## Grade 8 – Argumentative Writing Work Sample: Does Not Yet Meet

**Task**: Your class is studying about the human nervous system and the brain. You are given three articles about the brain and how it impacts memory.

*Read the sources carefully to **write an explanatory article** about improving memory. Using more than one source, select the most relevant information to support your thesis/controlling idea about memory.*

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

### Ideas and Content: 2

The essay presents a clear claim to keep the penny, but the argument is based almost entirely on sentimental value, hypothetical examples, and unsupported assumptions, rather than evidence from the provided sources. Several statements directly contradict the source set (especially regarding rounding and charity impact), and key concepts such as production cost, economic efficiency, or time-waste data are missing. The essay shows effort and some relevant ideas, but lacks accurate evidence, depth of reasoning, and source grounding.

| Evidence from Student Work: Ideas and Content | Student Recommendations for Improvement: Ideas and Content |
|---|---|
| ✓ **Clear Claim & Purpose**<br>○ Establishes the claim in the introduction: "Preserve the penny!… I think that is a bad idea [to remove it]."<br>○ Restates in the conclusion: "I believe the penny should be preserved." | ➢ |
| ✓ **Relevant but Unsupported Reasons**<br>○ Gives three main reasons:<br>▪ sentimental value ("created many memories," "figures of speech")<br>▪ savings on purchases ("you would have to pay $30 instead of $29.96")<br>▪ charity donations ("people would be more likely to donate their pennies")<br>○ None of these reasons are supported with evidence from the required sources. | ➢ **Use Accurate Evidence From the Required Sources**<br>○ Replace unsupported claims with facts from the actual articles (penny minting cost, time wasted handling pennies, economic rounding research). |
| ✓ **Evidence Use Is Inaccurate or Not From Sources**<br>○ Uses an invented or non-task article: "according to this article from Washington Middle School Chronicle…"—this is not one of the provided sources.<br>○ Claims about rounding contradict the actual economic analysis in Source 3, where price-rounding is shown not to harm consumers.<br>○ Claims about charity impact are unsupported by any source. | ➢ **Correct Inaccurate or Contradicted Claims**<br>○ Revise statements about rounding and charity impact to align with what the sources actually say. |

| Evidence from Student Work: Ideas and Content | Student Recommendations for Improvement: Ideas and Content |
|---|---|
| ✓ **Development, Reasoning & Explanation (Weak)**<br>○ Historical details about early pennies ("Lady Liberty… Flying Eagle… Indian Head…") are off-topic for the argumentative purpose; these are not provided in the sources.<br>○ The writer states effects without reasoning: "two cents can be a lot for some people," "it could hurt charities," without explaining why or using evidence.<br>○ Overgeneralizations appear throughout ("two cents can be a lot," "people donate pennies more often than quarters" with no support). | ➢ **Deepen Reasoning With Clear Explanation**<br>○ Explain why each reason matters—especially how sentimental value compares to economic cost. |
| ✓ **Focus & Relevance to the Argument**<br>○ The essay stays on topic—preserving the penny—but relies on general feelings and hypothetical scenarios rather than economic arguments required by the task.<br>○ Some drift into historical trivia that does not advance the argument. | ➢ **Remove Off-Task Information and Strengthen Relevance**<br>○ Focus on economic pros/cons rather than long lists of historical designs unless tied directly to your argument. |

**Organization: 2**

The essay has an introduction and conclusion, but the internal structure is inconsistent and not well aligned to the argument. Paragraphs are uneven, reasoning does not build logically, and transitions are limited. The required counterargument structure is missing, and several sections drift into off-task historical description instead of advancing the argument.

| Evidence from Student Work: Organization | Student Recommendations for Improvement: Organization |
|---|---|
| ✓ **Introduction Establishes Position but Lacks Preview**<br>○ Opens with "Preserve the penny!" but does not provide an overview of reasons. | ➢ **Add a Clear Preview in the Introduction**<br>○ Briefly outline your main reasons so the structure is more predictable and organized. |
| ✓ **Body Paragraphs Not Logically Sequenced**<br>○ Moves abruptly from sentiment to rounding to charity to historical trivia.<br>○ Historical list of coin designs ("Lady Liberty… Flying Eagle… Indian Head…") does not support the writer's reasoning. | ➢ **Organize Reasons Into Separate Paragraphs With Clear Focus**<br>○ Keep sentiment l value, rounding, and charity impacts in distinct sections and remove unrelated historical content. |
| ✓ **Transitions Are Limited**<br>○ Uses a few transitional phrases ("This will affect…", "Lastly"), but most ideas shift suddenly. | ➢ **Use Purposeful Transitions**<br>○ Add transitions that show relationships ("as a result," "in contrast," "more importantly"). |
| ✓ **Conclusion Restates Claim but Does Not Synthesize**<br>○ Repeats earlier ideas but does not tie the argument together. | ➢ |
| ✓ **Missing Counterargument and Rebuttal**<br>○ No acknowledgment of opposing views from the sources (e.g., cost of production, time inefficiency, economist analysis). | ➢ **Incorporate a Counterargument Using Source Evidence**<br>○ Use a paragraph to acknowledge concerns and respond with evidence from the articles. |

**Voice: 2**

The voice is earnest but inconsistent and relies heavily on emotional appeals, personal assumptions, and conversational tone. Audience awareness is limited, and the argument lacks the formal persuasive tone expected for a civic/economic topic.

| Evidence from Student Work: Voice | Student Recommendations for Improvement: Voice |
|---|---|
| ✓ **Conversational Tone**<br>○ Statements like "two cents can be a lot for some people!" and "this has created many memories" sound informal for the intended audience. | ➢ **Shift Toward a More Academic Tone**<br>○ Replace emotional phrasing with fact-based argumentation drawn from sources. |
| ✓ **Emotional but Unsupported Appeals**<br>○ "Seeing the penny shows us our history"<br>○ "This really will affect charities a lot"<br>○ These statements are not supported by evidence. | ➢ **Balance Emotion With Evidence**<br>○ You can keep sentimental points, but ground them in factual context or expert perspectives. |
| ✓ **Limited Audience Awareness**<br>○ Essay does not address policymakers or acknowledge economic concerns that would matter in a public policy discussion. | ➢ **Increase Audience Awareness**<br>○ Write with the perspective of policymakers, focusing on economic efficiency and public impact. |
| ✓ **Inconsistent Authoritative Voice**<br>○ Sentimental appeals outweigh evidence, reducing persuasive credibility. | ➢ **Reduce Informal Expressions**<br>○ Avoid conversational statements and strengthen formality when addressing a national policy issue. |

**Word Choice: 2**

Word choice is simple, repetitive, and imprecise at times. The essay uses emotional vocabulary and relies on unsupported generalizations instead of precise economic or policy language. Several opportunities to incorporate specific terms from the sources are missed.

| Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice | Student Recommendations for Improvement: Word Choice |
|---|---|
| ✓ **Vague or Overgeneralized Language**<br>○ "This will affect us a lot,"<br>○ "two cents can be a lot,"<br>○ "seeing the penny shows us our history." | ➢ **Replace Vague Words With Specific Descriptions**<br>○ Clarify statements instead of using "a lot" or "many." |
| ✓ **Emotional and Figurative Language**<br>○ "Created many memories for us,"<br>○ "figures of speech we use daily." | ➢ **Reduce Emotional or Figurative Language**<br>○ Replace sentimental or historical references with more concrete arguments. |
| ✓ **Missing Academic Vocabulary**<br>○ No use of terms such as "production cost,"<br>✓ economic efficiency," "consumer impact," or "minting expense." | ➢ **Use Direct Terminology From the Articles**<br>○ Include key vocabulary such as "2.4 cents to mint," "government losses," "time inefficiency." |
| ✓ **Repetition of Simple Language**<br>○ Frequent use of "a lot," "many," "people," without additional specificity. | ➢ **Use More Precise Economic Vocabulary**<br>○ Incorporate terms from Sources 1–3 about minting costs, efficiency, and consumer rounding. |

### Sentence Fluency: 3

Sentences are mostly readable, but the writing lacks variety and sometimes feels repetitive or disjointed. Flow is uneven due to shifts between emotional statements, facts, and off-topic details.

| Evidence from Student Work: Sentence Fluency | Student Recommendations for Improvement: Sentence Fluency |
|---|---|
| ✓ **Simple, Mostly Correct Sentences**<br>○ "It was created many memories for us."<br>○ "Two cents can be a lot for some people." | ➢ **Use Transitions to Connect Ideas**<br>○ Strengthen flow with transitions such as "for example," "in addition," "in contrast." |
| ✓ **Repetitive Sentence Beginnings**<br>○ Several sentences start with similar structures ("This is good because…," "This will affect…"). | ➢ **Vary Sentence Beginnings**<br>○ Use introductory phrases or clauses to improve rhythm. |
| ✓ **Occasional Awkward or Incorrect Constructions**<br>○ "It was created many memories"<br>○ "Pennies can remind us of the old days." | ➢ **Improve Sentence Structure Accuracy**<br>○ Revise awkward grammatical constructions ("It was created many memories"). |
| ✓ **Flow Interrupted by Off-Topic Lists**<br>○ Long list of old penny designs disrupts fluency and pacing. | ➢ **Remove or Condense Off-Topic Lists**<br>○ Streamline historical descriptions to improve flow. |

### Conventions: 3

Conventions are generally adequate but inconsistent. Some sentences contain grammar errors or awkward phrasing, and a few punctuation issues reduce clarity.

| Evidence from Student Work: Conventions | Student Recommendations for Improvement: Conventions |
|---|---|
| ✓ **Minor Grammar Issues**<br>○ "It was created many memories for us" (incorrect construction).<br>○ Occasional missing words ("This can affect people a lot the penny…" missing punctuation). | ➢ **Fix Awkward Phrasing and Word Order**<br>○ Revise sentences like "It was created many memories" for proper English syntax. |
| ✓ **Some Capitalization and Punctuation Issues**<br>○ Missing commas in complex or compound sentences.<br>○ A few unclear sentence boundaries. | ➢ **Add Necessary Commas and Periods**<br>○ Ensure all sentences have correct punctuation. |
| ✓ **Spelling Generally Correct**<br>○ No major spelling errors that obscure meaning. | ➢ **Continue Developing Proofreading Habits**<br>○ Use a convention checklist before final drafts. |
| ✓ **Meaning Remains Clear Despite Errors**<br>○ Errors do not prevent understanding but reduce overall polish. | ➢ **Check Sentence Boundaries**<br>○ Avoid fused sentences or missing endings. |

**Use of Sources: 1**

The essay uses **no evidence from the four required sources**. It relies entirely on personal opinions, sentimental reflections, hypothetical examples, and incorrect claims. Because the essay never draws from the source material, it does not meet task expectations for evidence-based argumentation.

| Evidence from Student Work:<br>Use of Sources | Student Recommendations for Improvement:<br>Use of Sources |
|---|---|
| ✓ **No Use of Assigned Sources**<br>○ No quotations or paraphrases from Source 1, 2, 3, or 4. | ➢ **Include Explicit Attribution**<br>○ Use phrases like "According to Source 3…" to properly introduce evidence. |
| ✓ **Evidence Presented Is Inaccurate or Irrelevant**<br>○ "According to Washington Middle School Chronicle…" is not part of this task's source set.<br>○ Claims about rounding, charity, and pricing contradict the economic information in Source 3. | ➢ **Correct Misconceptions Using Source Facts**<br>○ Revise statements about rounding and donation habits using the economists' findings. |
| ✓ **Missed Opportunities to Use Strong Evidence**<br>○ Sources provide data about minting cost, government losses, consumer rounding effects, and penny's limited purchasing power. | ➢ **Use Accurate Evidence From the Sources**<br>○ Replace unsupported claims with factual information from Sources 1–3 about costs and consumer impact. |
| ✓ **No Attribution or Source-Based Rebuttal**<br>○ Counterarguments and rebuttal are absent. | ➢ **Add a Counterargument Supported by Evidence**<br>○ Address concerns and rebut them using expert analysis from the articles. |

## 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.*

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### Ideas and Content:

Source Accuracy Mini-Lesson

- Students match each claim in their draft to specific evidence in the provided sources to correct inaccuracies.

Evidence–Reasoning Chain Practice

- Teach students to follow every claim with: evidence to explanation to connection to the argument.

Task-Focus Modeling

- Model how to choose evidence that directly supports an economic argument rather than unrelated historical facts.

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### Organization:

Paragraph-Purpose Mapping

- Students sort sentences into categories by function (claim, reason, evidence) to improve structure.

Transition Function Lessons

- Teach transitions categorized by purpose (contrast, elaboration, cause/effect).

Counterargument Modeling

- Provide frames for concession and rebuttal based on economic arguments in the sources.

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### Voice:

Tone Calibration Exercises

- Compare informal vs. academic versions of the same paragraph.

Audience-Driven Revision Practice

- Students rewrite sentences for a policymaker or economic analyst audience.

Evidence-Backed Voice Mini-Lessons

- Teach students to anchor emotional or anecdotal statements in source evidence.

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### Word Choice:

Replace-and-Refine Word Choice Workshop

- Students revise vague statements into precise economic or historical terms.

Source Vocabulary Banks

- Build lists of key terms drawn directly from the sources.

Semantic Precision Mini-Lessons

- Teach students how specific vocabulary elevates argumentative clarity.

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### Sentence Fluency:

Combining and Splitting Sentences Practice

- Help students adjust pacing by restructuring sentences.

Sentence-Opening Variety Exercises

- Students revise repeated openings to improve rhythm.

Contextual Fluency Read-Alouds

- Students identify awkward or choppy areas by hearing the writing.

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### Conventions:

Grammar Mini-Lessons on Sentence Structure

- Focus on subject–verb–object patterns.

Editing Stations for Conventions

- Students rotate through capitalization, punctuation, and sentence-boundary tasks.

Proofreading Checklist

- Provide a structured list targeting common errors seen in this piece.

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### Use of Sources:

Source-Evidence Alignment Routine

- Students practice matching statements to specific source excerpts.

Evidence–Explanation Pair Practice

- Students learn to pair each piece of evidence with an explanation that supports the claim.

Rebuttal Construction Workshop

- Teach students how to respond to counterarguments using data from the sources.