Grade 3 – Opinion Writing Work Sample: Approaching

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: 3

The essay demonstrates progress toward grade-level writing skills. The opinion is clear, and several reasons are provided using information from the sources. However, development is uneven—details are sometimes listed rather than explained, and elaboration is limited. The paper includes enthusiasm but needs stronger focus, connections, and clarity.

Evidence from Student Work: Ideas and Content
✓ **Clear Opinion and Purpose** ○ The writer clearly states an opinion in the introduction: *"In my opinion I think if you're planning a vacation… you should go to a hot island."* ○ This fulfills the rubric's "writer's purpose and main ideas are easy to understand." ○ However, the introduction could better preview the reasons instead of repeating the opinion.
✓ **Relevant but Basic Details** ○ The student uses ideas drawn from the sources: *"hot island gets a lot of sun," "long rainy season," "huge waterfalls and coral reefs."* ○ These match the rubric's "the writer includes some facts, definitions, or other information about the topic." ○ Still, the evidence is paraphrased loosely and lacks deeper explanation or connection to the opinion.
✓ **Limited Elaboration and Development** ○ The writer lists reasons such as *"weather," "water," "creatures," "tropical stuff growing over there"* without explaining why these make hot islands better to visit. ○ According to the rubric, this aligns with "details may be too general or not specific; details may be listed, but not explained."
✓ **Focus and Relevance** ○ The essay remains mostly on topic but includes off-task or filler statements like *"(But don't sell your house.)"* and *"just reading my opinion writing would make you do all this stuff."* ○ These humorous asides disrupt focus and slightly weaken the purpose.

Organization: 3

The essay shows a basic organizational structure with an introduction, four body sections, and a conclusion. However, transitions are inconsistent, ideas sometimes overlap, and pacing feels uneven.

Evidence from Student Work: Organization
✓ **Introduction** ○ Begins with context: *"Today my class is reading a book about islands…"* and leads to an opinion. ○ The introduction identifies the topic but lacks a strong hook or clear overview of reasons.
✓ **Grouping and Order** ○ Body paragraphs follow a basic sequence—weather, water, animals, plants—but paragraph breaks are uneven, and one section is overextended with multiple unrelated ideas.

Evidence from Student Work: Organization
✓ **Introduction** ○ Begins with context: *"Today my class is reading a book about islands…"* and leads to an opinion. ○ The introduction identifies the topic but lacks a strong hook or clear overview of reasons.
✓ **Grouping and Order** ○ Body paragraphs follow a basic sequence—weather, water, animals, plants—but paragraph breaks are uneven, and one section is overextended with multiple unrelated ideas.
✓ **Transitions and Connections** ○ Uses simple connectors like *"My first reason," "Another reason," "The third reason,"* which show awareness of sequencing but feel repetitive. ○ Missing internal transitions that connect ideas smoothly.
✓ **Conclusion and Closure** ○ The conclusion restates reasons in a lively tone but adds distracting humor (*"Don't sell your house."*). ○ This meets "concluding statement or section is about the opinion," but the focus is diluted.

Voice: 4

The tone is lively, sincere, and shows enthusiasm for the topic. The writer's personality comes through with humor and energy, though the voice sometimes overshadows clarity.

Evidence from Student Work: Voice
✓ **Engaging and Honest Tone** ○ The student's personality is evident in phrases like *"How cool would it be to see a real-life chimp?"* and *"Listen to me and take my advice."* ○ This meets the rubric's "writing is lively, sincere, exciting, or honest."
✓ **Personal Connection** ○ Frequent use of personal pronouns ("I," "you") makes the tone genuine and interactive.
✓ **Audience Awareness** ○ The student clearly writes for an audience of peers, using persuasive appeals and humor to connect with the reader.
✓ **Consistency of Voice** ○ The tone remains enthusiastic throughout but occasionally becomes too casual or distracting, reducing clarity.

Word Choice: 3

The writer uses some descriptive and content-specific words, but repetition, informal phrasing, and occasional misspellings limit precision.

Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice
✓ **Variety and Precision** ○ Words like "beautiful," "tropical," "cool creatures," and "fabulous" show attempt at descriptive vocabulary. ○ Many simple or repeated words ("hot island," "cool," "stuff") weaken clarity.
✓ **Content Vocabulary** ○ Includes basic topical terms ("coral reefs," "lagoon," "mountains"), showing understanding of island-related content.
✓ **Appropriate for Audience** ○ Language is lively and understandable, matching a student's persuasive purpose, though word choices sometimes sound exaggerated or informal.

Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice
✓ **Spelling and Word Form Errors** ○ Misspellings (“wheater,” “bannanas,” “islnds”) occasionally distract the reader and reduce precision.

Sentence Fluency: 3

The writing is readable and shows some sense of rhythm, but frequent repetition, inconsistent structure, and uneven sentence control affect flow.

Evidence from Student Work: Sentence Fluency
✓ **Readability** ○ The essay can be read aloud easily, fulfilling the rubric’s “parts of the writing are easy to read out loud.”
✓ **Repetitive Patterns** ○ Many sentences begin with “My first reason,” “Another reason,” “The third reason,” causing predictable rhythm.
✓ **Sentence Length Variety** ○ Sentences are mostly medium length with few short or compound structures.
✓ **Occasional Errors in Structure** ○ Missing commas and run-ons (“Sharks, eels, crabs, many kinds of colorful fish living in the waters”) interrupt fluency.

Conventions: 2

The paper contains frequent errors in spelling, capitalization, and punctuation that occasionally disrupt meaning. Basic sentence structure is evident, but errors distract the reader.

Evidence from Student Work: Conventions
✓ **Punctuation and Capitalization** ○ Missing commas, capitalization errors (“i think,” “hot island”) and inconsistent parentheses reduce readability.
✓ **Spelling Errors** ○ Words like “wheater,” “bannanas,” “mountins,” “shelterd,” and “chmip” show common phonetic misspellings.
✓ **Grammar and Mechanics** ○ Sentence fragments and missing words occasionally appear, making parts confusing.

Use of Sources: 3

The student uses general ideas from the sources but references them vaguely (“paragraph two,” “paragraph three”). Integration is limited, and accuracy is inconsistent.

Evidence from Student Work: Use of Sources
✓ **Accurate but General Use of Sources** ○ References details like “lagoon,” “coral reefs,” and “mountains and hills” that reflect *Source #2.* ○ Mentions reading “paragraph two” and “paragraph three,” showing attempt to cite but without clear connection to which source.

Evidence from Student Work: Use of Sources
✓ **Paraphrasing and Integration** o Facts are restated loosely, sometimes word-for-word, but integrated within original sentences.
✓ **Limited Source Variety** o Only hot island information is used; no evidence from *Source #1 (cold islands)* appears.