Grade 5 – Informational Writing Work Sample: Meets

Task: Your class is studying about different animal habitats and behavior. You are given three sources about animal behavior and hibernation.

*Read the sources carefully to **write an informational article** about hibernation. Using more than one source, develop a main idea about hibernation. Choose the most important information from the sources to support your main idea.*

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

Ideas and Content: 4

The paper demonstrates clear understanding of hibernation and presents accurate information from multiple sources. The main ideas—energy conservation, fat storage, and hibernation habits—are explained with some detail, but reasoning and synthesis remain somewhat surface-level.

Evidence from Student Work: Ideas and Content	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Ideas and Content
✓ **Clear and Focused Main Idea:** ○ The introduction directly states the topic and three main sub-points: "Bears hibernate to save energy, they store fat in there [their] bodies, and do they sleep all winter?" This signals clear intent and organization.	➢ **Add Broader Perspective:** ○ Compare bears with another hibernator (ground squirrel, skunk) to demonstrate general understanding.
✓ **Relevant and Accurate Details:** ○ Facts from *Do Not Disturb* and *A Barn for Bears* are correctly cited, such as "Hibernation is controlled by the part of the brain called the hypothalamus" and "Female bears always have their cubs… in the middle of winter." These show accurate comprehension of scientific concepts.	➢ **Integrate Evidence:** ○ Blend facts from multiple sources in one paragraph instead of isolating them by number.
✓ **Limited Depth of Explanation:** ○ Although each paragraph includes a relevant detail, elaboration is brief ("This part of the brain helps regulate hunger, thirst, and blood pressure") and doesn't connect clearly to how these details prove hibernation's importance.	➢ **Deepen Explanations:** ○ Add reasoning to show *why* stored fat and reduced movement help bears survive winter scarcity.
✓ **Partial Synthesis Across Sources:** ○ The writer references more than one source but treats each as a separate fact. No analysis connects Source 1's biological detail to Source 3's behavioral evidence.	➢ **Clarify Cause and Effect:** ○ Link details like "temperature drops" or "less food" to *why* hibernation starts.

Organization: 4

The structure is logical and easy to follow. Each body paragraph addresses one sub-point from the introduction, though transitions and paragraph variety could improve flow and pacing.

Evidence from Student Work: Organization	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Organization
✓ **Logical Sequence:** ○ Introduction → three body paragraphs (energy, fat, behavior) → conclusion. The order matches the previewed outline in the opening.	➢ **Add Linking Sentences:** ○ Connect subtopics by showing how each supports bear survival.
✓ **Transitional Clarity:** ○ Phrases like "The first statement…" and "The next statement…" guide readers but sound formulaic.	➢ **Upgrade Transitions:** ○ Replace repetitive openers with more academic ones ("Another key factor," "Finally").
✓ **Balanced Paragraphing:** ○ Each section contains roughly equal length and structure, maintaining balance across ideas.	➢ **Vary Paragraph Structure:** ○ Merge or expand where ideas overlap to create smoother pacing.
✓ **Conclusion and Closure:** ○ The ending restates main ideas clearly but drifts into conversational tone ("If you were a bear…").	➢ **Revise Conclusion:** ○ Replace the question with a synthesis statement summarizing the significance of hibernation.

Voice: 4

The tone is enthusiastic and approachable, showing strong engagement with the topic, but the conversational style and direct reader address reduce formality.

Evidence from Student Work: Voice	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Voice
✓ **Engaging Introduction:** ○ Questions like "Did you ever wonder about how bears hibernate?" effectively draw readers in.	➢ **Refine the Conclusion Voice:** ○ End with a confident, factual statement instead of a question.
✓ **Enthusiastic but Informal Style:** ○ The writer's personality appears through phrases such as "I am here to teach you all I know," which energizes the writing but breaks the formal register.	➢ **Balance Energy with Accuracy:** ○ Keep enthusiasm but ground it in scientific language.
✓ **Audience Awareness:** ○ Explanations are accessible for peers, though occasionally too chatty ("I hope you enjoy and learn a lot from my paper").	➢ **Convert Direct Address to Informative Tone:** ○ Replace "you" and "I" with objective phrasing ("This report explains…").
✓ **Inconsistent Tone:** ○ The shift from academic explanation to personal conversation in the conclusion weakens the professional voice.	➢ **Maintain Tone Consistency:** ○ Align word choice and sentence structure with informational purpose throughout.

Word Choice: 4

The vocabulary shows topic knowledge and some domain-specific terms, but informal or inaccurate word use occasionally reduces precision.

Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Word Choice
✓ **Appropriate Academic Vocabulary:** ○ Words like *hibernation*, *hypothalamus*, *energy*, and *fat* demonstrate subject awareness.	➢ **Eliminate Redundancy:** ○ Remove repetitive "bears hibernation" phrasing by using pronouns or synonyms.

Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Word Choice
✓ **Misunderstood Terms:** ○ The student misdefines "binge" as "a time or instance of carefree fun," showing confusion about meaning in context.	➢ **Clarify Word Meanings:** ○ Replace the incorrect definition of "binge" with "eating large amounts of food to build fat reserves."
✓ **Informal Expressions:** ○ Phrases such as "super hard" and "a ton" detract from the scientific tone.	➢ **Use Formal Vocabulary:** ○ Change "super hard" to "extremely difficult" and "a ton" to "a great deal."
✓ **Missed Opportunities for Precision:** ○ References to "special brown fur" instead of *brown fat* suggest incomplete comprehension of technical language.	➢ **Add Correct Domain Words:** ○ Replace "fur" with *fat* and use terms like *body temperature* and *den*.

Sentence Fluency: 4

Sentences are generally clear and readable with adequate variety. Occasional repetition and awkward phrasing interrupt flow.

Evidence from Student Work: Sentence Fluency	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Sentence Fluency
✓ **Variety of Sentence Types:** ○ Mixes simple and compound sentences effectively ("Bears hibernate to save energy, they store fat…").	➢ **Use Short Sentences for Emphasis:** ○ Add concise sentences to contrast longer explanations.
✓ **Transitional Flow:** ○ Paragraphs move logically, but repeated sentence starters ("The first statement," "The next statement") cause monotony.	➢ **Vary Sentence Openings:** ○ Begin with time phrases or transitions other than "The."
✓ **Readable but Choppy Rhythm:** ○ Some sentences run long or rely heavily on conjunctions without punctuation balance.	➢ **Read for Sound:** ○ Read aloud to check rhythm and eliminate awkward flow.
✓ **Occasional Structural Confusion:** ○ "The fat they build up stores energy and keeps them cozy while the are in slumber" is mostly clear but needs minor grammatical tightening.	➢ **Edit for Clarity:** ○ Break run-ons with commas or periods where appropriate.

Conventions: 4

The paper maintains general control of punctuation, spelling, and capitalization. Minor issues with homophones and apostrophes appear but do not impede readability.

Evidence from Student Work: Conventions	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Conventions
✓ **Spelling Accuracy:** ○ Frequent misuse of *there* for *their* and occasional missing commas ("Source #1:The brown fat works…") appear.	➢ **Correct Homophones:** ○ Replace *there* with *their* consistently.
✓ **Punctuation:** ○ Quotation marks are correctly used but lack spacing consistency.	➢ **Review Spacing and Commas:** ○ Add a space after colons and commas after introductory phrases.

Evidence from Student Work: Conventions	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Conventions
✓ **Grammar and Agreement:** ○ Sentences are complete and coherent; errors are mechanical rather than structural.	➢ **Proofread Aloud:** ○ Listening helps detect missing words and punctuation.
✓ **Apostrophes and Possessives:** ○ The title and phrases like "a bears hibernation" should include possessives ("a bear's hibernation").	➢ **Add Apostrophes for Possession:** ○ Use *bear's* when indicating ownership.

Use of Sources: 4

The writer integrates information from at least two sources accurately and uses citations, though integration remains mechanical rather than analytical.

Evidence from Student Work: Use of Sources	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Use of Sources
✓ **Multiple Source Use:** ○ The essay references Source 1 (hypothalamus, brown fat) and Source 3 (female bears with cubs).	➢ **Add a Third Source:** ○ Integrate at least one point from *Do Bears Hibernate?* to fully meet task expectations.
✓ **Accuracy of Evidence:** ○ Details quoted are factual and correctly paraphrased.	➢ **Blend Evidence:** ○ Combine details from Source 1 and Source 3 within one explanation for synthesis.
✓ **Limited Integration:** ○ Each source appears in its own paragraph rather than combined to show relationships.	➢ **Explain Significance:** ○ After each quote, add "This shows that…" or "This helps bears because…" sentences.
✓ **Basic Citation Practice:** ○ Sources are labeled ("Source #1," "Source #3"), but capitalization and spacing vary.	➢ **Standardize Citations:** ○ Use consistent capitalization and punctuation in source references.

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 Ladder:

- Students list each fact, then climb one "rung" by adding a "so that…" explanation.

Compare-and-Contrast Chart:

- Model how to pair one bear detail with another animal's adaptation to show synthesis.

Cause-Effect Organizer:

- Guide students to connect environmental triggers with survival responses.

Organization:

Transition Bank Activity:

- Students sort transition words by purpose (sequence, cause/effect, addition).

Outline Audit:

- Students compare their introduction's preview sentences with actual body paragraph content to ensure alignment.

Concluding Insight Practice:

- Model "so what" endings that explain topic importance.

Voice:

Formal vs. Informal Rewrite:

- Students transform chatty sentences into objective academic language.

Purpose-Tone Chart:

- Identify which tone (enthusiastic, factual, reflective) fits different writing purposes.

Mentor Text Comparison:

- Examine how science magazines blend curiosity and professionalism.

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:

Context Clue Practice:

- Have students use surrounding sentences to define scientific words accurately.

Word Upgrade Challenge:

- Students identify informal words in a paragraph and propose precise replacements.

Source Vocabulary Integration:

- Highlight new terms from the sources and require their use in revised drafts.

Sentence Fluency:

Sentence Variety Graph:

- Students track how often they use different sentence types.

Combine and Break Workshop:

- Practice joining choppy sentences and dividing run-ons for control.

Read-Aloud Fluency Check:

- Students listen for pacing and revise to improve natural rhythm.

Conventions:

Homophone Sort:

- Students practice choosing correct forms (*their/there/they're*).

Possessive Noun Mini-Lesson:

- Model apostrophe use with examples like "bear's den."

Comma and Spacing Edit Station:

- Peer partners check punctuation after quotations and transitions.

Use of Sources:

Color-Coded Source Integration:

- Have students highlight notes from each source in a different color, then check their drafts to ensure at least two colors appear—showing balanced use of sources.

Signal Phrase Sentence Frames:

- Provide sentence stems like *"The author describes how…"* or *"The article explains that…"* for students to practice inserting before factual details.

Synthesis Paragraph Practice:

- Ask students to combine two related details from different sources into one paragraph (e.g., penguins huddling in cold climates + owls sheltering in cacti) to show how animals adapt in contrasting ways.