Grade 7 – Expository Writing Work Sample: Exceeds

Task: Your class is studying about the role of second language learning in American schools and how most schools in Europe require all students to learn two languages. You are given four sources (two research articles, a compilation of letters to the editor, and an interview) that provide information about the pros and cons of foreign language studies and discuss at what age it is best to learn a foreign language.

*Read the sources carefully to **write an argumentative essay** in which you establish an argumentative claim for or against the inclusion of second language instruction in local elementary schools. Make sure to address potential counterarguments in your essay and support your claim with information from the sources you have examined.*

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

Ideas and Content: 5

The essay makes a clear and compelling argument in favor of offering foreign language classes in elementary school. The writer presents multiple well-developed reasons, integrates accurate and relevant evidence from the sources, and offers generally strong explanation linking evidence to the argument. A counterargument is acknowledged and addressed with reasoning. Minor opportunities remain for deeper elaboration in places, but overall this is a strong and well-supported argument.

Evidence from Student Work: Ideas and Content
✓ **Clear Claim & Purpose** ○ The claim is direct and well framed: "you should include this course at the elementary school, because the benefits outweigh any negatives." ○ Purpose remains consistent: persuading the school board to adopt foreign language instruction. ○ The conclusion reinforces this: "foreign language class should be part of the elementary school curriculum."
✓ **Relevant, Accurate Reasons & Evidence** ○ Academic benefits supported with Source 4: ▪ "Analyzing the grammar of the second language makes you more aware of language structure and usage in general…" ▪ "Students who learn a second language also tend to perform better… in math, science, and social studies." ○ Employment benefits supported with Source 1: ▪ "we need to be able to compete on relationships and service, and languages are an important factor." ○ Communication benefits supported with logical reasoning and a personal anecdote. ○ Evidence accurately reflects the source material and is well selected for the argument.
✓ **Development, Reasoning & Explanation** ○ Strong explanation of academic benefits: "kids will get in the habit of noticing grammar structures, writing with good grammar…" ○ Connects economic arguments to real-world employment: "learning a new language could be the key to the children of our community's success." ○ Personal anecdote helps illustrate the communication argument, showing how language barriers affect relationships. ○ Reasoning is strong but occasionally relies on general statements ("benefits outweigh the negatives") without deeper explanation of *how* or *why*.
✓ **Focus & Relevance to the Argument** ○ Focus is consistent and remains tied to the claim throughout. ○ Each paragraph introduces a new, relevant reason connected to the central argument. ○ Counterargument is acknowledged ("Adding another class takes up valuable time…") and directly addressed with evidence. ○ No major digressions; even the personal story is tied back to the argument's communication claim.

Organization: 5

The essay follows a clear, logical structure with a purposeful introduction, well-sequenced body paragraphs, smooth transitions, and a strong concluding statement. Each section builds upon the previous one, and the organizational structure enhances clarity and persuasiveness.

Evidence from Student Work: Organization
✓ **Purposeful Introduction With Clear Context** ○ Opens with an engaging idea about global connectivity: "As we move and grow into the future, learning a foreign language has become more important…" ○ Context naturally leads to the claim and positions the audience (the school board).
✓ **Logical Sequencing of Reasons** ○ Moves through well-defined reasons: ▪ academic benefits ▪ economic/employment opportunities ▪ cultural/social benefits ▪ counterargument and rebuttal ✓ • Each paragraph builds logically on earlier points.
✓ **Effective Transitions** ○ Uses transitions such as "One reason," "Another benefit," and "Finally" to guide the reader. ○ Transitions signal progression and support coherence.
✓ **Compelling Conclusion** ○ Ends with a clear, persuasive final line: "That is why foreign language class should be part of the elementary school curriculum." ○ Reinforces the argument and its rationale.

Voice: 5

The voice is confident, persuasive, and well-tailored to a school board audience. The writer conveys credibility and control while maintaining a respectful, professional tone. Emotional and logical appeals are well balanced.

Evidence from Student Work: Voice
✓ **Confident, Authoritative Tone** ○ Uses strong statements such as "the benefits outweigh any negatives," and "learning a new language could be the key to the children of our community's success."
✓ **Engaged and Purposeful** ○ Shows investment in the issue: "I need to be able to communicate with her and other kids like her."
✓ **Awareness of Audience** ○ Maintains a respectful tone appropriate for addressing decision-makers (the school board).
✓ **Balanced Emotional and Logical Appeals** ○ Personal anecdote adds sincerity, while the following analysis remains grounded in evidence.

Word Choice: 4

Word choice is generally precise, clear, and purposeful. The writer uses several strong academic terms and persuasive phrases. A few opportunities remain for more precise or discipline-specific vocabulary, but overall word choice effectively strengthens the argument.

Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice
✓ **Strong Academic Vocabulary** ○ Uses terms such as "curriculum," "proficiency," "academic benefit," "employment opportunities."
✓ **Clarity in Explanations** ○ Phrases like "exercise the brain" and "be able to compete… in service and relationships" strengthen clarity.
✓ **Some General or Repetitive Expressions** ○ Repeats ideas about "communication" and "success" without always deepening nuance.
✓ **Opportunities for Greater Precision** ○ Could use more domain-specific terms (e.g., "cognitive flexibility," "metalinguistic awareness").

Sentence Fluency: 4

Sentences show solid variety and flow, supporting clarity and persuasiveness. Some sentences are long or densely packed, but overall fluency is strong and readable.

Evidence from Student Work: Sentence Fluency
✓ **Varied Sentence Structures** ○ Uses simple, compound, and complex structures effectively.
✓ **Smooth Pacing** ○ Transitions ("Another benefit…," "Some people worry…") help maintain flow.
✓ **Occasional Lengthy or Multi-Idea Sentences** ○ A few sentences combine several claims or pieces of evidence at once.
✓ **Minor Repetition in Sentence Beginnings** ○ Several sentences begin with "Learning" or "Students who," but this does not majorly impede fluency.

Conventions: 4

Conventions are generally strong, with accurate spelling, punctuation, and sentence boundaries throughout the piece. Minor errors are present but do not impede meaning.

Evidence from Student Work: Conventions
✓ **Accurate Spelling and Grammar** ○ No significant spelling issues. Grammar is consistently correct.
✓ **Effective Punctuation** ○ Commas used accurately in complex sentences.
✓ **Minor Errors** ○ Occasional comma placement or minor capitalization adjustments could strengthen clarity.
✓ **Clear Sentence Boundaries** ○ No fragments or run-ons.

Use of Sources: 5

The essay uses sources effectively, integrating accurate, relevant, and well-selected evidence that directly supports the argument. The writer paraphrases and quotes appropriately, provides strong explanation after each piece, and incorporates counterargument evidence with clarity.

Evidence from Student Work: Use of Sources
✓ **Accurate and Relevant Use of Multiple Sources** ○ Source 4: Academic and cognitive benefits (grammar awareness, test performance). ○ Source 1: Employment and global service benefits. ○ Source 3: Concerns about confusion and class time.
✓ **Effective Explanation of Evidence** ○ Explains cognitive benefits clearly: early language learning improves grammar awareness and academic performance. ○ Connects economic evidence to long-term benefits: language skills increase job opportunities.
✓ **Purposeful Use of Counterargument Evidence** ○ Accurately acknowledges Source 3 concerns and responds logically with stronger evidence.
✓ **Strong Integration of Paraphrase and Quotation** ○ Uses both strategies to support claims, maintaining accuracy and relevance.