Grade 6 – Argumentative Writing Work Sample: Exceeds

Task: Your class is studying about the environment and recycling. You are given four sources about community service and recycling efforts.

*Read the sources carefully to **write an argumentative essay** in which you give your opinion about whether the school should agree to clean a section of a highway or host a technology recycling day as your school's community service project. 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: 5

The essay presents a clear, well-reasoned claim in favor of hosting a technology recycling day and consistently supports that claim with accurate, relevant evidence from multiple sources. Explanations show strong understanding of environmental impact, and reasoning is well developed. A few explanations could be more concise or more explicitly tied to the argument, but overall, the writing demonstrates strong clarity, accuracy, and purpose.

Evidence from Student Work: Ideas and Content
✓ **Clear Claim & Purpose** ○ The claim is explicit and well-framed: "our school should host a technology recycling day, rather than a highway cleanup." ○ Purpose is reinforced throughout the piece: "This way, lead poisoning or other harmful effects… can be prevented." ○ Reasserts claim clearly in the conclusion: "That is why our school should host a technology recycling day…"
✓ **Relevant, Accurate Reasons & Evidence** ○ Uses Source 3 accurately: "If crushed and put into landfills, the lead from CRTs could seep into groundwater and rivers, contaminating the water supply." ○ Provides another source-based point: "It's better for the planet if we keep using an electronic for as long as it keeps working…" (Barbara Kyle quote). ○ References national recycling laws: "In 2013, only half of the states in the U.S. had passed laws about recycling and disposing of electronics." ○ Compares technology litter vs highway litter using accurate reasoning from the sources. ○ Evidence is well-chosen and directly supports the claim.
✓ **Development, Reasoning & Explanation** ○ Explains environmental impact in detail: ▪ Technology waste poses greater environmental danger: lead contamination, air/water pollution. ▪ Highway litter has declining rates due to existing programs: "many acts to stop highway littering… the amount of litter is becoming smaller." ○ Offers reasoning tied to consequences ("if water supply is contaminated, it can have terrible effects on humans and animals"). ○ Provides extended explanation of why recycling electronics is difficult due to changing technology ("new versions… cause problems when recycling materials"). ○ Minor areas could be even more precise (e.g., removing some repeated statements about popularity of devices).
✓ **Focus & Relevance to the Argument** ○ Stays consistently focused on comparing the two service options and arguing why tech recycling is better. ○ Every paragraph supports the central claim with new evidence or reasoning. ○ Maintains relevance even when explaining background context (Act of 1965, RePC, CRTs). Occasional minor drift into general statements about technology popularity, but still connected to the argument.

Organization: 5

The essay is well-structured and easy to follow. The introduction clearly frames the issue, body paragraphs each develop distinct reasons supported by evidence, and the conclusion provides clear closure. Transitions and sequencing effectively scaffold the reader through the argument. Minor areas could be even more streamlined, but overall, the structure is strong and enhances comprehension.

Evidence from Student Work: Organization
✓ **Clear, Purposeful Introduction** ○ Opens with a compelling setup: "Did you know that your computer, tablet or phone could be harming the planet?" ○ States claim and introduces rationale for comparing service projects.
✓ **Logical Sequencing of Ideas** ○ Well-ordered structure: introduction to environmental danger of electronics to recycling system weaknesses to comparison to highway litter to conclusion. ○ Each section builds on the previous one, deepening the argument.
✓ **Effective Transitions** ○ Uses transitions such as "To begin with," "According to one of the articles," "Another way…," "Also," and "Lastly." ○ These signal shifts in reasoning and help create a smooth argumentative flow.
✓ **Conclusion Provides Strong Closure** ○ Reasserts claim clearly: "That is why our school should host a technology recycling day…" ○ Provides a final persuasive appeal rooted in earlier evidence.

Voice: 4

The voice is confident, persuasive, and shows clear concern for environmental responsibility. Tone is appropriate for an argumentative audience and purpose, though occasionally conversational phrasing slightly weakens academic authority. Nevertheless, the voice effectively conveys urgency and commitment.

Evidence from Student Work: Voice
✓ **Confident, Purpose-Driven Tone** ○ Uses assertive statements such as "Technology recycling day is the better way instead of highway cleanup." ○ Maintains a persuasive tone throughout.
✓ **Appropriate Engagement With Audience** ○ Appeals to readers' sense of responsibility: "We need to protect our community." ○ Uses a motivational closing line: "Let's save our environment."
✓ **Occasional Conversational or Informal Phrasing** ○ Phrases like "This could be really bad" or "People just throw away their old devices without thinking" lean informal.
✓ **Consistent Perspective** ○ Maintains argumentative stance; no shifts into narrative or unrelated commentary.

Word Choice: 4

The writing uses clear and effective vocabulary, with several strong phrases and persuasive word choices. At times, wording becomes repetitive or slightly vague, but overall the piece demonstrates solid, purpose-driven language.

Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice
✓ **Effective Persuasive Vocabulary** ○ Uses strong verbs and descriptors like "contaminating the water supply," "preventing harm," "destroying our environment."
✓ **Domain-Specific Terms** ○ Includes environmental and technological terms such as "recycling," "groundwater," "pollutants," and "disposing of electronics."
✓ **Occasional Vague Phrasing** ○ Phrases like "really bad" or "hurts the community" are less precise.
✓ **Repetition of Key Terms** ○ Repeats "harm," "bad," and "dangerous" rather than expanding vocabulary for variety.

Sentence Fluency: 4

Sentences generally flow well, with clear structure and readable pacing. Some sentences are long or slightly repetitive in pattern, but overall the essay demonstrates effective fluency.

Evidence from Student Work: Sentence Fluency
✓ **Varied Sentence Structures** ○ Mix of complex, compound, and simple sentences supports rhythm. ○ Example: "If crushed and put into landfills, the lead from CRTs could seep into groundwater and rivers, contaminating the water supply."
✓ **Generally Smooth Flow** ○ Sentences connect logically and maintain readable pacing.
✓ **Some Repetition in Sentence Beginnings** ○ Several sentences begin with "This," "It," or "Also," creating minor monotony.
✓ **Occasional Lengthy Sentences** ○ Some sentences carry multiple ideas; could be split for clarity.

Conventions: 4

Conventions are strong with only minor errors in punctuation or grammar. Spelling and capitalization are accurate. Errors do not impede understanding and are infrequent.

Evidence from Student Work: Conventions
✓ **Accurate Spelling** ○ Words such as "contaminating," "recycling," "groundwater," and "electronic" are spelled correctly.
✓ **Mostly Correct Punctuation** ○ Commas used appropriately in most complex sentences.
✓ **Minor Errors** ○ Occasional missing comma or slight sentence-level awkwardness, but meaning remains clear.
✓ **Clear Grammar and Agreement** ○ Uses consistent subject–verb agreement and clear sentence boundaries.

Use of Sources: 5

The essay uses multiple sources accurately and convincingly. Evidence is well selected, contextually appropriate, and integrated into reasoning. While citations are not formal, the writing clearly and accurately reflects information from at least two sources.

Evidence from Student Work: Use of Sources
✓ **Accurate Use of Multiple Sources** ○ Draws on Source 3 for CRT/lead contamination and water pollution. ○ Uses Barbara Kyle's statement from Source 1 about continuing to use electronics until they wear out. ○ References legislative information about state recycling laws.
✓ **Evidence Directly Supports the Argument** ○ Each chosen detail is connected to the central claim favoring a tech recycling day.
✓ **Effective Integration** ○ Evidence is woven into sentences rather than dropped in isolation.
✓ **Room for Greater Explicit Attribution** ○ Sources are referenced by description, not numbered attribution, but accuracy is maintained.