

Sentence Fluency:

Sentence Combining and Splitting Practice

- Students practice revising sentences that contain too many or too few ideas.

First-Word Variety Check

- Students highlight the first word of each sentence and revise repetitive beginnings.

Fluency Read-Aloud Stations

- Students revise based on areas where reading feels disrupted.

Conventions:

Conventions Mini-Lessons

- Short lessons on comma rules, capitalization, and proper noun accuracy.

Peer Editing Checklists

- Students use a checklist specific to conventions while reviewing each other's work.

Sentence Boundary Workshop

- Practice identifying and correcting overextended sentences.

Use of Sources:

Source Attribution Sentence Frames

- Provide sentence starters for quoting and paraphrasing sources.

Accuracy Verification Routine

- Students compare their statements to the source text for accuracy.

Evidence + Explanation Modeling

- Teacher models how to follow each source detail with a sentence explaining impact.