Grade 6 – Expository Writing Work Sample: Approaching

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: 3

The essay communicates a clear controlling idea about the impact of the 1893 World's Fair and includes several relevant examples, but explanations are basic, sometimes inaccurate, and often rely on simplified or repeated source ideas. Development shows partial understanding but lacks the depth and precision needed for a stronger score.

Evidence from Student Work: Ideas and Content
✓ **Clear Controlling Idea and Purpose** ○ States a general purpose in the introduction: "The 1893 Chicago World Fair is sure to have impacted many people." ○ Each paragraph attempts to address a different aspect of impact (inventions, lighting, reasons for the fair), but the purpose is broad and not clearly defined.
✓ **Relevant and Accurate Details** ○ Includes relevant inventions from the sources such as the "dishwasher and zipper" and references well-known inventors like "Milton Hershey" and "HJ Heinz." ○ Mentions the lighting rivalry with Edison, Tesla, and Westinghouse: "Edison…lost the chnce to two other inventors…Nichola Tesla and George Westinghouse." ○ Some details are inaccurate or simplified, such as calling the Ferris wheel "a brand new invention" without noting it was built specifically for the fair, or stating lighting "was the cause of many to come too," which does not appear in the source.
✓ **Development and Elaboration** ○ Provides minimal explanation after listing inventions, such as saying they "have never been seen before" but not elaborating on their importance or impact on daily life. ○ States impacts in broad terms ("lighting likely impacted many visitors") without explaining how or why electricity was significant at that time. ○ Explanation of the fair's purpose ("Some think the reason of the fair is The Great Chicago Fire") repeats source content without adding commentary about why this mattered.
✓ **Focus and Relevance** ○ Stays mostly on topic by discussing inventions, lighting, and historical reasons for the fair. ○ Several sentences are repetitive or loosely connected, such as restating "interesting inventors" or repeating that the fair had "an impact on a great number of people." ○ The conclusion introduces an instructional suggestion to the reader ("You can learn more…by researching"), which shifts away from the informational focus.

Organization: 3

The essay follows a basic, logical sequence with clear paragraph breaks and simple transitions, but the introduction is underdeveloped, transitions are repetitive, some ideas feel loosely connected, and the conclusion shifts away from an informational purpose.

Evidence from Student Work: Organization
✓ **Clear but Basic Introduction** ○ Opens with: "The 1893 Chicago World Fair is sure to have impacted many people," which introduces the topic but does not preview the essay's structure or specific impacts. ○ The purpose is implied rather than clearly established.
✓ **Logical but Simple Sequencing** ○ Paragraphs are arranged in a logical order (inventions, lighting, historical reasons), but internal sequencing is sometimes unclear. ○ For example, the inventions paragraph shifts from inventions to inventors without a clear transition ("And there were also some very interesting inventors…").
✓ **Transitions and Flow** ○ Uses basic transitions such as "First," "Next," and "Finally," but these transitions do not clarify relationships between ideas. ○ Several sentences begin abruptly or repeat similar patterns, making the flow uneven.
✓ **Conclusion Provides Closure but Shifts Purpose** ○ Attempts to summarize: "So what was so impacting about Chicago World Fair of 1893?" ○ However, the final sentence instructs the reader to "learn more…by researching," which shifts from expository summarizing to giving advice.

Voice: 3

The writing shows some engagement with the topic but shifts into conversational tone and uses informal language. Awareness of audience is inconsistent, and the informational purpose is weakened in places.

Evidence from Student Work: Voice
✓ **Awareness of Audience Is Inconsistent** ○ Uses casual phrases such as "Well. lets take a look inside the fair and see," which signals a conversational, not informational, voice. ○ Occasional use of second person ("lets take a look") shifts tone.
✓ **Formal Style Not Maintained** ○ Informal expressions appear throughout: "a brand new invention," "interesting inventors," "could have greatly impacted people," "definetly had an impact." ○ These weaken the formal tone expected in expository writing.
✓ **Engagement and Commitment** ○ Shows some enthusiasm for the topic, particularly when describing inventions and lighting. ○ However, enthusiasm is expressed through general statements rather than precise commentary.
✓ **Tone Shifts in Conclusion** ○ The shift to advising the reader ("You decide…You can learn more…") moves away from an objective, informational voice.

Word Choice: 3

The writing uses generally understandable language but relies heavily on general words, repeated expressions, and some inaccurate spelling that affects clarity. Domain-specific vocabulary is limited.

Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice
✓ **General and Repetitive Language** ○ Frequent vague terms such as “brand new,” “interesting inventors,” “impactful piece,” and “very exciting.” ○ Repetition of “impact/impacting” without specifying the type of impact.
✓ **Limited Domain-Specific Vocabulary** ○ Refers to “lighting” or “inventions” broadly instead of using precise terms like AC power, Electricity Building, or exhibition.
✓ **Inaccurate or Misspelled Words Affect Meaning** ○ Misspellings include “chnce,” “Nichola,” “Twmr,” “ecectricity,” “definetly,” “yaers.” ○ These distract from clarity and weaken credibility.
✓ **Some Effective Word Choices** ○ Includes a few precise nouns like “carriages,” “condiments,” or “cradles” when describing exhibits.

Sentence Fluency: 3

The writing includes readable sentences but contains choppy openings, repeated patterns, and run-on or awkwardly joined ideas. These issues disrupt smoothness.

Evidence from Student Work: Sentence Fluency
✓ **Readable in Parts but Uneven Flow** ○ Some sentences read smoothly, but others are choppy or disconnected: “Well. lets take a look inside the fair and see.”
✓ Repetitive Sentence Beginnings ○ Multiple sentences begin with similar structures (“First,” “Next,” “Finally,” “And there were…”).
✓ **Run-On or Overextended Sentences** ○ Includes extended sentences lacking clarity, such as: “During the time of the fair, electric lighting was fairly new, so the idea of the fair being lit by electricity was very exciting.”
✓ **Inconsistent Rhythm** ○ Short, abrupt sentences (“things like the dishwasher and zipper”) reduce fluency.

Conventions: 2

Frequent spelling, capitalization, and punctuation errors interrupt clarity. Several misspellings and grammatical issues require significant editing to meet grade-level expectations.

Evidence from Student Work: Conventions
✓ **Frequent Spelling Errors** ○ Misspellings include: “lets,” “chnce,” “yaers,” “definetly,” “impacting sa,” “thr,” “ecectricity.” ○ Errors interfere with readability and accuracy.
✓ **Punctuation and Sentence Boundary Errors** ○ Uses a period incorrectly in “Well. lets take a look…” ○ Several comma and period omissions affect clarity.
✓ **Capitalization Errors** ○ “world fair,” “cities,” “industrial revolution,” and “inventers” are incorrectly capitalized.

Evidence from Student Work: Conventions
✓ **Grammar and Agreement Issues** ○ Awkward phrases such as “could have definetly had an impact on a great number of people” show inconsistent grammar.

Use of Sources: 3

The student uses some information from more than one source but relies heavily on paraphrase without citations, oversimplifies key ideas, and occasionally misinterprets source content.

Evidence from Student Work: Use of Sources
✓ **Use of Multiple Sources** ○ Draws from Source 1 (inventions), Source 3 (lighting competition), and Source 4 (Chicago Fire). ○ Indicates use of more than one source but does not cite them.
✓ **Relevant but Inaccurately Interpreted Details** ○ Includes correct names of inventors and inventions, but claims such as “lighting…was the cause of many to come too” do not appear in the source. ○ States the Ferris wheel “could have greatly impacted people” but does not accurately explain why it was significant.
✓ **Lack of In-Text Citations** ○ Uses paraphrased information but provides no citations or attribution phrases.
✓ **Limited Explanation of Evidence** ○ Lists inventions or events without connecting them clearly back to the controlling idea.