Grade 3 – Opinion Writing Work Sample: Exceeds

Task: Your class is studying about different places people visit. You are given two sources about the life of an astronaut and the type of training that astronauts receive in order to do their job.

Read the sources carefully to **write an opinion essay** in which you give your opinion about which type of island would be better to visit—a hot island or a cold island. Make sure you clearly state your opinion and write several paragraphs supporting your opinion with reasons and details from the sources.

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

Ideas and Content: 5

The essay demonstrates strong writing skills. The writer's opinion is clear and thoroughly supported with relevant, accurate details from the source about tropical islands. Each reason is well-developed and on-topic, showing strong understanding and enthusiasm for the topic.

Evidence from Student Work: Ideas and Content
✓ **Clear Opinion and Purpose** ○ The writer's opinion—*"tropical islands are a much better place to go on vacation"*—is stated clearly in the introduction and maintained consistently throughout. ○ The essay fulfills the rubric's "writer's purpose and main ideas are interesting and easy to understand." ○ The opinion is reinforced in the conclusion with statements like *"This is why I think tropical islands are the best place to visit."*
✓ **Relevant and Accurate Details** ○ The essay integrates accurate information from *Source #2* (e.g., *"tropical islands are near the equator," "houses are built for high winds,"* and *"2,600 kinds of palm trees"*). ○ Each body paragraph focuses on one reason, meeting the rubric's expectation that "specific details are on-topic and support main ideas." ○ The essay's details are purposeful and mostly accurate, showing comprehension of the source.
✓ **Elaboration and Development** ○ Each reason—warm weather, interesting plants, strong houses, unique wildlife, and entertainment—is elaborated with examples and explanations. ○ Statements like *"You can probably just pick a banana or a coconut right off its tree!"* show understanding and enthusiasm. ○ The writing reflects "many strong, specific details that are good choices for the purpose and the reader."
✓ **Insight and Connection to Reader** ○ The writer adds a personal and persuasive touch by inviting the reader into the experience (*"What an experience that would be!"*). ○ The paper connects factual detail with opinion, a hallmark of strong opinion writing. ○ Occasional overuse of exclamations slightly affects formality but does not reduce clarity or engagement.

Organization: 5

The writing is very easy to follow, showing strong control of structure and sequencing. The introduction captures interest and clearly states the opinion, body paragraphs are grouped by reason, and the conclusion restates the opinion with clear closure.

Evidence from Student Work: Organization
✓ **Clear and Engaging Introduction** ○ The essay begins with a hook and clear statement of opinion: *"Have you ever gone on a trip to the tropical islands? They are much better than the cold islands…"* ○ This opening identifies the topic and makes the reader want to keep reading, meeting the rubric's "introduction identifies the topic, is interesting, and makes the reader want to keep reading."
✓ **Logical Grouping of Information** ○ Each body paragraph develops a single reason: escape from the cold, interesting plants, safe houses, unique wildlife, and entertainment. ○ The order is logical, matching the rubric's "information is grouped to make sense."
✓ **Effective Transitions and Sequencing** ○ The writer uses transitions such as *"To begin with," "Second," "Third," "Fourth," "Lastly"* that guide the reader clearly through the reasons.Paragraph breaks are appropriately placed and easy to follow.
✓ **Concluding Section and Closure** ○ The essay ends with strong closure: *"That is why I think tropical islands are a better place to go on vacation than cold islands."* ○ This reinforces the opinion and provides a sense of completion consistent with the rubric's "concluding section is about the opinion or information presented."

Voice: 5

The writing is lively, sincere, and engaging. The tone captures the reader's interest and reflects the writer's genuine enthusiasm for tropical islands.

Evidence from Student Work: Voice
✓ **Expressive and Engaging Tone** ○ Phrases such as *"You can probably just pick a banana or a coconut right off its tree!"* and *"What an experience that would be!"* invite the reader into the experience. ○ This matches the rubric's "writing is lively, sincere, exciting, or honest."
✓ **Sincerity and Personal Connection** ○ Frequent use of personal pronouns and exclamations gives the essay warmth and authenticity, consistent with "the writing allows the reader to engage and pay attention."
✓ **Audience Awareness** ○ The writer speaks directly to readers and anticipates their interest through rhetorical questions and enthusiastic expressions.
✓ **Consistent Enthusiasm** ○ The energy level stays high from the introduction through the conclusion, sustaining reader attention throughout.

Word Choice: 4

The writing uses many interesting and precise words, though repetition and small inaccuracies prevent it from reaching the "Strong" level. Vocabulary is generally varied and appropriate.

Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice
✓ **Content Vocabulary** ○ Words such as "equator," "palm trees," and "lagoon" show understanding of topic-specific vocabulary.

Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice
✓ **Accuracy and Clarity** ○ Most word choices are correct, though one factual error appears (“2,6000 kinds of palm trees”).
✓ **Appropriate for Audience and Purpose** ○ Language matches opinion writing expectations: clear, direct, and reader-friendly.

Sentence Fluency: 4

The essay reads smoothly and is easy to follow. Sentences are complete and coherent, though patterns and transition styles are somewhat repetitive.

Evidence from Student Work: Sentence Fluency
✓ **Smooth and Natural Flow** ○ Sentences read easily and sound natural aloud. ○ The variety in length is limited, but rhythm is generally pleasant.
✓ **Variety in Sentence Beginnings** ○ Most paragraphs start with transition words like “To begin with,” “Second,” “Third,” etc., creating a predictable pattern.
✓ **Balanced Sentence Lengths** ○ Most are medium-length, with few short or complex sentences for contrast.
✓ **Readable and Fluent** ○ The writing maintains a conversational rhythm, aligning with the rubric’s “writing is smooth and very easy to read out loud.”

Conventions: 4

The paper demonstrates adequate control of grade-level conventions. Most punctuation, capitalization, and spelling are correct, and errors do not interfere with meaning.

Evidence from Student Work: Conventions
✓ **Sentence Endings and Punctuation** ○ Sentences end correctly; higher-level punctuation (commas, apostrophes) are mostly accurate. ○ Overuse of exclamation marks slightly affects polish.
✓ **Spelling and Capitalization** ○ Most words are spelled correctly, though minor issues appear (“cant,” “source#2” needs spacing). ✓ Capitalization is correct for proper nouns (“Faroe,” “Greenland”).
✓ **Grammar and Usage** ○ Grammar is correct, and sentence structure supports clarity. ○ Minor spacing and formatting errors remain.

Use of Sources: 4

The student effectively uses accurate information from one source (*Source #2*) but does not reference *Source #1*. Integration is appropriate, but source variety could be improved.

Evidence from Student Work: Use of Sources
✓ **Accurate Use of Source Information** o The essay includes correct facts from *Source #2* about tropical islands (e.g., "near the equator," "built for high winds").
✓ **Integration and Paraphrasing** o The writer paraphrases rather than copies, blending facts smoothly into original sentences.
✓ **Limited Source Variety** o All evidence comes from *Source #2*, with no information drawn from *Source #1 (cold islands)*.
✓ **Citation Clarity** o References to "Source #2" are used but formatted inconsistently ("source#2" vs. "Source #2").

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