High School – Argumentative Writing Work Sample: Approaching

Task: Your class is studying about computer technology and development. You are given five resources about 3-D printers and how copyright, patent, and trademark law apply to 3D printers.

*Read the sources carefully to **write an argumentative essay** supporting or opposing the school library getting a 3D printer for students to use. Make sure to address potential counterarguments in your essay and support your claim with information from the sources you have examined.*

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

Ideas and Content: 3

The essay presents a clear claim opposing the school library getting a 3D printer and provides several reasons: financial burden, legal risks, and lack of educational value. The stance is consistent and the body paragraphs remain aligned with the claim. The writer includes multiple references to the sources, but many of these references are partial, misinterpreted, or oversimplified. Reasoning is present but often underdeveloped, with several statements that contradict or inaccurately summarize the source material. The essay demonstrates understanding of the task but lacks the accuracy, nuance, and depth required for a higher score.

Evidence from Student Work: Ideas and Content	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Ideas and Content
✓ **Clear Claim Stated Early and Maintained** ○ "The library should not purchase a 3D printer…" ○ The entire essay consistently supports the claim.	➢ **Increase Analytical Depth** ○ Move beyond restating concerns; explain implications, impacts, and cause–effect relationships.
✓ **Relevant but General Reasons** ○ Financial burden: Cites cost of "$1,299 plus shipping," though this number comes from the prompt rather than the sources. ○ Legal issues: Mentions copyright and patent risks but misunderstands core source explanations. ○ Library mission: Claims printers have "no educational purpose," but does not address source-based counterexamples.	➢ **Connect Reasons to Specific Evidence** ○ Use data or examples from the sources rather than general statements about copying or risks.
✓ **Partial and Sometimes Inaccurate Source Use** ○ Source 3: Misinterprets government "leniency" Source 3 explains that *most* printed objects are not protected by patent or copyright, which *reduces* legal concerns; the writer frames this as increased danger. ○ Source 4: Misstates that the system "does not work out" frequently; however, Source 4 shows that DMCA takedowns work effectively in many cases. ○ Source 1: Suggests library could get into lawsuits but does not mention the clear policies that protect institutions. ○ Source 5: Correct general idea (library mission concerns), but not cited directly or accurately.	➢ **Use Source Information Accurately** ○ Revisit Source 3 to correct misunderstandings about what is legally protected. ○ Use Source 4 more accurately—explain how the takedown system typically works.

Evidence from Student Work: Ideas and Content	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Ideas and Content
✓ **Reasoning Is Underdeveloped** ○ Financial reasoning is shallow no comparison to typical library expenditures, no noted policy mitigations (Source 1). ○ Legal reasoning is largely speculative ("better to avoid any problems overall"). ○ Educational-purpose argument ignores the customization and innovation benefits outlined in Sources 2 and 3.	➢ **Deepen Reasoning in Each Paragraph** ○ Explain why a $1,299 printer is a major burden by comparing to other library needs or budgets. ○ Clarify *how* library mission conflict arises using evidence from Source 5.
✓ **Counterargument Present but Weak** ○ Acknowledges a warning label and "caveat emptor," but does not use source-based benefits before rebutting. ○ Misinterprets Source 4's message that most disputes are resolved.	➢ **Strengthen Counterargument and Rebuttal** ○ Include at least one benefit from the sources (customization, access, innovation) before rebutting it.
✓ **No Evidence of Synthesis Across Sources** ○ Sources are mentioned individually but not connected or compared.	➢

Organization: 3

The essay has a recognizable argumentative structure: a clear claim, body paragraphs grouped by reasons, and a conclusion. Transitions are basic but functional. However, some paragraphs blend unrelated ideas or lack internal coherence. Sequencing is adequate but not fully logical or purposeful. The counterargument section is very brief and not well integrated.

Evidence from Student Work: Organization	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Organization
✓ **Clear Introduction With a Firm Claim** ○ Opens with: "The library should not purchase a 3D printer…"	➢
✓ **Body Paragraphs Organized by Reason** ○ One paragraph for cost, one for legal concerns, one for educational purpose.	➢
✓ **Transitions Are Simple but Functional** ○ Uses "Another problem," "Also," "Besides," which provide basic connections.	➢ **Add Clear Topic Sentences** ○ Provide a preview of the reasoning within each paragraph.
✓ **Counterargument Is Weakly Positioned and Underdeveloped** ○ Briefly mentions label warnings and "buyer beware" but does not integrate source-based benefits before rebutting.	➢ **Strengthen the Counterargument Structure** ○ Add a complete counterargument paragraph with source-based benefits before responding.
✓ **Paragraphs Sometimes Blend Ideas Without Development** ○ The "legal issues" paragraph mixes patent concerns, copying risks, and copyright misconceptions in ways that lack clarity.	➢ **Improve Logical Flow** ○ Arrange paragraphs so that reasoning builds logically from most concrete (cost) to most conceptual (mission, educational purpose).
✓ **Conclusion Restates Claim Without Synthesis** ○ Repeats stance but does not unify reasoning or reference the main themes.	➢ **Revise Conclusion for Synthesis** ○ Summarize how cost, mission, and legal concerns collectively support the claim.

Voice: 3

The voice is sincere and clearly expresses the writer's concerns about cost, misuse, and educational value. However, the tone becomes overly alarmist or speculative at times and lacks the academic control expected in high school argument writing. Audience awareness is inconsistent.

Evidence from Student Work: Voice	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Voice
✓ **Clear Authorial Stance** ○ Strong personal voice shows conviction about the dangers and drawbacks.	➢
✓ **Occasional Overly Emotional or Alarmist Tone** ○ Phrases like "end up being sued for something they didn't do," "dangerous prototyping," and "might be legally on the line" heighten drama without evidence.	➢ **Shift From Emotional to Evidence-Based Language** ○ Replace alarmist or dramatic claims with precise, source-based reasoning. ➢ **Ground Concerns in Facts** ○ Use evidence from sources instead of relying on speculative language.
✓ **Limited Academic Neutrality** ○ Several claims rely on fear rather than argument: "better to avoid any problems overall."	➢ **Increase Academic Tone** ○ Maintain professional, neutral language while still expressing a viewpoint.
✓ **Audience Awareness Is Partial** ○ Addresses concerns relevant to school decision-makers, but tone at times feels aimed at peers rather than adults.	➢ **Clarify Intended Audience** ○ Write with administrators or the school board in mind, not peers.
✓ **Some Effective Moments of Formal Voice** ○ When summarizing reasons, voice becomes more controlled and focused.	➢

Word Choice: 3

Word choice is generally clear but often vague, informal, or exaggerated. The writer uses some source-related terminology but also relies on speculative or imprecise expressions that weaken argumentative effectiveness.

Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Word Choice
✓ **Attempts at Technical or Legal Vocabulary** ○ Mentions "copyright," "patent," and "illegal printing."	➢
✓ **Vague or Overgeneralized Language** ○ "Many people could get in trouble," "dangerous prototyping," "very easy to make items that could get you sued."	➢ **Remove Vague or General Statements** ○ Replace terms like "dangerous" or "get you sued" with evidence-based specifics.
✓ **Informal Word Choice** ○ Uses everyday language that lacks academic precision: "avoid any problems," "no educational purpose," "drain on funds."	➢ **Eliminate Informal Phrasing** ○ Use academic vocabulary appropriate for argumentative essays.
✓ **Occasional Misuse of Terminology** ○ Confuses patent vs. copyright in ways that reflect misunderstanding.	➢ **Increase Precision in Legal Terminology** ○ Use accurate terms from the sources: "infringement," "patent-protected designs," "DMCA takedown," "authorized distribution."

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✓ **Some Effective Diction** ○ When describing educational purpose concerns, language becomes more precise.	➢ **Define Terms Clearly** ○ Clarify what "educational purpose" means with examples.

Sentence Fluency: 3

Sentences are generally readable but show uneven rhythm, repetitive structures, and occasional awkward phrasing. Some sentences combine unrelated ideas, and transitions within sentences are sometimes unclear.

Evidence from Student Work: Sentence Fluency	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Sentence Fluency
✓ **Readable but Not Smooth** ○ Sentences sometimes feel abrupt or stitched together.	➢
✓ **Repetitive Sentence Structures** ○ Many sentences follow a similar pattern, reducing variety.	➢ **Vary Sentence Beginnings and Structures** ○ Use introductory phrases or clauses to avoid repetition.
✓ **Awkward or Dense Constructions** ○ Example: "Another problem is that if a student uses a design he found online…" followed by multiple loosely connected ideas.	➢ **Revise Awkward Phrasing** ○ Rework sentences with multiple dependent ideas.
✓ **Some Run-On Tendencies** ○ Long sentences attempt to link multiple claims without clear transitions.	➢ **Break Multi-Idea Sentences Into Smaller Units** ○ Improve clarity by separating loosely connected ideas.
✓ **Basic Transitional Phrases** ○ "Another problem," "Also," "Besides" provide minimal fluency support.	➢ **Improve Internal Transitions** ○ Add linking words that clarify cause/effect, contrast, or concession.

Conventions: 3

The writing demonstrates basic control of grammar and punctuation, with errors that occasionally distract but do not impede clarity. The piece would benefit from more precise editing.

Evidence from Student Work: Conventions	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Conventions
✓ **Mostly Correct Grammar** ○ Sentences generally maintain subject–verb agreement.	➢
✓ **Some Punctuation Errors** ○ Missing commas in complex sentences. Occasional run-on tendencies.	➢ **Add Commas for Clarity** ○ Review complex sentences for appropriate punctuation. ➢ **Correct Run-On Sentences** ○ Break long sentences into complete thoughts.
✓ **Minor Spelling Errors** ○ No major issues, but proofreading could catch small slip-ups.	➢ **Proofread for Minor Errors** ○ Review for spelling, punctuation, and capitalization consistency.
✓ **Clear but Not Polished** ○ Errors do not impede meaning but reduce the professionalism of the writing.	➢

Use of Sources: 3

The essay uses multiple sources, but interpretations are often partial or inaccurate. Source integration is present but not consistently clear or correct. Evidence sometimes contradicts source explanations or oversimplifies key points.

Evidence from Student Work: Use of Sources	Student Recommendations for Improvement: Use of Sources
✓ **Attempts to Use Several Sources** ○ Mentions legal concerns, creativity issues, and library purpose—all tied to the text set.	➢
✓ **Inaccurate Interpretation of Source 3** ○ Writer claims government leniency increases danger; Source 3 states most objects are not legally protected, reducing infringement concern.	➢ **Use Sources Accurately** ○ Verify claims about legal protections, takedowns, and library policies.
✓ **Mischaracterization of Source 4** ○ Suggests takedown system "does not work out" regularly, though Source 4 shows it often resolves disputes.	➢
✓ **Source 1 Underutilized** ○ Does not acknowledge the staff-mediated policy protections that reduce risk.	➢ **Incorporate Source 1** ○ Mention policies that regulate printing and reduce risk.
✓ **No Clear Attribution** ○ Sources referenced implicitly without signal phrases.	➢ **Add Explicit Attribution** ○ Use "According to Source __" to show where evidence comes from.
✓ **No Synthesis Across Sources** ○ Sources are used separately, not combined to support reasoning.	➢ **Improve Synthesis** ○ Combine ideas from multiple sources to deepen reasoning.

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:

Source Accuracy Check Routine

- Have students highlight claims in their essay and connect them to exact source lines.

Counterargument-Rebuttal Modeling

- Teach how to acknowledge a source-based benefit and respond with evidence-based reasoning.

Purpose and Precision Mini-Lesson

- Support students in distinguishing between speculation and text-based reasoning.

Synthesis Practice

- Use a graphic organizer to show how multiple sources can support or complicate a single argument.

Organization:

Argument Blueprint Lesson

- Use a template showing claim → reasons → evidence → counterargument → rebuttal → conclusion.

Paragraph Focus Workshop

- Students practice identifying and revising paragraphs with mixed or unclear ideas.

Conclusion Synthesis Modeling

- Provide mentor texts that demonstrate how to synthesize argument elements.

Voice:

Tone Calibration Using Mentor Texts

- Compare emotional statements to more academically grounded versions.

Audience Lens Writing Exercises

- Students rewrite a paragraph for a specific adult audience.

Evidence-Based Voice Mini-Lesson

- Teach students how to anchor their tone in accurate source use.

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 Precision Workshop

- Identify vague or informal terms in the essay and revise them collectively.

Semantic Accuracy Practice

- Teach distinctions between copyright, patent, and trademark using Source 3.

Source Vocabulary Integration

- Use a word bank drawn directly from the sources.

Sentence Fluency:

Sentence Combining/Splitting Workshop

- Practice restructuring long or clunky sentences.

Fluency Read-Aloud Routine

- Students listen to identify breaks in rhythm.

Transition Function Mini-Lesson

- Teach advanced linking words for argumentative clarity.

Conventions:

Targeted Editing Stations

- Rotate through stations focused on punctuation, grammar, and sentence boundaries.

Sentence Boundary Mini-Lesson

- Teach students how to identify and fix run-ons.

Proofreading Checklist

- Provide a structured routine for final editing.

Use of Sources:

Source Verification Activity

- Students match their claims to the exact lines in sources.

Attribution Practice

- Teach explicit and varied signal phrases.

Synthesis Modeling

- Demonstrate how to blend multiple sources into one analytic paragraph.