Grade 6 – Expository Writing Work Sample: Does Not Yet Meet

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: 2

The essay attempts to communicate a controlling idea about activities, inventions, and rivalries at the fair, but the purpose is unclear, details are limited or inaccurate, and explanations lack development. Much of the information is vague, repeated, or unrelated to the fair's true historical impact.

Evidence from Student Work: Ideas and Content
✓ **Clear Controlling Idea and Purpose** ○ Attempts to state a purpose in the introduction ("In the chicago world fair of 1893 there were many fantastic and amazing things happening"), but the thesis is vague and overly general. ○ The controlling idea shifts from "great activities" to "inventions" to "a rivalry," with no clear explanation of the fair's overall impact.
✓ **Relevant but Inaccurate or Limited Details** ○ Includes a few correct factual details such as "7000 seats" and "600 acres of land," but does not explain their significance. ○ Several invented or inaccurate details undermine reliability ("Thousands and thousands of people came only for the inventions," "There was probably evan more invetions than activities"). ○ Many sentences repeat details rather than adding meaningful information ("There was all inventions that are most used today like the zipper…").
✓ **Minimal Development and Elaboration** ○ Provides almost no explanation of how activities, inventions, or rivalries impacted people. ○ Statements such as "It would be a great place to be" and "mind capturing inventions that took your breath away" are descriptive opinions, not elaboration based on sources. ○ The rivalry section is extremely limited ("Those two had a big rivalry from light") and does not use source-based evidence to explain the AC/DC conflict.
✓ **Focus and Relevance** ○ The writing loosely groups related ideas into paragraphs but lacks focus on the prompt's requirement to explain the impact of the fair. ○ Conclusion restates the three topics but does not clarify significance ("The chicogo world fair was a great place"). ○ Repeated general statements ("great activities," "fantastic and amazing things") weaken relevance to the task.

Organization: 2

The essay is divided into paragraphs, but the introduction is unfocused, sequencing is inconsistent, transitions are weak or missing, and the conclusion does not meaningfully summarize the essay's ideas.

Evidence from Student Work: Organization
✓ **Weak or Underdeveloped Introduction** ○ Opens with: "In the chicago world fair of 1893 there were many fantastic and amazing things happening," which does not preview the main ideas or establish a clear purpose. ○ The introduction focuses on opinions ("fantastic," "amazing") rather than an organized preview of content.
✓ **Limited and Sometimes Illogical Sequencing** ○ The first body paragraph jumps quickly from "activities" to "food" to "space," with no clear relationship between ideas. ○ The inventions paragraph shifts abruptly from zipper to chocolate to pickles without transitions or organization.
✓ **Weak or Missing Transitions** ○ Paragraphs lack transitions to connect major ideas. ○ Sentences such as "The last thing the fair was popular was the rivalry" do not connect smoothly to previous ideas.
✓ **Conclusion Lacks Purposeful Closure** ○ Offers a minimal summary ("there was activities, invetions and rivalrys") and restates earlier general ideas. ○ Does not reinforce or synthesize the fair's significance.

Voice: 2

The writer shows some enthusiasm but frequently uses informal language, inconsistent tone, and vague expressions that do not match informational writing expectations.

Evidence from Student Work: Voice
✓ **Unclear Awareness of Audience** ○ Uses phrases like "It would be a great place to be" and "mind capturing inventions," which are conversational rather than informational.
✓ **Inconsistent or Informal Style** ○ Includes subjective or emotional language: "amazing things happening," "took your breath away." ○ Lowercase sentence beginnings ("something else…") further weaken formality.
✓ **Limited Commitment to Informational Purpose** ○ Focuses more on personal opinion ("only the best activities there") than explanation supported by facts. ○ Does not maintain the formal voice expected in expository writing.
✓ **Tone Shifts** ○ Moves between description, opinion, and attempts at explanation without a consistent academic tone.

Word Choice: 2

Vocabulary is often general, repetitive, or unclear, with frequent spelling errors that interfere with meaning. Domain-specific vocabulary is minimal.

Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice
✓ **General and Vague Vocabulary** ○ Uses broad words such as "fantastic," "amazing," "great," "best," which do not convey informational precision.

Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice
✓ **Limited or Misused Domain Vocabulary** ○ Only a few content-related terms appear (“inventions,” “rivalry”), and these are used without supporting detail or accuracy.
✓ **Repetitive Language** ○ Repeats “invetions,” “activities,” and “evan” instead of using varied vocabulary or topic-specific terms.
✓ **Frequent Spelling Errors Affect Clarity** ○ Misspellings such as “invetions,” “evan,” “ytook,” “atonention,” “elecricity,” “chicogo” disrupt meaning.

Sentence Fluency: 2

Sentences are frequently choppy, repetitive, or awkward. Many begin with the same structure and contain mechanical or grammatical issues that interrupt flow.

Evidence from Student Work: Sentence Fluency
✓ **Choppy and Uneven Rhythm** ○ Short, abrupt sentences like “There was good food.” disrupt fluency. ○ Repetitive sentence patterns diminish readability.
✓ **Repetitive Sentence Beginnings** ○ Many sentences begin with similar structures (“There was…”, “There was also…”), reducing variety.
✓ **Awkward or Incorrect Constructions** ○ Sentences such as “There was probably evan more invetions than activities” contain errors that affect clarity.
✓ **Limited Use of Complex Sentences** ○ Very few compound or complex sentences appear; most sentences are simple, reducing fluency and variety.

Conventions: 2

Frequent errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar interfere with readability. Error patterns indicate limited understanding of basic conventions.

Evidence from Student Work: Conventions
✓ **Frequent Spelling Errors** ○ Numerous incorrect spellings: “invetions,” “evan,” “ytook,” “heins,” “atonention,” “elecricity,” “chicogo,” “rivalrys.” ○ Errors significantly disrupt meaning.
✓ **Capitalization Errors** ○ Fails to capitalize “chicago,” “something,” and other proper nouns.• Improper lowercase beginnings of sentences (“something else…”).
✓ **Incorrect Punctuation and Fragments** ○ Sentences like “Infact some are still popular today.” lack necessary commas. ○ Some sentences are fragments or run-ons.
✓ **Grammar and Agreement Issues** ○ Uses incorrect verb forms and agreement (“There was probably evan more invetions”). ○ Repeated omitted words reduce clarity.

Use of Sources: 2

The writing includes minimal source-based information and contains inaccuracies. No citations or attribution are used, and evidence is not clearly connected to the prompt.

Evidence from Student Work: Use of Sources
✓ **Minimal Use of Sources** ○ Mentions general features from the fair (inventions, rivalry) but does not use specific source details or quotations. ○ Lacks clear evidence that multiple sources were used.
✓ **Inaccurate or Unsupported Claims** ○ Claims that inventions "are most used today like the zipper" without noting actual inventions from Source 1. ○ Rivalry section ("rivalry from light… from elecricity") is vague and unsupported.
✓ **No Citations or Source Attribution** ○ Does not identify any source or provide in-text citations.
✓ **Lack of Explanation** ○ Lists activities and inventions but does not explain how the information ties back to the prompt about impact.

Suggestions for Teaching Strategies to Support the Student Sample:

The following contain suggestions for teaching strategies and do not encompass a complete list of possible strategies.

Ideas and Content:

Detail–to–Impact Organizer

- Students use a three-column organizer (Detail from Source → What It Means → Why It Matters) to practice elaborating source information with purpose.

Accuracy Check Routine

- Students compare their draft statements to the source text to correct made-up details and ensure accurate paraphrasing.

Focused Thesis Writing Mini-Lesson

- Students practice writing a clear controlling idea that directly answers the prompt and previewing the impact areas they will explain.

Organization:

Paragraph Sorting Activity

- Students receive mixed sentences from their draft and practice grouping related ideas to improve cohesion.

Transition Frames Chart

- Provide students with transition categories (time, contrast, addition) to integrate into their paragraphs.

Conclusion Synthesis Workshop

- Students practice writing a conclusion that revisits the controlling idea and summarizes key points with clarity.

Voice:

Formal vs. Informal Sorting

- Students sort descriptive, opinion-based phrases and revise them to formal informational equivalents.

Voice Consistency Checks

- Students highlight words that show opinion and revise them to objective language.

Modeling Informational Tone

- Teacher uses examples from informational texts to demonstrate precise, neutral tone.

Suggestions for Teaching Strategies to Support the Student Sample:

The following contain suggestions for teaching strategies and do not encompass a complete list of possible strategies.

Word Choice:

Academic Vocabulary Bank

- Create a shared bank of precise words from the sources for students to use in their writing.

Spelling Check Routine

- Students practice proofreading specifically for content-area words and commonly confused spellings.

Replace-and-Revise Practice

- Students revise vague words in their drafts with more specific, content-appropriate vocabulary.

Sentence Fluency:

Sentence Variety Chart

- Students mark how sentences begin and revise repeated patterns.

Combining and Splitting Sentence Practice

- Students explore how combining or separating sentences affects readability.

Oral Read-Aloud Fluency Checks

- Students revise sentences that cause stumbling or unclear meaning.

Conventions:

Error Pattern Identification

- Students analyze their repeated errors and practice correcting them through targeted tasks.

Conventions Stations

- Rotating activities focused on spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and sentence boundaries.

Guided Sentence Correction

- Teacher models how to revise incorrect sentences, then students practice fixing multiple examples.

Use of Sources:

Source Extraction Practice

- Students pull key facts from each source and practice paraphrasing and citing them.

Evidence + Explanation Modeling

- Teacher models writing a detail followed by two sentences of impact explanation.

Citation Frames

- Provide sentence starters like “The source explains that…” or “According to Source 3…” to support proper attribution.