Grade 5 – Opinion Writing Work Sample: Meets

Task: Your class is studying about the history of animals and how they have contributed to human growth and development. You are given three articles about service animals.

Read the sources carefully to write an opinion essay in which you give your opinion about whether you agree with a new rule allowing only service dogs and miniature horses in public places, or whether you disagree with the rule. 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: 4

The opinion is clear and consistently supported by accurate reasoning drawn from the source. The essay demonstrates understanding of safety, hygiene, and practicality concerns, though elaboration and depth are limited.

Evidence from Student Work: Ideas and Content	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Ideas and Content
✓ **Clear Opinion and Purpose** ○ Explicit stance: *"I agree with this law, and in this article, I will be explaining why I say this."* ○ Maintains focus on supporting the new law throughout.	➢ **Maintain a Consistent Tone:** ○ Keep humor brief; focus on informative reasoning rather than jokes ("service goat").
✓ **Relevant and Accurate Details** ○ Accurately references risks mentioned in Source #3: *"Service animals could transmit diseases to other people"* and *"birds could leave behind droppings… which makes for an unhealthy environment."* ○ Mentions that dogs "listen to commands" and "sit quietly," showing understanding of their trainability.	➢ **Add One More Source Detail:** ○ Include a fact from *Source #1* about monkeys' unpredictability to reinforce the safety argument.
✓ **Development and Elaboration** ○ Provides multiple reasons (safety, health, business convenience), but each is brief and lacks explanation. ○ Example: *"No one knows what the animal could do next"* is general rather than specific.	➢ **Expand Each Reason:** ○ After each statement, add one explanation ("This matters because…") to show understanding of why the reason supports the law.
✓ **Focus and Relevance** ○ Stays entirely on topic, but humor ("service goat") and casual closing slightly weaken focus.	➢ **Strengthen the Ending:** ○ Replace "I'll see you again…" with a clear conclusion summarizing key points.

Organization: 4

The essay follows a clear, logical order with a straightforward introduction, body, and conclusion. Transitions are basic but effective.

Evidence from Student Work: Organization	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Organization
✓ **Introduction** ○ States topic and position clearly in the first sentence.	➢ **Introduce Paragraph Topics Early:** ○ Begin each body paragraph with a clear topic sentence.

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✓ **Introduction** ○ States topic and position clearly in the first sentence.	➢ **Introduce Paragraph Topics Early:** ○ Begin each body paragraph with a clear topic sentence.
✓ **Grouping and Sequencing** ○ Each paragraph introduces a new reason—safety, hygiene, business practicality.	➢
✓ **Transitions and Flow** ○ Uses implicit transitions ("Also," "Overall") to connect ideas.	➢ **Add Paragraph Transitions:** ○ Use phrases like "Another reason," "In addition," or "Finally" for smoother flow.
✓ **Conclusion and Closure** ○ Ends with a summary opinion, though the "Adios!" sign-off reduces formality.	➢ **Formalize the Conclusion:** ○ Replace "Adios" with a professional closing ("In conclusion, this law keeps everyone safe and healthy.").

Voice: 4

The tone is clear, confident, and personable. The writer's humor and conversational style engage the reader, though formality could be stronger for academic tone.

Evidence from Student Work: Voice	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Voice
✓ **Engaging and Expressive Tone** ○ Conversational lines like *"Imagine walking to work with a service goat leading you there!"* show lively engagement.	➢ **Refine Formal Tone:** ○ Replace casual phrasing ("I'll see you again") with formal closure.
✓ **Sincerity and Personality** ○ Writer's enthusiasm for the topic comes through naturally.	➢
✓ **Audience Awareness** ○ Balances explanation and humor to hold interest.	➢ **Balance Humor with Purpose:** ○ Keep entertaining examples but connect them to reasoning ("A goat wouldn't follow commands like a trained dog").
✓ **Consistency of Tone** ○ Maintains positivity throughout, but informal sign-off shifts tone away from academic writing.	➢ **Add Persuasive Emphasis:** ○ Use stronger conviction language ("This rule protects both people and businesses").

Word Choice: 3

Vocabulary is clear and accurate but limited in range. Repetition of general words and informal phrasing reduce sophistication.

Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Word Choice
✓ **Precision and Variety** ○ Common words like "law," "animal," and "people" are repeated.	➢ **Reduce Repetition:** ○ Replace repeated "animals" with "creatures," "service pets," or pronouns. ➢ **Upgrade Verbs:** ○ Use stronger verbs like "endanger," "contaminate," "assist," "protect."

Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Word Choice
✓ **Content Vocabulary** ○ Includes some relevant words ("transmit diseases," "environment") but lacks variety.	➢
✓ **Descriptive Language** ○ Humor adds imagery but not technical precision.	➢
✓ **Appropriate Tone** ○ Everyday language fits audience but needs more academic vocabulary.	➢ **Add Academic Terms:** ○ Include "regulations," "public safety," "trained animals," "hygiene."

Sentence Fluency: 4

Sentences are clear and readable. Minor run-ons and informal phrasing affect rhythm but not understanding.

Evidence from Student Work: Sentence Fluency	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Sentence Fluency
✓ **Readable Flow** ○ Sentences are complete and straightforward, making the essay easy to follow.	➢ **Vary Sentence Openings:** ○ Begin some sentences with transitions ("Because," "Since," "When") for variety.
✓ **Rhythm and Variety** ○ Some variety in length and structure ("In public places, there are more people than just you there.").	➢ **Maintain Punctuation Consistency:** ○ Avoid random commas after "service."
✓ **Run-Ons and Repetition** ○ Occasional choppiness or run-ons, especially with conjunctions ("But with dogs, which we've lived with for hundreds of years, are less likely to hurt someone.").	➢ **Correct Run-Ons:** ○ Split long sentences into two clear thoughts.
✓ **Natural Cadence** ○ Conversational rhythm keeps the piece lively and readable.	➢

Conventions: 4

Frequent minor spelling and punctuation errors appear but do not obscure meaning.

Evidence from Student Work: Conventions	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Conventions
✓ **Punctuation and Spacing** ○ Extra commas and missing periods ("service, goat leading you there").	➢ **Proofread for Consistency:** ○ Read aloud to check punctuation and spacing.
✓ **Capitalization** ○ Generally correct.	➢
✓ **Spelling** ○ Few errors ("to bummed out" instead of "too bummed out").	➢ **Fix Minor Errors:** ○ Correct "to → too," remove extra commas.
✓ **Grammar** ○ Minor subject-verb issues ("dogs… are less likely" phrasing slightly off).	➢ **Review Comma Placement:** ○ Avoid inserting commas before incomplete thoughts.

Use of Sources: 3

Accurate understanding of *Source #3* is evident, and information is paraphrased appropriately. Evidence is correctly integrated, but the essay relies on a single source.

Evidence from Student Work: Use of Sources	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Use of Sources
✓ **Accurate Source Use** ○ Explicitly references *"Info from: Source #3"* at the end.	➢
✓ **Relevance and Accuracy** ○ Reflects correct details from *Source #3* about hygiene and safety.	➢ **Explain Evidence:** ○ Add a follow-up line showing how each fact supports the law.
✓ **Balance of Sources** ○ No evidence from *Sources #1* or *#2.*	➢ **Add Another Source:** ○ Include one fact from *Source #1* (monkey helpers) to show broader understanding.
✓ **Citation and Attribution** ○ Acknowledged source number but could integrate citations within text.	➢ **Integrate Source in Text:** ○ Write "According to Source #3…" instead of only listing it at the end.

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:

Reason–Evidence–Explanation Frames:

- Students pair each reason with a supporting fact and a "why it matters" statement.

Source Integration Mini-Lesson:

- Model how to use short quotes from multiple texts ("According to Source #3…").

Conclusion Workshop:

- Teach students to restate opinions in formal language rather than conversational closings.

Organization:

Transition Variety Chart:

- Provide examples of formal transition words for sequence and emphasis.

Introduction–Conclusion Pair Practice:

- Show how to connect opening and closing ideas without repetition.

Topic Sentence Mini-Lesson:

- Students draft first sentences that preview the reason developed in each paragraph.

Voice:

"Voice Shift" Practice:

- Students rewrite humorous lines in a formal academic style while keeping energy.

Audience Awareness Discussion:

- Identify when conversational tone is appropriate versus formal writing.

Peer Tone Feedback:

- Classmates comment on where tone feels engaging or too informal.

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 Expansion Chart:

- List topic-specific words and encourage students to use two new terms in revisions.

Synonym Substitution Game:

- Students replace repeated basic words with more precise synonyms.

Academic Word Bank Practice:

- Integrate key terms from the ADA and service-animal context.

Sentence Fluency:

Sentence Combining Workshop:

- Teach students to merge or separate ideas appropriately.

Sentence Starter Variety Chart:

- Encourage rewriting sentences with new openings for flow.

Read-Aloud Rhythm Check:

- Students listen for pacing and natural pauses to revise.

Conventions:

Editing Checklists:

- Use checklists for commas, spelling, and subject-verb agreement.

Peer Proofreading Pass:

- Students find and fix one mechanical error per paragraph.

Mini-Lesson on Homophones:

- Practice “to/too/two” and similar sound-alike words.

Use of Sources:

Source-Blending Practice:

- Students practice weaving two different source details into one paragraph.

Citation Starter Frames:

- Teach simple sentence stems for citing sources within text.

“Fact-to-Opinion” Routine:

- After citing, students add one sentence explaining how the fact proves their point.