Grade 5 – Opinion Writing Work Sample: Does Not Yet Meet

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: 3

The essay communicates a clear opinion supported by relevant reasons, but explanations are basic, exaggerated, or inaccurate. It reflects understanding of health and safety concerns yet lacks accurate or balanced detail from the sources.

Evidence from Student Work: Ideas and Content	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Ideas and Content
✓ **Clear Opinion and Purpose** ○ Explicit stance: *"The new law for service animals… is a good law."* ○ Maintains this opinion throughout, fulfilling "writer's purpose and main ideas are easy to understand."	➢ **Add One Counterpoint:** ○ Briefly acknowledge why some people liked other service animals before reaffirming your opinion.
✓ **Relevant but Simplified Details** ○ References general source ideas like health concerns and animal control: *"Monkeys and birds might spread deceases and other infections to public stores."* ○ However, exaggerations ("monkeys throwing punches," "horses and goats in hotels") weaken accuracy.	➢ **Use Accurate Source Details:** ○ Replace exaggerated examples with real ones ("According to Source #3, other animals can spread diseases or be unpredictable in public").
✓ **Development and Elaboration** ○ Attempts to provide reasoning (safety, hygiene, allergies) but lacks explanation or examples from the texts. ○ Several sentences repeat the same idea ("dogs are safer").	➢ **Add Factual Elaboration:** ○ Explain *why* dogs are safer or easier to train using text-based details ("They can stay calm and follow commands in crowds").
✓ **Focus and Relevance** ○ Focus remains consistent, though humor and exaggeration sometimes distract from clarity.	➢ **Remove Overstatement:** ○ Replace dramatic claims ("throwing punches") with factual ones from the readings.

Organization: 3

The essay follows a basic structure with an introduction, body, and conclusion but lacks clear paragraph separation and effective transitions.

Evidence from Student Work: Organization	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Organization
✓ **Introduction** ○ Starts clearly with the opinion statement but lacks a preview of reasons.	➢

Evidence from Student Work: Organization	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Organization
✓ **Grouping and Sequencing** ○ Related ideas (safety, hygiene, business concerns) appear, but paragraphs are merged together and repetitive.	➢ **Add Paragraph Breaks:** ○ Create separate sections for hygiene, safety, and children's comfort.
✓ **Transitions and Flow** ○ Few connecting words ("Finally," "Also") are used inconsistently; ideas sometimes jump abruptly.	➢ **Add Clear Transitions:** ○ Use phrases like "Another reason," "For example," and "In conclusion."
✓ **Conclusion and Closure** ○ Ends by restating opinion but adds an unrelated line ("they can protect there owner") without synthesis.	➢ **Tighten the Ending:** ○ Replace repetitive "Finally" with a short summary of main reasons.

Voice: 4

The tone is confident and sincere. The student's enthusiasm and conviction come through clearly, though informal phrasing sometimes distracts from credibility.

Evidence from Student Work: Voice	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Voice
✓ **Engaging and Expressive Tone** ○ Strong conviction: *"People who ran businesses were pleased."* ○ Passionate, direct, and reader-focused voice.	➢ **Add Empathy:** ○ Briefly mention how the rule helps everyone stay safe and comfortable.
✓ **Sincerity and Personality** ○ The humor ("monkeys throwing punches") shows personality and engagement.	➢ **Keep Humor Balanced:** ○ Remove exaggerations but keep authentic enthusiasm.
✓ **Audience Awareness** ○ Conversational phrasing connects with readers but could be more formal for academic writing.	➢ **Refine Formality:** ○ Replace casual phrases ("I'm not the only one who agree") with academic tone ("Many business owners agreed with the law").
✓ **Consistency of Tone** ○ Maintains positive tone throughout, reinforcing opinion effectively.	➢

Word Choice: 3

Vocabulary is clear and readable but basic. Repetition and informal phrasing limit variety and precision.

Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Word Choice
✓ **Precision and Variety** ○ Repeats common terms like "law," "animal," and "dog."	➢ **Avoid Repetition:** ○ Replace repeated "dogs" and "animals" with synonyms ("service pets," "creatures," "these animals").
✓ **Topic Vocabulary** ○ Includes "diseases," "allergies," "public," and "businesses," showing awareness of content.	➢ **Add Academic Vocabulary:** ○ Use words like "regulations," "public safety," "trained service animals," "behavioral control."

Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Word Choice
✓ **Descriptive Language** ○ Attempts imagery ("monkeys throwing punches") but lacks sophistication or accuracy.	➢ **Use More Precise Verbs:** ○ Replace "spread diseases" with "transmit infections."
✓ **Tone and Audience Fit** ○ Everyday phrasing fits purpose but lacks academic polish.	➢

Sentence Fluency: 2

Sentences are readable but frequently joined with commas or run together. Repetitive openings and informal phrasing reduce rhythm.

Evidence from Student Work: Sentence Fluency	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Sentence Fluency
✓ **Readable Flow** ○ Sentences are understandable and maintain momentum.	➢
✓ **Repetition of Patterns** ○ Most begin with "I think," "Also," or "And."	➢ **Vary Sentence Starters:** ○ Begin with dependent clauses ("Because some animals are large, they may be unsafe indoors").
✓ **Run-Ons and Punctuation Errors** ○ Example: *"The new law for service animals,in my opinion is a good law because some animals like snakes,lizards and even horses may be to dangerous or to large."*	➢ **Fix Run-Ons:** ○ Split long ideas into two clear sentences.
✓ **Rhythm and Variety** ○ Conversational rhythm but limited sentence variety.	➢ **Add Short Emphasis Sentences:** ○ Use brief statements for clarity ("Dogs are different.").

Conventions: 2

Frequent errors in punctuation, spelling, and capitalization make the writing uneven, though meaning remains clear.

Evidence from Student Work: Conventions	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Conventions
✓ **Punctuation and Spacing** ○ Missing commas ("The new law for service animals,in my opinion…") and inconsistent spacing.	➢ **Add Commas After Introductory Phrases:** ○ Insert commas after "In my opinion," "Also," and "Finally."
✓ **Spelling** ○ Common misspellings: "deceases" (diseases), "won" (one), "to" (too), "there" (their).	➢ **Check Homophones:** ○ Correct "there/they're/their," "to/too." ➢ **Proofread for Spelling:** ○ Fix high-frequency words like "deceases → diseases," "bisinesses → businesses."
✓ **Capitalization and Grammar** ○ Some sentences start with lowercase; inconsistent verb agreement ("people who ran bisinesses were pleased").	➢

Use of Sources: 3

The essay shows general understanding of the readings, accurately referencing disease, behavior, and public safety concerns, but evidence is paraphrased loosely with no citations.

Evidence from Student Work: Use of Sources	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Use of Sources
✓ **Accurate Understanding** ○ Refers to relevant concerns from *Source #3* ("spread diseases," "large animals unsafe indoors").	➢
✓ **Integration of Evidence** ○ No direct quotes or explicit attributions.	➢ **Explain the Facts:** ○ After using evidence, write one sentence showing how it supports your opinion.
✓ **Balance of Sources** ○ Relies almost entirely on ideas from *Source #3*; no mention of monkeys from *Source #1* or variety from *Source #2*.	➢ **Include Multiple Sources:** ○ Add a fact from *Source #1* about monkey helpers and one from *Source #2* about how animals assist people.
✓ **Citation and Attribution** ○ No source reference included.	➢ **Add Source Citations:** ○ Example: "According to Source #3, large animals like horses can be unsafe in crowded stores."

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 vs. Opinion Chart:

- Students highlight which statements are true facts from sources and which are personal opinions.

"Why It Matters" Expansion Routine:

- Have students add one sentence explaining why each reason supports their opinion.

Accuracy Revision Workshop:

- Compare exaggerated claims to text evidence and model precise restatements.

Organization:

Paragraph Planning Organizer:

- Students plan one reason per paragraph with topic sentence and support.

Transition Variety Chart:

- Model use of additive and concluding transitions.

Conclusion Practice:

- Have students rewrite final sentences to restate their opinion and summarize key points.

Voice:

Tone Rewriting Exercise:

- Students convert casual lines into formal statements without losing personality.

Audience Awareness Discussion:

- Discuss how tone changes when writing to lawmakers versus peers.

Voice + Purpose Chart:

- Students identify sentences that show conviction versus those that could distract readers.

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 Upgrade Ladder:

- Students replace simple words with higher-level synonyms.

Topic Word Wall:

- Collect and display vocabulary from the sources for integration.

Descriptive Revision Workshop:

- Practice writing one precise, sensory sentence for each key reason.

Sentence Fluency:

Sentence Combining and Splitting Practice:

- Students practice joining short ideas or breaking long ones appropriately.

Sentence Starter Chart:

- Provide templates for beginning sentences with transitions or dependent clauses.

Read-Aloud Rhythm Check:

- Students read aloud to hear where sentences run on or pause unnaturally.

Conventions:

Conventions Editing Stations:

- Students rotate to focus on punctuation, spelling, and capitalization separately.

Homophone Mini-Lesson:

- Practice frequently confused pairs.

Peer Proofreading Checklist:

- Partners review drafts for at least three corrections each.

Use of Sources:

Citation Starter Frames:

- Teach students to introduce evidence with “According to Source #…”

Source Comparison Organizer:

- Students collect one fact from each text before drafting.

“Fact + Explanation” Routine:

- Students practice pairing every evidence sentence with one follow-up explanation.