Grade 6 – Expository Writing Work Sample: Does Not Yet Meet

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: 2

The essay attempts to communicate a controlling idea about activities, inventions, and rivalries at the fair, but the purpose is unclear, details are limited or inaccurate, and explanations lack development. Much of the information is vague, repeated, or unrelated to the fair's true historical impact.

Evidence from Student Work: Ideas and Content	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Ideas and Content
✓ **Clear Controlling Idea and Purpose** ○ Attempts to state a purpose in the introduction ("In the chicago world fair of 1893 there were many fantastic and amazing things happening"), but the thesis is vague and overly general. ○ The controlling idea shifts from "great activities" to "inventions" to "a rivalry," with no clear explanation of the fair's overall impact.	➢ **Clarify Your Controlling Idea** ○ Rewrite your introduction to explain what impact the fair had on society, inventions, or technology. Clearly state what you want the reader to learn.
✓ **Relevant but Inaccurate or Limited Details** ○ Includes a few correct factual details such as "7000 seats" and "600 acres of land," but does not explain their significance. ○ Several invented or inaccurate details undermine reliability ("Thousands and thousands of people came only for the inventions," "There was probably evan more invetions than activities"). ○ Many sentences repeat details rather than adding meaningful information ("There was all inventions that are most used today like the zipper…").	➢ **Add Accurate, Relevant Details From the Sources** ○ Replace vague or incorrect statements with specific facts from the sources (for example, inventions like the dishwasher or the Ferris wheel, or the AC power competition). ○ Avoid exaggerations such as "thousands came only for the inventions" unless supported by sources.
✓ **Minimal Development and Elaboration** ○ Provides almost no explanation of how activities, inventions, or rivalries impacted people. ○ Statements such as "It would be a great place to be" and "mind capturing inventions that took your breath away" are descriptive opinions, not elaboration based on sources. ○ The rivalry section is extremely limited ("Those two had a big rivalry from light") and does not use source-based evidence to explain the AC/DC conflict.	➢ **Explain the Importance of Each Detail** ○ After describing an invention or rivalry, add a sentence explaining why it mattered or how it changed life for people at the time. ○ Expand the rivalry section using details from the lighting competition between Edison and Tesla in the sources.

Evidence from Student Work: Ideas and Content	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Ideas and Content
✓ **Focus and Relevance** ○ The writing loosely groups related ideas into paragraphs but lacks focus on the prompt's requirement to explain the impact of the fair. ○ Conclusion restates the three topics but does not clarify significance ("The chicogo world fair was a great place"). ○ Repeated general statements ("great activities," "fantastic and amazing things") weaken relevance to the task.	➢ **Maintain Focus on Impact** ○ Remove repeated or opinion-based statements and replace them with specific explanations that show how the fair influenced technology, culture, or innovation.

Organization: 2

The essay is divided into paragraphs, but the introduction is unfocused, sequencing is inconsistent, transitions are weak or missing, and the conclusion does not meaningfully summarize the essay's ideas.

Evidence from Student Work: Organization	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Organization
✓ **Weak or Underdeveloped Introduction** ○ Opens with: "In the chicago world fair of 1893 there were many fantastic and amazing things happening," which does not preview the main ideas or establish a clear purpose. ○ The introduction focuses on opinions ("fantastic," "amazing") rather than an organized preview of content.	➢ **Rewrite the Introduction for Clarity** ○ Add a clear sentence describing the main ideas you will explain (activities, inventions, rivalry) and the fair's impact.
✓ **Limited and Sometimes Illogical Sequencing** ○ The first body paragraph jumps quickly from "activities" to "food" to "space," with no clear relationship between ideas. ○ The inventions paragraph shifts abruptly from zipper to chocolate to pickles without transitions or organization.	➢ **Reorganize Paragraphs for Logical Flow** ○ Group related ideas together and place general statements before specific examples within each paragraph.
✓ **Weak or Missing Transitions** ○ Paragraphs lack transitions to connect major ideas. ○ Sentences such as "The last thing the fair was popular was the rivalry" do not connect smoothly to previous ideas.	➢ **Add Purposeful Transitions** ○ Use phrases like "Another important feature of the fair…" or "In addition to the activities…" to guide the reader.
✓ **Conclusion Lacks Purposeful Closure** ○ Offers a minimal summary ("there was activities, invetions and rivalrys") and restates earlier general ideas. ○ Does not reinforce or synthesize the fair's significance.	➢ **Revise the Conclusion to Summarize Impact** ○ Restate the three main ideas and include one sentence explaining the overall importance of the fair.

Voice: 2

The writer shows some enthusiasm but frequently uses informal language, inconsistent tone, and vague expressions that do not match informational writing expectations.

Evidence from Student Work: Voice	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Voice
✓ **Unclear Awareness of Audience** ○ Uses phrases like "It would be a great place to be" and "mind capturing inventions," which are conversational rather than informational.	➢ **Maintain a Formal Tone** ○ Begin sentences with correct capitalization and avoid phrases that sound conversational.
✓ **Inconsistent or Informal Style** ○ Includes subjective or emotional language: "amazing things happening," "took your breath away." ○ Lowercase sentence beginnings ("something else…") further weaken formality.	➢ **Replace Informal Language** ○ Remove emotional or subjective words ("amazing," "great place to be") and use precise, academic language.
✓ **Limited Commitment to Informational Purpose** ○ Focuses more on personal opinion ("only the best activities there") than explanation supported by facts. ○ Does not maintain the formal voice expected in expository writing.	➢ **Express Interest Through Clear Explanation** ○ Show enthusiasm by providing strong, accurate explanations rather than personal opinions.
✓ **Tone Shifts** ○ Moves between description, opinion, and attempts at explanation without a consistent academic tone.	➢ **Align Tone to Purpose** ○ Ensure each sentence contributes to explaining the fair's impact rather than describing how "great" it was.

Word Choice: 2

Vocabulary is often general, repetitive, or unclear, with frequent spelling errors that interfere with meaning. Domain-specific vocabulary is minimal.

Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Word Choice
✓ **General and Vague Vocabulary** ○ Uses broad words such as "fantastic," "amazing," "great," "best," which do not convey informational precision.	➢ **Replace General Words with Specific Descriptions** ○ Replace phrases like "fantastic things" with precise details about exhibits or technologies.
✓ **Limited or Misused Domain Vocabulary** ○ Only a few content-related terms appear ("inventions," "rivalry"), and these are used without supporting detail or accuracy.	➢ **Add More Domain-Specific Vocabulary** ○ Use terms from the sources like "exhibit," "electricity," "AC power," and "manufactured goods."
✓ **Repetitive Language** ○ Repeats "invetions," "activities," and "evan" instead of using varied vocabulary or topic-specific terms.	➢ **Improve Word Accuracy** ○ Ensure vocabulary correctly represents the fair's inventions and events.
✓ **Frequent Spelling Errors Affect Clarity** ○ Misspellings such as "invetions," "evan," "ytook," "atonention," "elecricity," "chicogo" disrupt meaning.	➢ **Correct Spelling Errors** ○ Use spelling tools or peer review to check domain-specific and general vocabulary for accuracy.

Sentence Fluency: 2

Sentences are frequently choppy, repetitive, or awkward. Many begin with the same structure and contain mechanical or grammatical issues that interrupt flow.

Evidence from Student Work: Sentence Fluency	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Sentence Fluency
✓ **Choppy and Uneven Rhythm** ○ Short, abrupt sentences like "There was good food." disrupt fluency. ○ Repetitive sentence patterns diminish readability.	➢ **Read Aloud to Identify Rough Spots** ○ Revise any sentence that sounds choppy or repetitive.
✓ **Repetitive Sentence Beginnings** ○ Many sentences begin with similar structures ("There was…", "There was also…"), reducing variety.	➢ **Vary Sentence Beginnings** ○ Use descriptive openings, transitional phrases, and varied structures to improve rhythm.
✓ **Awkward or Incorrect Constructions** ○ Sentences such as "There was probably evan more invetions than activities" contain errors that affect clarity.	➢ **Break Up Awkward Sentences** ○ Separate long or confusing statements into clearer sentences.
✓ **Limited Use of Complex Sentences** ○ Very few compound or complex sentences appear; most sentences are simple, reducing fluency and variety.	➢ **Combine Short Sentences** ○ Join related ideas to create smoother, more mature sentences.

Conventions: 2

Frequent errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar interfere with readability. Error patterns indicate limited understanding of basic conventions.

Evidence from Student Work: Conventions	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Conventions
✓ **Frequent Spelling Errors** ○ Numerous incorrect spellings: "invetions," "evan," "ytook," "heins," "atonention," "elecricity," "chicogo," "rivalrys." ○ Errors significantly disrupt meaning.	➢ **Correct High-Frequency Errors** ○ Use spelling and grammar tools to fix repeated mistakes such as "inventions," "even," "Chicago," and "electricity."
✓ **Capitalization Errors** ○ Fails to capitalize "chicago," "something," and other proper nouns.• Improper lowercase beginnings of sentences ("something else…").	➢ **Review Capitalization Rules** ○ Capitalize all proper nouns and the first word of every sentence.
✓ **Incorrect Punctuation and Fragments** ○ Sentences like "Infact some are still popular today." lack necessary commas. ○ Some sentences are fragments or run-ons.	➢ **Fix Sentence Boundaries** ○ Ensure each sentence has a subject, verb, and proper punctuation.
✓ **Grammar and Agreement Issues** ○ Uses incorrect verb forms and agreement ("There was probably evan more invetions"). ○ Repeated omitted words reduce clarity.	➢ **Read Sentence by Sentence for Errors** ○ Slow down and check each line for spelling, grammar, and punctuation issues.

Use of Sources: 2

The writing includes minimal source-based information and contains inaccuracies. No citations or attribution are used, and evidence is not clearly connected to the prompt.

Evidence from Student Work: Use of Sources	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Use of Sources
✓ **Minimal Use of Sources** ○ Mentions general features from the fair (inventions, rivalry) but does not use specific source details or quotations. ○ Lacks clear evidence that multiple sources were used.	➢ **Use Accurate, Specific Source Details** ○ Add details about inventions, electricity, or the Chicago Fire directly from the provided texts.
✓ **Inaccurate or Unsupported Claims** ○ Claims that inventions "are most used today like the zipper" without noting actual inventions from Source 1. ○ Rivalry section ("rivalry from light… from elecricity") is vague and unsupported.	➢ **Correct Misinterpretations** ○ Review the Edison–Tesla rivalry in the source to provide accurate explanation.
✓ **No Citations or Source Attribution** ○ Does not identify any source or provide in-text citations.	➢ **Add Source Citations or Attributions** ○ Use signal phrases such as "According to Source 1…" to show where information came from.
✓ **Lack of Explanation** ○ Lists activities and inventions but does not explain how the information ties back to the prompt about impact.	➢ **Explain How Evidence Shows Impact** ○ After each source detail, add a sentence connecting it to the fair's significance.

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 Organizer

- Students use a three-column organizer (Detail from Source → What It Means → Why It Matters) to practice elaborating source information with purpose.

Accuracy Check Routine

- Students compare their draft statements to the source text to correct made-up details and ensure accurate paraphrasing.

Focused Thesis Writing Mini-Lesson

- Students practice writing a clear controlling idea that directly answers the prompt and previewing the impact areas they will explain.

Organization:

Paragraph Sorting Activity

- Students receive mixed sentences from their draft and practice grouping related ideas to improve cohesion.

Transition Frames Chart

- Provide students with transition categories (time, contrast, addition) to integrate into their paragraphs.

Conclusion Synthesis Workshop

- Students practice writing a conclusion that revisits the controlling idea and summarizes key points with clarity.

Voice:

Formal vs. Informal Sorting

- Students sort descriptive, opinion-based phrases and revise them to formal informational equivalents.

Voice Consistency Checks

- Students highlight words that show opinion and revise them to objective language.

Modeling Informational Tone

- Teacher uses examples from informational texts to demonstrate precise, neutral tone.

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:

Academic Vocabulary Bank

- Create a shared bank of precise words from the sources for students to use in their writing.

Spelling Check Routine

- Students practice proofreading specifically for content-area words and commonly confused spellings.

Replace-and-Revise Practice

- Students revise vague words in their drafts with more specific, content-appropriate vocabulary.

Sentence Fluency:

Sentence Variety Chart

- Students mark how sentences begin and revise repeated patterns.

Combining and Splitting Sentence Practice

- Students explore how combining or separating sentences affects readability.

Oral Read-Aloud Fluency Checks

- Students revise sentences that cause stumbling or unclear meaning.

Conventions:

Error Pattern Identification

- Students analyze their repeated errors and practice correcting them through targeted tasks.

Conventions Stations

- Rotating activities focused on spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and sentence boundaries.

Guided Sentence Correction

- Teacher models how to revise incorrect sentences, then students practice fixing multiple examples.

Use of Sources:

Source Extraction Practice

- Students pull key facts from each source and practice paraphrasing and citing them.

Evidence + Explanation Modeling

- Teacher models writing a detail followed by two sentences of impact explanation.

Citation Frames

- Provide sentence starters like “The source explains that…” or “According to Source 3…” to support proper attribution.