Grade 6 – Expository Writing Work Sample: Exceeds

Task: Your class is studying about the Chicago World's Fair of 1893 and the remarkable exhibits and inventions that would make history. You are given four articles about the Chicago World's Fair of 1893.

*Read the sources carefully to **develop a thesis/controlling idea** to explain the impact of the 1893 World's Fair. Using more than one source, select the most relevant information to support your thesis/controlling idea.*

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

Ideas and Content: 5

The essay presents a clear and well-focused controlling idea about the lasting impact of the 1893 World's Fair. The student uses well-chosen, accurate details from multiple sources to develop the topic, and explanations show a solid understanding of the fair's inventions, historical context, and influence on modern life. Several explanations could be more precise, but overall development is strong.

Evidence from Student Work: Ideas and Content
✓ **Clear Controlling Idea and Purpose** ○ Establishes a clear controlling idea in the introduction: the fair "influenced a huge change in everyday life" and "helped spark a creative fire in the hearts of America's inventors." ○ Maintains purpose throughout the essay by consistently linking examples back to the idea of long-term impact, such as stating that the fair prepared people "for the modern world."
✓ **Relevant and Accurate Details** ○ Uses accurate information from Source 1 about inventions: "dishwasher," "fluorescent light bulb," "zipper," and the Ferris wheel being "a new invention at the time." ○ Incorporates precise historical context from Source 4: the Great Chicago Fire "destroying nearly 17,450… buildings" and that Chicago wanted to show it had "really and truly been reborn." ○ Includes accurate details about Edison, Tesla, and AC power from Source 3: "Nicola Tesla… won the competition by using long distance AC power." ○ Selects information that directly ties to the essay's purpose, such as technology becoming "significant parts of American life and culture."
✓ **Development and Elaboration** ○ Provides explanations showing why inventions mattered: describes how they "made life simpler, tasks easier to accomplish." Connects the Industrial Revolution to the fair's ○ Innovation by explaining how making goods "faster, safer" supported economic growth. ○ Explains the significance of AC power by noting Tesla's method "made it possible to light large areas up," showing understanding of why the lighting competition was impactful. ○ Adds commentary on long-term influence by stating that inventions "further benefited the Industrial Revolution" and " moved America… into modern times."
✓ **Focus and Relevance** ○ Stays focused on the impact of the fair by ending most paragraphs with a statement tying back to progress or innovation ("They were getting ready for a new era"). ○ Avoids unrelated details and consistently selects information that supports the thesis. ○ Some statements overgeneralize impact ("spark a creative fire in the hearts of America's inventors"), but overall relevance is strong.

Organization: 5

The essay is well structured with a clear introduction, purposeful sequencing of ideas, effective transitions, and a strong conclusion. Some paragraphs could tighten focus, but the overall organization meaningfully supports reader understanding.

Evidence from Student Work: Organization
✓ **Clear and Purposeful Introduction** ○ Opens with a hook and identifies the essay's purpose: "When you flick on the light switch at home…it feels so natural." ○ Establishes the topic and sets up the idea of inventions shaping modern life.
✓ **Logical Sequence of Ideas** ○ Moves from describing the fair's sights and inventions to historical context, then to electricity, and finally to long-term impact. ○ Paragraph order supports understanding by building background before introducing source comparisons.
✓ **Effective Transitions** ○ Uses transitions that guide the reader through sections ("To really understand the influence…," "There was also another reason…," "If you look deeper into the details…"). ○ Transitions connect ideas across paragraphs and help maintain momentum.
✓ **Clear and Purposeful Conclusion** ○ Conclusion reinforces the controlling idea by stating inventions "moved people into the modern day." ○ Summarizes main points without introducing new unrelated ideas.

Voice: 4

The voice is mostly appropriate, formal, and engaged. The writer demonstrates interest in the topic but occasionally uses overly dramatic or emotional language.

Evidence from Student Work: Voice
✓ **Appropriate Voice for Purpose and Audience** ○ Maintains an academic tone in most places, especially when discussing history or inventions. ○ Demonstrates understanding of informational purpose.
✓ **Consistent Formal Style** ○ Uses a formal tone: "These crazy ideas led to the invention of items such as the light-bulb and the dishwasher," despite occasional informal phrasing.
✓ **Sincere and Engaged** ○ The writing reflects investment in the topic: "helped spark a creative fire in the hearts of America's inventors."
✓ **Occasional Shifts in Tone** ○ Some language is exaggerated ("Amazing, I know") and contrasts with the otherwise formal style.

Word Choice: 4

The writing uses clear and generally precise vocabulary with some domain-specific language. Occasional vague or exaggerated words reduce clarity.

Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice
✓ **Effective and Precise Vocabulary** ○ Uses academic and topic-specific terms: "Industrial Revolution," "long distance AC power," "reborn."

Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice
✓ **Domain-Specific Word Use** o Accurately names inventions and technologies from sources, such as “fluorescent light bulb” and “zipper.”
✓ **Some Vague or Exaggerated Language** o Uses general phrases like “huge change” and “creative fire,” which weaken precision.
✓ **Strong but Sometimes Overstated Descriptions** o Words like “crazy inventions” or “amazing” shift from objective to subjective.

Sentence Fluency: 4

Sentences are generally smooth and readable, with varied structures. Some long or repetitive sentences reduce flow.

Evidence from Student Work: Sentence Fluency
✓ **Readable and Natural Flow** o Complex and simple sentences are used effectively.
✓ **Varied Beginnings and Structures** o Uses diverse sentence openings: “To really understand…” / “There was also another reason…” / “If you look deeper…”
✓ **Some Repetition and Length Issues** o Some sentences are long and combine too many ideas, reducing clarity.
✓ **Occasional Awkward Phrasing** o Repetitive transitions and extended clauses create minor fluency issues.

Conventions: 4

The writing demonstrates generally strong control of grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Errors are minor and do not impede readability.

Evidence from Student Work: Conventions
✓ **Consistent Sentence Construction** o No major run-ons or sentence fragments appear.
✓ **Accurate Punctuation** o Dialogue and quotations from sources are punctuated correctly in most cases.
✓ **Mostly Correct Spelling and Grammar** o Spelling of domain-specific words is accurate throughout.
✓ **Minor Errors** o Occasional punctuation and phrasing inconsistencies appear but do not disrupt meaning.

Use of Sources: 5

The student integrates relevant information from multiple sources with accurate quotations and paraphrasing. While some interpretations could be more precise, the overall use of sources demonstrates strong understanding.

Evidence from Student Work: Use of Sources
✓ **Relevant Use of Multiple Sources** o Draws from Source 1 (inventions), Source 3 (electricity and AC power), and Source 4 (Chicago Fire and Industrial Revolution).

Evidence from Student Work: Use of Sources
✓ **Accurate Evidence Integration** o Uses direct source details such as “destroying nearly 17,450 buildings” and Tesla “using long distance AC power.”
✓ **Correct Quotation Punctuation** o Quotations are integrated correctly and support key ideas.
✓ **Minor Interpretation Issues** o Occasionally generalizes the inventions’ impact beyond what sources state.