# Grade 5 – Informational Writing Work Sample: Does Not Yet Meet

**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: 3

The paper demonstrates basic understanding of hibernation with several accurate references to the sources. However, ideas are inconsistently developed, and much of the writing retells source facts rather than explaining their meaning or connecting them to a clear main idea.

| Evidence from Student Work: Ideas and Content | Student Recommendations for Improvement: Ideas and Content |
|---|---|
| ✓ **Clear but Simplistic Main Idea:**<br>○ The introduction establishes a purpose ("I'm going to be writing about hibernation in my own words") and raises a question ("do bears truly hibernate?"), but the main idea remains narrow and repeated rather than developed into an explanation. | ➢ **Clarify the Main Idea:**<br>○ Replace "do bears truly hibernate?" with a focused statement such as "Bears hibernate to survive the cold winter when food is hard to find." |
| ✓ **Use of Accurate Facts from Sources:**<br>○ The student correctly refers to Source 1 ("a bear in Yellowstone was looking for insects, berries, [and] small rodents") and Source 2 ("five bears were sent in fake dens… scientists watched them on video cameras"). These details show comprehension but are reported without analysis or transitions. | ➢ **Show Connections Between Sources:**<br>○ Combine details (e.g., from Source 2's scientists and Source 3's mother bears) to show understanding of both behavior and biology. |
| ✓ **Lack of Explanation and Synthesis:**<br>○ The writer strings details together—e.g., "So source number 3 says… the bear fattens up on acorns"—but never explains how these facts connect to the main question. There is no reasoning that links evidence to the claim that bears truly hibernate. | ➢ **Explain Facts, Don't Just List Them:**<br>○ After quoting scientists or describing what bears do, add a sentence explaining *why that matters.* |
| ✓ **Weak Conclusion or Insight:**<br>○ The paper ends abruptly with "So bears do hibernate," which answers the question but provides no summary or concluding thought about *why* or *how* hibernation benefits bears. | ➢ **Write a Concluding Insight:**<br>○ End by summarizing what scientists learned or why hibernation is important to animal survival. |

### Organization: 3

The paper follows a sequential, source-by-source structure but lacks smooth transitions, paragraph unity, and an effective introduction or closure.

| Evidence from Student Work: Organization | Student Recommendations for Improvement: Organization |
|---|---|
| ✓ **Predictable but Choppy Structure:**<br>○ Each body paragraph begins with "So source number 2 says…" or "So source number 3 says…" This signals order but results in a repetitive, disconnected structure. | ➢ **Create Thematic Paragraphs:**<br>○ Organize by topics (e.g., "Preparing for Hibernation," "Sleeping Safely," "Caring for Cubs") instead of by source number. |
| ✓ **Minimal Transitions:**<br>○ Frequent repetition of "so" as a transition creates abrupt jumps rather than logical flow between ideas. | ➢ **Use Transitional Phrases:**<br>○ Replace "so" with academic connectors such as "for example," "in addition," or "as a result." |
| ✓ **Uneven Paragraph Development:**<br>○ Paragraphs summarize information from individual sources without combining or extending ideas across them. | ➢ **Balance Paragraph Length:**<br>○ Develop each paragraph with two to three facts followed by explanation to keep sections proportional. |
| ✓ **Abrupt Conclusion:**<br>○ The final line—"So bears do hibernate"—lacks reflection or synthesis and ends the piece suddenly. | ➢ **Add a Clear Closing Paragraph:**<br>○ End with a statement summarizing what scientists now know about hibernation. |

**Voice: 3**

The student's tone is conversational and friendly but inconsistent with the expectations of an informational report. The writer's curiosity is evident, yet the repeated use of first-person narration and rhetorical questions weakens the formal tone.

| Evidence from Student Work: Voice | Student Recommendations for Improvement: Voice |
|---|---|
| ✓ **Engaged but Informal Introduction:**<br>○ The opening—"So I'm going to be writing about hibernation in my own words"—shows interest but reads like a classroom prompt, not an informational article. | ➢ **Replace Conversational Phrasing:**<br>○ Begin with an engaging statement of fact ("Scientists have long wondered whether bears truly hibernate") instead of "So I'm going to write about…" |
| ✓ **Audience Awareness:**<br>○ Rhetorical questions ("But the question is do bears trully hibernate?") draw the reader in but do not maintain academic tone. | ➢ **Maintain Consistent Formal Tone:**<br>○ Avoid "so" at the start of sentences and personal remarks like "in my own words." |
| ✓ **Inconsistent Formality:**<br>○ Frequent "so" starters and casual phrasing ("they go into ther dens," "they come out looking skinny") reduce the professionalism of the writing. | ➢ **Use Academic Transition Phrases:**<br>○ Replace casual connectors ("so," "then") with formal ones ("therefore," "as a result"). |
| ✓ **Missing Reflective Voice:**<br>○ There is no personal insight, commentary, or concluding statement that conveys the writer's understanding or stance beyond "So bears do hibernate." | ➢ **Add Reflective Comment:**<br>○ End by expressing what was learned or why the topic matters ("This shows that hibernation helps bears survive extreme cold"). |

**Word Choice: 3**

The vocabulary demonstrates some topic understanding but is limited in variety and precision. Frequent spelling errors and misused words reduce clarity.

| Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice | Student Recommendations for Improvement: Word Choice |
|---|---|
| ✓ **Limited Vocabulary Range:**<br>○ Repetition of "so," "says," and "source" shows dependency on simple transitions and dialogue phrasing. | ➢ **Add Variety:**<br>○ Replace repeated "so" and "says" with stronger verbs like "explains," "describes," or "reports." |
| ✓ **Some Domain-Specific Words:**<br>○ Mentions of "hibernate," "den," and "vital signs" show awareness of scientific terminology from the sources. | ➢ **Upgrade Vocabulary:**<br>○ Use scientific words such as "forage," "monitor," and "hibernate" consistently. |
| ✓ **Frequent Spelling Errors:**<br>○ Misspellings like "trully," "asleap," "consintrate," and "ther" interrupt readability and lower control. | ➢ **Proofread for Accuracy:**<br>○ Correct misspellings and revise unclear words before final submission. |
| ✓ **Lack of Precision:**<br>○ Phrases such as "one bear was looking for insects" or "they go into ther dens" could be refined to show more scientific understanding and specificity. | ➢ **Use Descriptive Detail:**<br>○ Include words that show conditions ("cold," "frozen," "snow-covered") for imagery. |

**Sentence Fluency: 2**

Sentences are mostly complete and readable but repetitive in structure and rhythm. The overuse of "so" to start sentences creates monotony and informal flow.

| Evidence from Student Work: Sentence Fluency | Student Recommendations for Improvement: Sentence Fluency |
|---|---|
| ✓ **Simple, Repetitive Patterns:**<br>○ Nearly every paragraph begins with "So source number…" which interrupts fluency and creates redundancy. | ➢ **Vary Sentence Openings:**<br>○ Use words other than "so" to begin sentences. |
| ✓ **Run-ons and Fragments:**<br>○ Several long sentences could be divided for clarity ("They say th bears always slept in a curled position so source1 and 2 say yes but does source3 say they do hibernate"). | ➢ **Combine and Simplify:**<br>○ Break long sentences into smaller ones or combine short ones with transitions. |
| ✓ **Readable but Uneven Rhythm:**<br>○ Although the writing is clear, sentence length varies inconsistently, causing pacing issues. | ➢ **Read Aloud for Flow:**<br>○ Listen for repetitive or awkward phrasing to improve rhythm. |
| ✓ **Limited Transitional Control:**<br>○ Few compound or complex sentences link ideas smoothly across paragraphs. | ➢ **Use Compound Sentences:**<br>○ Link related ideas with "because," "when," or "although." |

**Conventions: 2**

Frequent spelling, punctuation, and capitalization errors interfere with fluency. Grammar control is inconsistent, though meaning is still accessible.

| Evidence from Student Work: Conventions | Student Recommendations for Improvement: Conventions |
|---|---|
| ✓ **Spelling Errors:**<br>○ Words such as “asleap,” “consintrate,” “trully,” and “ther” are consistently misspelled, showing limited proofreading. | ➢ **Run a Full Spell-Check:**<br>○ Use digital tools or peer editing to catch frequent errors. |
| ✓ **Capitalization and Punctuation:**<br>○ “I’m” and “So im” lack capitalization and apostrophes. Missing commas after introductory words make sentences harder to read. | ➢ **Capitalize Proper Nouns and Sentences:**<br>○ Start every sentence with a capital letter. |
| ✓ **Grammar and Agreement Issues:**<br>○ Plural and possessive errors (“there dens,” “thier cubs”) appear throughout. | ➢ **Focus on Homophones:**<br>○ Review “there/their,” “it’s/its,” and “to/too.” |
| ✓ **Readability Despite Errors:**<br>○ While mechanical errors are frequent, they rarely obscure overall meaning. | ➢ **Add Commas and Apostrophes:**<br>○ Correct contractions (“I’m”) and use commas after transitions. |

### Use of Sources: 3

The paper references all three sources but does so in a surface-level, sequential manner. Source information is summarized rather than synthesized, and quotes lack explanation or analysis.

| Evidence from Student Work: Use of Sources | Student Recommendations for Improvement: Use of Sources |
|---|---|
| ✓ **Coverage of All Sources:**<br>○ The essay mentions Source 1 (bear gathering food), Source 2 (scientists monitoring bears in dens), and Source 3 (female bears and cubs). | ➢ **Synthesize Ideas:**<br>○ Combine details from multiple sources in the same paragraph. |
| ✓ **Limited Integration:**<br>○ Sources are discussed separately (“So source number 2 says…”), rather than blended to build ideas. | ➢ **Avoid Source-by-Source Retelling:**<br>○ Discuss what *all the sources together* teach about hibernation. |
| ✓ **Minimal Commentary:**<br>○ Each fact is reported without explanation of significance—no insight into how evidence supports the claim. | ➢ **Explain the Evidence:**<br>○ After each fact, write a sentence that connects it to your main point. |
| ✓ **Inconsistent Citation Formatting:**<br>○ Source numbers are named but not capitalized consistently (“source1,” “source number 3”). | ➢ **Use Consistent Citations:**<br>○ Capitalize and format all sources as “Source 1,” “Source 2,” etc. |

## 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:

Fact + Reason Pairing Exercise:

- Students practice pairing each factual statement with a "this shows that…" reasoning sentence.

Source Connection Chart:

- Use a 3-column chart (Source 1 / Source 2 / Source 3) where students find one idea each and write a linking statement that unites them.

Conclusion Sentence Frames:

- Provide models for informative closings ("This shows that…," "Because of this process, bears…") to guide synthesis.

---

### Organization:

Paragraph Reorganization Task:

- Provide sentences from the essay for students to reorder into thematic rather than source-based groups.

Transition Ladder Practice:

- Students list better transition words categorized by purpose (sequence, cause/effect, contrast).

Outline Planning Template:

- Use an outline model where students create paragraph titles by concept instead of "Source 1/2/3."

---

### Voice:

Tone Transformation Workshop:

- Students rewrite informal sentences in a more academic tone while keeping the same information.

Purpose and Audience Chart:

- Compare sentences written for friends vs. school audiences to explore formality levels.

Rhetorical Question Replacement:

- Model turning questions into factual topic statements.

## 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:

Word Replacement Chart:

- Students replace overused words with stronger synonyms from the sources.

Spelling and Editing Focus:

- Practice correcting commonly misspelled science terms in short drills.

Precision Word Challenge:

- Students earn points for finding and using specific, topic-accurate vocabulary.

---

### Sentence Fluency:

Sentence Combining Practice:

- Students merge short, choppy sentences into complex ones for smoother flow.

Read-Aloud Fluency Check:

- Record and playback reading to identify rough transitions or repetition.

Sentence Starter Revision:

- Provide a list of academic openers to replace repeated “so” structures.

---

### Conventions:

Editing Stations:

- Separate desks for spelling, punctuation, and capitalization checks.

Mini-Lesson on Homophones:

- Quick practice correcting “there/their/they’re” and “its/it’s.”

Peer Proofreading Checklist:

- Students identify one convention error per paragraph and explain the correction.

---

### Use of Sources:

Source Weaving Workshop:

- Students practice combining facts from two sources in one paragraph.

Quote and Comment Pairs:

- Model how to follow evidence with a commentary statement (“This shows that…”).

Source Integration Chart:

- Create a chart showing overlapping information between sources to encourage synthesis.