Grade 7 – Expository Writing Work Sample: Does Not Yet Meet

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: 2

The writer attempts to argue that foreign language instruction should be included in elementary schools, but the ideas are underdeveloped, repetitively stated, and unsupported by the required sources. The claim appears inconsistently, reasons lack clarity, and the essay relies heavily on general opinions and personal statements rather than accurate, source-based evidence. With limited explanation and frequent drift into unsupported assertions, the argument does not yet demonstrate grade-level depth or accuracy.

Evidence from Student Work: Ideas and Content
✓ **Clear Claim & Purpose (Partially Met)** ○ The claim appears near the end: "learning a second language is almost important so I think there should be second language classes in elementary schools." ○ Earlier paragraphs do not clearly establish the claim; the purpose becomes clearer only in the conclusion.
✓ **Relevant but Unsupported Reasons** ○ The writer provides general reasons such as: ▪ students "will understand more," ▪ it "helps in future jobs," ▪ kids "don't have to wait until they are in high school." ○ These reasons are loosely connected to the topic but not drawn from the required sources, reducing accuracy and credibility.
✓ **Development, Reasoning & Explanation (Weak)** ○ Ideas are often stated without explanation: "You can get a job speaking a different language," "they will understand more." ○ No detail is provided about *how* language learning supports understanding, employment, or early success. ○ Several reasons remain vague or incorrect: ▪ "If no one speaks English the kids won't understand them at the school." ▪ "Learning it faster helps later on when they grow up learning other things." ○ No counterargument is acknowledged or rebutted.
✓ **Focus & Relevance to the Argument** ○ The essay stays loosely connected to the topic, but sections drift into generalities about jobs or communication without linking back to the claim. ○ Central ideas repeat rather than deepen ("they will understand more," "they will know more things"). ○ The conclusion restates the claim but does not synthesize key reasons.

Organization: 2

The essay has an introduction, body, and conclusion, but the structure lacks clarity and logical sequencing. Ideas repeat across paragraphs, transitions are minimal, and the argument does not build effectively. A required counterargument section is missing. Overall, the organizational structure needs clearer direction and purpose.

Evidence from Student Work: Organization
✓ **Weak Introduction With No Clear Preview** o Opens with vague statements: "Learning a second language can be important to kids… they can learn more faster." o No clear claim or preview of reasons.
✓ **Ideas Not Clearly Grouped or Sequenced** o Paragraphs repeat similar ideas: ▪ "they will understand more," ▪ "they will learn a lot faster," ▪ "kids learn faster when they are younger." o No clear progression between reasons.
✓ **Transitions Are Minimal** o Paragraphs start abruptly with little connection to prior information.
✓ **Conclusion Restates Claim but Lacks Synthesis** o States, "I think there should be second language classes… kids are able to learn more," without summarizing or advancing the argument.
✓ **Missing Counterargument Section** o Task requires addressing opposing viewpoints using Source 3.

Voice: 2

The writer's voice is sincere but inconsistent. Tone is conversational, repetitive, and sometimes uncertain. Audience awareness is limited, and the argument lacks the authority expected when addressing a school board.

Evidence from Student Work: Voice
✓ **Sincere but Repetitive Tone** o Statements such as "they will understand more," "they will learn more," and "they will learn more faster" repeat without development.
✓ **Conversational or Informal Language** o Phrases like "they can learn more faster," "they don't have to wait," and "it will help in jobs" lack academic tone.
✓ **Audience Awareness Is Not Well Established** o No reference to decision-makers, benefits to the school, or broader community implications.
✓ **Voice Lacks Persuasive Confidence** o Uses tentative phrasing like "learning a second language is almost important."

Word Choice: 2

Word choice is simple, repetitive, and often imprecise. The essay lacks academic vocabulary, and several statements rely on general or vague wording rather than clear, specific language.

Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice
✓ **Repetitive Vocabulary** o Frequent repetition of "learn faster," "learn more," "understand more," without adding clarity.
✓ **General or Vague Language** o Statements such as "helps in jobs" and "learn more things" lack specificity.
✓ **Missing Academic and Domain-Specific Words** o No use of key terms such as "bilingual," "language proficiency," "cognitive development," "communication skills."
✓ **Opportunities for Precision Missed** o Evidence about grammar awareness, memory benefits, and global communication is not used.

Sentence Fluency: 2

Sentences are often repetitive in structure, sometimes incomplete, and lacking a sense of rhythm. Several sentences are overly short or simplistic, and transitions between ideas are limited.

Evidence from Student Work: Sentence Fluency
✓ **Repetitive Sentence Patterns** o Many sentences begin with "They will," "This will," "Kids," or "Learning."
✓ **Simple, Short Sentences** o "Kids learn faster when they are younger." o "That helps in future jobs." o "Kids don't have to wait."
✓ **Limited Use of Complex Structures** o Very few sentences combine ideas or show relationships.
✓ **Weak Transitions Between Ideas** o Sentences often shift abruptly without linking phrases.

Conventions: 2

Frequent errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and sentence boundaries affect clarity. Errors do not obscure meaning but distract from the writing.

Evidence from Student Work: Conventions
✓ **Spelling Errors** o "ther," "therefor," "lear," "famly," "beter," "therefor" appear across the draft.
✓ **Punctuation Issues** o Missing commas in complex sentences. o Some fused or run-on sentences.
✓ **Capitalization Errors** o Inconsistent capitalization at the start of sentences.

Evidence from Student Work: Conventions
✓ **Sentence Boundary Problems** ✓ • Several sentences are fragments or run-ons: ▪ "Kids learn faster when they are younger and that." ▪ "That helps in future jobs."

Use of Sources: 1

The essay does not use any evidence from the required sources. Assertions are based entirely on personal opinion without factual grounding. Misunderstandings of the task and lack of attribution significantly reduce the effectiveness of the argument.

Evidence from Student Work: Use of Sources
✓ **No Use of Sources** o No quotations, paraphrases, or factual statements from Sources 1–4.
✓ **Unsupported Claims** o "Learning it faster helps later on," o "Kids will understand more," o "That helps with getting a job," are unsupported and vague.
✓ **No Attribution Phrases** o No "According to Source __" or references to the texts.
✓ **Missing Counterargument and Rebuttal** o No use of Source 3's concerns or responses drawn from other sources.