Grade 7 – Expository Writing Work Sample: Meets

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: 4

The essay presents a clear claim in favor of foreign language instruction and provides three consistent reasons. The argument is well organized with understandable logic, and the writer uses personal reasoning and some relevant real-world examples. However, the essay does not incorporate source material, contains some inaccuracies, and relies heavily on personal opinion rather than evidence-based explanation. Reasoning is present but could be more developed and more tightly connected to factual support. Overall, the ideas are clear, relevant, and purposeful, but lacking the depth and accuracy required for a higher score.

Evidence from Student Work: Ideas and Content
✓ **Clear Claim & Purpose** ○ The claim is stated clearly in the introduction: "I strongly believe that a student should be provided with the opportunity to learn a foreign language." ○ Restated directly in the conclusion: "learning a foreign language should be required." ○ Purpose remains consistent throughout, with no drift away from the argument.
✓ **Relevant Reasons (But No Source Evidence)** ○ Three clear reasons are provided: ▪ Expands the student's mind ("opens the mind up to a whole other world… traditions, celebrations, food, or even the music"). ▪ Improves future career options ("if a student is able to speak the language of their patient…"). ▪ Gives an advantage when applying for jobs ("the student who is bilingual most likely will get the job"). ○ These reasons are relevant and accurate in general but not drawn from the assigned sources, resulting in missed opportunities for stronger support.
✓ **Development, Reasoning & Explanation** ○ Explanations are extended and concrete (joining cultures, patient–provider communication, résumé advantages). ○ Personal and real-world examples help illustrate the points. ○ However, reasoning is often based on opinion rather than evidence: ▪ "They become part of that culture," ▪ "Many adults wish they had the opportunity," ▪ "You will lose a patient if you don't understand them." ○ Lacks academic grounding available in the sources (e.g., grammar awareness, cognitive advantages, test score data).
✓ **Focus & Relevance to the Argument** ○ Stays consistently on topic; each paragraph supports the central argument. ○ Paragraphs remain relevant and consistent, but some repetition appears ("three reasons why I believe…" appears twice). ○ No counterargument or rebuttal included (a requirement in this task).

Organization: 4

The essay has a clear introduction, three distinct body paragraphs aligned to three reasons, and a conclusion that restates the main point. The structure is easy to follow, transitions are present, and ideas generally progress logically. The main weakness is the absence of a counterargument section required by the task, and some transitions could better clarify relationships among ideas.

Evidence from Student Work: Organization
✓ **Clear Introduction That Frames the Argument** ○ Starts with a clear statement of belief: "I strongly believe that a student should be provided with the opportunity to learn a foreign language." ○ Establishes purpose without previewing reasons.
✓ **Logical Paragraph Sequencing** ○ Organizes the three reasons into separate paragraphs: ▪ cultural connection ▪ career communication (patient example) ▪ job-market advantage ○ This makes the argument easy to follow.
✓ **Functional Transitions** ○ Uses transitions such as "A second reason," "Lastly," which support clarity. ○ These transitions are basic and could be more analytically purposeful.
✓ **Conclusion Provides Closure** ○ Restates the claim and summarizes thinking: "I strongly believe that learning a foreign language should be required."
✓ **Missing Required Counterargument Structure** ○ The task requires addressing the opposing viewpoint; this section is absent, affecting completeness.

Voice: 4

The voice is sincere, confident, and appropriate for persuasion. The writer demonstrates enthusiasm for language learning and uses a clear, supportive tone. Occasional conversational phrasing and overgeneralization reduce authority, but the voice still effectively communicates purpose.

Evidence from Student Work: Voice
✓ **Engaged and Purposeful Tone** ○ Uses statements like "This opens the student's mind up to a whole other world…" showing commitment.
✓ **Audience Awareness** ○ Consistently addresses the issue as something "students should be provided with," signaling understanding of a school-board audience.
✓ **Occasional Informal or General Language** ○ Uses broad claims such as "you will lose a patient if you don't understand them," which weaken academic tone.
✓ **Positive and Motivational Voice** ○ Ends with a decisive statement: "learning a foreign language should be required."

Word Choice: 4

Word choice is generally clear and purposeful, with some moments of vivid and meaningful phrasing. However, certain parts rely on general language or exaggeration. With more precise academic terminology and less repetition, this trait would score higher.

Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice
✓ **Clear, Accessible Vocabulary** ○ Uses phrases like "connect with their own culture," "whole other world," "advantage over other applicants."
✓ **Attempts at Specificity** ○ Refers to medical settings and job applications to give concrete examples.
✓ **Some Vague or Overgeneralized Language** ○ "You will lose a patient if you don't understand them" and "many adults wish…" are broad, unsupported claims.
✓ **Opportunities for More Academic Precision** ○ Omits terminology from the sources (e.g., "cognitive benefits," "language structure," "global economy").

Sentence Fluency: 4

Sentences are clear and readable, with generally smooth flow. Some sentences are long or repetitive, but overall fluency supports the argument.

Evidence from Student Work: Sentence Fluency
✓ **Mostly Varied Sentence Structures** ○ Uses simple and compound sentences effectively.
✓ **Readable, Logical Flow** ○ Ideas connect in a way that is easy to follow from paragraph to paragraph.
✓ **Some Repetitive Patterns** ○ Sentences often begin with "This" or "A second reason," creating predictable rhythm.
✓ **A Few Long or Loosely Connected Sentences** ○ Certain sentences include multiple ideas that could be separated for clarity.

Conventions: 4

The writing demonstrates control of sentence boundaries, punctuation, and spelling. A few minor errors appear but do not impede understanding.

Evidence from Student Work: Conventions
✓ **Correct Spelling and Grammar** ○ Words like "opportunity," "advantage," and "cultures" are spelled correctly.
✓ **Appropriate Punctuation Use** ○ Uses periods, commas, and apostrophes correctly in most places.
✓ **Minor Errors Appear** ○ Occasional missing comma or minor capitalization issue ("learning a foreign language should be required." capital "learning" optional). ○ No run-ons or fragments that obscure meaning.
✓ **Generally Strong Readability** ○ Conventions support clarity.

Use of Sources: 2

The essay does not use the required sources at all. All reasoning is based on personal opinion, hypothetical examples, or general observations. As a result, the argument lacks the factual grounding expected for this task. Evidence use is minimal and unsupported by the provided articles.

Evidence from Student Work: Use of Sources
✓ **No Direct Use of Sources** ○ No quotations, paraphrases, or accuracy from Sources 1, 2, 3, or 4.
✓ **Reasoning Not Supported by Factual Evidence** ○ Claims such as "you will lose a patient if you don't understand them" are not supported by source material.
✓ **Missed Opportunities to Integrate Strong Evidence** ○ Sources contain relevant information on cognitive development, test scores, job market data, and scheduling concerns.
✓ **Lack of Attribution** ○ With no source use, there are no attribution phrases or accurate references.