Grade 6 – Argumentative Writing Work Sample: Meets

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: 4

The essay presents a clear claim supporting the adoption of a highway and provides multiple relevant reasons supported with accurate source evidence. The writer explains why roadside cleanup matters and uses more than one source to strengthen the argument. Reasoning is generally solid but could be more consistently developed, and some paragraphs rely on opinion or emotional appeals rather than deeper explanation. Overall, this is a strong argument with room for precision and elaboration.

Evidence from Student Work: Ideas and Content
✓ **Clear Claim & Purpose** ○ The claim is explicitly stated: "This is why Muirlands Middle School should adopt a highway." ○ Reaffirmed in the conclusion: "I hope that you will understand… adopting a highway is the right thing for our community and our campus." ○ Purpose is consistent: persuading the principal to support a highway-cleanup service project.
✓ **Relevant, Accurate Reasons & Evidence** ○ Uses Source 1 effectively: "According to 'Keep Our Roadsides Beautiful,' 'Today, there are more than 4 million miles of roads and streets in the United States.'" ○ Incorporates President Johnson's quote from Source 1: "Beauty belongs to all the people." ○ Accurately references the scenic value of roadways: "Drivers and passengers can enjoy mile after scenic mile of grass, trees… but this is not possible if these scenic miles are cluttered with cans, bags…" ○ Provides reasons: environmental safety, wildlife protection, improved driving experience, community pride. ○ Reasons are relevant and tied to the claim.
✓ **Development, Reasoning & Explanation** ○ Explains environmental harm: "trash is terrible for the environment… the safety of wildlife and the danger of pollution." ○ Provides reasoning for scenic benefits: litter "is not a sight that can raise someone's spirits." ○ Explains educational value to students: participation "will result in awareness of the increasing pollution and importance of recycling." ○ Some reasoning stays general or relies on emotional appeals ("innocent animals," "raise someone's spirits") rather than deeper explanation of ecological or community impact. ○ Could further explain *why* adopting a highway is more beneficial than other projects.
✓ **Focus & Relevance to the Argument** ○ Stays consistently focused on why adopting a highway would benefit the community. ○ No major drift from topic; each paragraph reinforces the argument. ○ Some repetition ("amazing idea," "fantastic educational opportunity") reduces precision but remains relevant.

Organization: 4

The essay follows a clear structure with a strong introduction, body paragraphs organized by reasons, and a conclusion that restates the claim. Transitions support movement between ideas, although paragraphing could be more precise and some transitions could better show relationships. Organization supports the argument effectively and makes the essay easy to follow.

Evidence from Student Work: Organization
✓ **Clear Introduction Setting Up the Argument** ○ Opens with: "Have you ever wondered how trash affects our environment?" ○ Establishes the topic and leads naturally into the claim advocating for adopting a highway.
✓ **Logical Sequencing of Ideas** ○ Paragraphs follow a logical order: ▪ Importance of roadside beauty ▪ Source-based evidence about road mileage ▪ Wildlife and pollution dangers ▪ Educational benefits for students ▪ Conclusion reinforcing the claim ○ Each paragraph builds logically on the previous one.
✓ **Relevant Transitions** ○ Uses transitions such as "To begin with," "Another reason," "Also," and "Lastly" to move through reasons. ○ These convey addition but could more clearly signal relationships (cause, comparison, emphasis).
✓ **Conclusion Offers Closure but Not Full Synthesis** ○ Concludes with: "That is why our school should adopt a highway." ○ Strong closure, but could synthesize multiple reasons more explicitly.

Voice: 4

The writer's voice is committed, sincere, and persuasive. Tone is appropriate for an argument directed at the principal, and the writer uses emotion effectively without overwhelming the logical appeal. Some phrases are slightly informal or overly enthusiastic, but overall the voice supports the purpose.

Evidence from Student Work: Voice
✓ **Engaged, Purposeful Voice** ○ Shows commitment to the issue: "trash is terrible for the environment," "innocent animals are harmed."
✓ **Audience Awareness** ○ Addresses the principal respectfully and logically: "Adopting a highway would be beneficial to our community."
✓ **Slightly Informal or Enthusiastic Tone at Times** ○ Uses phrases like "fantastic educational opportunity," which could be more precise. ○ Occasional emotional appeal ("innocent animals") adds persuasion but reduces academic tone slightly.
✓ **Consistent Point of View** ○ Maintains an advocacy voice throughout with no drift into unrelated narrative.

Word Choice: 4

Word choice is purposeful and clear. The writer uses domain-specific vocabulary effectively, though some phrases lack precision or rely on emotional emphasis. Overall, word choice supports clarity and persuasiveness.

Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice
✓ **Effective Use of Environmental Vocabulary** ○ Uses words like “pollution,” “environment,” “wildlife,” “scenic,” and “harmful.”
✓ **Domain-Specific Usage** ○ Incorporates “recycling,” “dispose,” “contaminating,” and “groundwater.”
✓ **Occasional Vague or General Phrasing** ○ Phrases like “terrible for the environment,” “very useful,” or “amazing idea” could be replaced with more precise terms.
✓ **Strong Descriptive Language** ○ “Cluttered with cans, bags, wrappers, leftover food” effectively evokes the problem.

Sentence Fluency: 4

Sentences are clear, readable, and varied. Some sentences are lengthy or rely on familiar patterns, but overall fluency is strong and supports the argument’s clarity.

Evidence from Student Work: Sentence Fluency
✓ **Variety of Sentence Structures** ○ Uses complex sentences effectively, for example: “Drivers and passengers can enjoy mile after scenic mile… but this is not possible if these scenic miles are cluttered with cans, bags…”
✓ **Generally Smooth Flow** ○ Sentences connect logically and maintain steady pacing.
✓ **Some Lengthy Sentences With Multiple Ideas** ○ A few sentences carry several clauses; could be separated for clarity.
✓ **Occasional Repetitive Sentence Beginnings** ○ Repetition of “Another reason…” or “Also…” creates predictable rhythm.

Conventions: 4

Conventions are strong with mostly correct spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. A few minor errors appear but do not impede meaning.

Evidence from Student Work: Conventions
✓ **Correct Spelling of Academic Vocabulary** ○ Words such as “environment,” “pollution,” “recycling,” “contaminating,” and “scenic” are spelled correctly.
✓ **Mostly Correct Punctuation** ○ Commas appear in appropriate places, even in complex sentences.
✓ **Minor Errors Present** ○ Occasional commas missing after introductory elements or minor agreement issues.
✓ **Sentence Boundaries Are Clear** ○ No major run-ons or fragments.

Use of Sources: 4

The writer uses more than one source accurately and appropriately. Evidence is relevant, correctly paraphrased or quoted, and supports the claim directly. Some opportunities remain to integrate sources more explicitly or more deeply, but overall the use of evidence is solid.

Evidence from Student Work: Use of Sources
✓ **Uses Multiple Sources Effectively** ○ Quotes Source 1 explicitly: "According to 'Keep Our Roadsides Beautiful,' 'Today, there are more than 4 million miles of roads…'" ○ Uses President Johnson's quote accurately. ○ References scenic value (Source 1) and wildlife safety (Source 3) through paraphrasing.
✓ **Evidence Supports Argument Clearly** ○ Environmental and scenic examples tie directly to the claim advocating for highway adoption.
✓ **Explanation Follows Evidence** ○ Follows facts with reasoning about pollution, wildlife endangerment, and community pride.
✓ **Could Improve Attribution Consistency** ○ Some evidence is paraphrased without a clear signal phrase.