Grade 3 – Opinion Writing Work Sample: Meets

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: 4

The essay demonstrates adequate writing skills. The writer clearly states an opinion, supports it with several relevant reasons, and uses accurate information from the sources. The writing fulfills the task and stays on topic, but ideas could be elaborated with more detailed explanations and connections between facts and opinions.

Evidence from Student Work: Ideas and Content
✓ **Clear Opinion and Purpose** ○ The opinion—*"I think that warm islands are better to visit than cold islands"*—is clearly stated at the start and maintained throughout. ○ The introduction meets the rubric's expectation that "the writer's purpose and main ideas are easy to understand." ○ However, the introduction repeats "I think" multiple times without previewing the key reasons, which limits reader engagement.
✓ **Relevant and Accurate Details** ○ The paper uses information that aligns with the sources, such as *"people there can't plant crops on the cold, hard, frozen ground"* (from Source #1) and *"they have all that heat because they are near the equator"* (from Source #2). ○ These accurate statements meet the rubric's criteria that "specific details support main ideas." ○ However, the reasons and facts are presented without deeper explanation or additional evidence.
✓ **Elaboration and Development** ○ Each paragraph focuses on a clear reason—food, warmth, and nature—which shows logical grouping of ideas. ○ Supporting details like *"you can pick a banana or a coconut right off a tree"* are engaging but surface-level. ○ According to the rubric, at the "Meets" level, "the writer includes accurate facts and concrete details," but the paper could move toward "Strong" by explaining *why* those details matter.
✓ **Focus and Relevance** ○ All ideas are on-topic, and no unrelated or confusing details appear. ○ The essay avoids drift but relies on a formulaic paragraph structure, lacking links that tie reasons back to the opinion. ○ The rubric's "details are on-topic and support main ideas" is met, though connections could be more explicit.

Organization: 4

The writing is easy to follow, showing a clear structure with an introduction, body paragraphs organized by reason, and a conclusion that restates the opinion. Transitions connect ideas, though repetitive sequencing and minimal linking between paragraphs keep it at the Meets level.

Evidence from Student Work: Organization
✓ **Clear Introduction** ○ The essay opens with *"I think that warm islands are better to visit than cold islands. You want to know why? Well, I'll tell you why."* ○ This introduction identifies the topic and opinion, fulfilling the rubric's "introduction identifies the topic." ○ However, it could preview the main reasons more directly instead of relying on conversational phrasing.
✓ **Logical Grouping of Information** ○ Each paragraph develops one reason (food, warmth, nature), matching the rubric's "information is grouped to make sense." ○ The order is logical and easy for readers to follow.
✓ **Effective Transitions** ○ Transitional words like *"The first reason," "The second reason,"* and *"The third reason"* guide the reader through the essay. ○ These transitions meet the rubric's "transition words and phrases connect ideas," but the overuse of the same format limits variety.
✓ **Concluding Section** ○ The essay ends with *"So, now do you want to visit a warm or cold island?"* which restates the opinion in a conversational style. ○ While engaging, the conclusion could be more formal and summarizing, consistent with "the concluding statement or section is about the opinion presented."

Voice: 4

The writing is sincere, engaging, and enthusiastic. The tone shows interest in the topic and invites readers in, though it sometimes leans conversational rather than persuasive.

Evidence from Student Work: Voice
✓ **Expressive and Engaging Tone** ○ The friendly tone in *"You want to know why? Well, I'll tell you why."* and *"Keep reading to know more…"* makes the piece lively and approachable.
✓ **Sincerity and Personal Connection** ○ Frequent use of "I think" and "I want to visit" gives authenticity and aligns with "writing helps the reader engage and pay attention."
✓ **Audience Awareness** ○ The writer directly addresses the reader and ends with a rhetorical question, demonstrating awareness of audience interaction.
✓ **Consistency of Tone** ○ The enthusiasm is consistent throughout but could be more persuasive with confident statements instead of repeated questions.

Word Choice: 4

The writer uses clear, relevant vocabulary and some descriptive phrases that show understanding of the topic. Some repetition and simple language limit precision and variety.

Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice
✓ **Variety and Precision** ○ Words like "soft, sandy beaches," "frozen ground," and "great view" show variety and sensory awareness.

Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice
✓ **Content Vocabulary** ○ The essay uses appropriate topic terms such as “equator,” “seafood,” and “frozen ground,” showing understanding of content.
✓ **Repetition and Simplicity** ○ The phrase “warm island” appears many times, and words like “better” and “good” are used instead of more vivid choices.
✓ **Appropriate for Audience** ○ The language is grade-appropriate and matches an opinion essay.

Sentence Fluency: 4

The essay is easy to read aloud with logical flow. Sentences are complete, but patterns and transitions are repetitive, limiting rhythm and variety.

Evidence from Student Work: Sentence Fluency
✓ **Smooth Flow** ○ The writing sounds natural when read aloud and matches “the writing is easy to read out loud” from the rubric.
✓ **Repetition in Beginnings** ○ Paragraphs often begin with “The first reason,” “The second reason,” and “The third reason,” which creates predictable rhythm.
✓ **Sentence Length and Pattern** ○ Most sentences are medium-length, with few short or complex ones to add rhythm variation.
✓ **Readable and Cohesive** ○ Sentences connect logically, maintaining fluency even without much structural variety.

Conventions: 4

The writing shows control of grade-level conventions. Minor spelling, spacing, and grammar issues appear but do not disrupt understanding.

Evidence from Student Work: Conventions
✓ **Punctuation and Capitalization** ○ Sentences end correctly, and commas are used in a few appropriate places. ○ Occasional spacing issues appear around parentheses (“(for planting crops and building animal farms)and”).
✓ **Spelling Accuracy** ○ Common words are spelled correctly, though “your” appears instead of “you’re.”
✓ **Grammar and Sentence Control** ○ Sentences are complete and easy to understand, meeting the rubric’s “grammar is usually correct.”

Use of Sources: 4

The writer accurately uses facts from both sources but does not explicitly cite them. Source material is paraphrased correctly and supports the opinion effectively.

Evidence from Student Work: Use of Sources
✓ **Accurate Information** ○ Facts such as *"people there can't plant crops on the cold, hard, frozen ground"* (Source #1) and *"they have all that heat because they are near the equator"* (Source #2) are factual and appropriate.
✓ **Integration and Paraphrasing** ○ The writer blends facts smoothly without copying text verbatim, showing comprehension.
✓ **Balanced Source Use** ○ The writer draws on both sources but relies more heavily on warm island information from Source #2.
✓ **Citations** ○ Sources are not referenced explicitly by number, which limits clarity of attribution.