Grade 6 – Expository Writing Work Sample: Meets

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: 4

The essay presents a clear and relevant controlling idea that the 1893 Chicago World's Fair was historically important. It includes accurate details from multiple sources and offers some explanation of significance. However, several explanations are general, some factual statements lack precision, and the final paragraph combines unrelated ideas without fully developing impact.

Evidence from Student Work: Ideas and Content
✓ **Clear Controlling Idea and Purpose** ○ Establishes a clear purpose in the introduction: "The Chicago World's Fair in 1893 was one of the most remarkable fairs in history." ○ Connects main ideas to impact by noting the fair had "brand new things: new inventions, new foods… and Nikola Tesla's new lighting system."
✓ **Relevant and Accurate Details** ○ Includes accurate historical reasons for the fair's location: "the Great Chicago Fire in 1871 had destroyed this magnificent city…" ○ Uses correct details from sources about inventions still used today: "fluorescent light bulb, the zipper and the dishwasher." ○ Describes AC vs. DC lighting accurately: Tesla's "AC… could power more energy over large distances unlike Thomas Edison's lights which used DC."
✓ **Development and Elaboration** ○ Provides some explanation of the fair's significance: for example, stating Chicago wanted "to prove that they had cleaned up the city" after the fire. ○ Adds elaboration on the Industrial Revolution: "build items in factories instead of by hand to be more efficient." ○ Some reasoning is general (e.g., "thousands came just to see the marvelous lights"), and the final paragraph shifts to listing famous visitors without explaining their connection to the fair's impact.
✓ **Focus and Relevance** ○ Stays mostly focused on explaining important aspects of the fair: inventions, lighting, reasons for the fair. ○ Occasionally includes less relevant or inaccurate details, such as listing "Thomas Jefferson" as a visitor. ○ The final sentence becomes overly broad and evaluative ("should be remembered as one of the most important fairs in history") without supporting explanation.

Organization: 4

The essay has a clear introduction, logical sequencing of major ideas, and a concluding statement. Some paragraphs contain too many ideas at once, and internal organization could be strengthened, but overall structure supports reader understanding.

Evidence from Student Work: Organization
✓ **Clear and Purposeful Introduction** ○ Opens with a strong topic sentence: "The Chicago World's Fair in 1893 was one of the most remarkable fairs in history." ○ Identifies the key areas the essay will discuss (inventions, foods, lighting).
✓ **Logical Sequence of Ideas** ○ Follows a clear order: historical reasons for Chicago, inventions and lighting, and then concluding evaluation. ○ Each paragraph addresses one broad aspect of the fair, helping the reader follow the overall structure.
✓ **Transitions Support Flow** ○ Uses connecting phrases such as "Few people actually know why the fair was in Chicago…" and "The two biggest attractions at the fair…" to move between sections. ○ Transitions sometimes introduce too many ideas in a single sentence, which can weaken clarity.
✓ **Conclusion Provides Closure** ○ Ends by returning to the main idea: "should be remembered as one of the most important fairs in history." ○ However, conclusion combines unrelated ideas (famous visitors, famous companies) which weakens focus.

Voice: 4

The writer maintains an appropriate formal tone with enthusiasm for the topic. Voice is mostly consistent, though some evaluative phrases show mild shifts toward opinion rather than informational explanation.

Evidence from Student Work: Voice
✓ **Appropriate Voice for Audience and Purpose** ○ Formal and clear tone throughout: "Few people actually know why the fair was in Chicago." ○ Avoids second-person address and guides the reader through informational ideas.
✓ **Mostly Formal Style** ○ Uses academic language ("produced in factories," "alternating current system"). ○ A few phrases are evaluative or subjective ("ginormous Ferris Wheel," "marvelous lights").
✓ **Engaged and Interested Tone** ○ Expresses interest with controlled enthusiasm ("brand new things," "very important to the world").
✓ **Minor Tone Shifts** ○ Occasional exaggeration ("one of the most important fairs in history") softens academic tone.

Word Choice: 4

The writing uses clear, generally precise vocabulary with some domain-specific terms. Occasional exaggeration and imprecise words weaken clarity, but overall word choice supports meaning.

Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice
✓ **Effective and Accurate Word Choice** ○ Uses domain vocabulary: “alternating current,” “Industrial Revolution,” “factories,” “direct current.”
✓ **Specific and Relevant Terms** ○ Includes correct invention names such as “fluorescent light bulb,” “zipper,” and “dishwasher.”
✓ **Occasional Vague or Excessive Words** ○ Uses phrases such as “ginormous Ferris Wheel” and “marvelous lights,” which are imprecise.
✓ **Mostly Controlled Language** ○ Shows understanding through phrases like “could power more energy over large distances,” demonstrating an attempt at technical precision.

Sentence Fluency: 4

Most sentences are varied and readable, with generally smooth flow. A few sentences are long, crowded with information, or use repetitive structures, which slightly weaken fluency.

Evidence from Student Work: Sentence Fluency
✓ **Readable and Varied Sentences** ○ Uses a mix of simple and complex sentences throughout the paper.
✓ **Variety in Sentence Beginnings** ○ Paragraphs begin with different structures (“Few people actually know…,” “The two biggest attractions…”).
✓ **Some Sentences Contain Too Many Ideas** ○ For example: “Chicago wanted to prove that they had cleaned up the city and were trying to help the city’s population grow, so they had planned for the fair to be here.” ○ Could be split for clarity.
✓ **Occasional Repetition or Wordiness** ✓ Phrases like “just as important as the others had been” repeat ideas unnecessarily.

Conventions: 4

The writing shows generally strong control of grammar, spelling, and punctuation with occasional errors. Mistakes do not impede meaning.

Evidence from Student Work: Conventions
✓ **Correct Sentence Construction** ○ Sentences are complete with no run-ons or fragments.
✓ **Mostly Accurate Spelling** ○ Spells key terms correctly: “Industrial Revolution,” “alternating current,” “fluorescent.”
✓ **Generally Correct Punctuation** ○ Uses commas and periods correctly in most sentences.
✓ **Minor Errors Are Present** ○ Occasional issues such as incorrect capitalization (“fair is still very popular today”), small punctuation inconsistencies, or overuse of commas.

Use of Sources: 4

The student uses relevant information from multiple sources accurately, including correct AC/DC explanation and historical context. Some details are misapplied or inaccurate, and citations are not provided, but overall source use is solid.

Evidence from Student Work: Use of Sources
✓ **Use of Multiple Sources** ○ Uses Source 4 to explain the Chicago Fire and Industrial Revolution. ○ Uses Source 1 for inventions and Source 3 for AC/DC lighting.
✓ **Accurate Evidence Integration** ○ Includes correct information about AC power traveling long distances. ○ Incorporates accurate inventions such as the dishwasher and fluorescent light bulb.
✓ **Lack of Citation or Attribution** ○ No attributions such as “According to Source 1” or in-text citations appear.
✓ **Some Inaccuracies or Unnecessary Additions** ○ Incorrectly lists “Thomas Jefferson” as a visitor, which weakens credibility. ○ Final paragraph shifts to unrelated information without explanation.