Grade 3 – Opinion Writing Work Sample: Does Not Yet Meet

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 opinion is clear and supported with several facts from the sources, but details are basic and development is uneven. The writing demonstrates understanding of cold islands but lacks elaboration and explanation of *why* the listed details make them appealing.

Evidence from Student Work: Ideas and Content
✓ **Clear Opinion and Purpose** ○ The writer states a direct opinion: *"My opinion is you should visit the cold islands…"* ○ The purpose is clear, fulfilling "writer's purpose and main ideas are easy to understand." ○ The introduction gives a few brief reasons but lacks elaboration or an engaging lead.
✓ **Relevant but Limited Details** ○ Includes accurate facts from the sources: *"More than 1,000 plants… moist soil,"* and *"brightly colored houses that dot the hillside."* ○ These show awareness of key information about Greenland and the Faroe Islands. ○ However, some statements are oversimplified or irrelevant (e.g., *"you can bring coats," "you won't have many hurricanes"*).
✓ **Elaboration and Development** ○ Each paragraph lists facts but does not explain why they make cold islands good to visit. ○ According to the rubric, this fits "details may be listed, but not explained." ○ For example, *"you will live in brightly colored houses"* could be elaborated to explain how this makes island life interesting or beautiful.
✓ **Focus and Relevance** ○ The writing stays mostly on topic, though some reasoning is loosely connected to the main opinion. ○ Ideas are repetitive ("cold islands" repeated often) and lack connections between reasons.

Organization: 3

The essay includes an introduction, body, and some sense of conclusion. However, transitions are weak, ideas are loosely grouped, and the ending lacks closure.

Evidence from Student Work: Organization
✓ **Introduction** ○ Opens with a clear opinion but without a hook or preview of reasons.
✓ **Grouping and Order** ○ The second paragraph combines several facts about plants, scenery, and houses but lacks internal organization. ○ Paragraph breaks occur, but information feels listed rather than logically sequenced.

Evidence from Student Work: Organization
✓ **Transitions** ○ Minimal transitional phrasing (“Also,” “At the cold islands”) results in abrupt paragraph changes. ○ Meets “some parts of the writing are not easy to follow.”
✓ **Conclusion** ○ The essay stops abruptly after the final paragraph; there’s no clear closing sentence to restate the opinion.

Voice: 3

The tone is clear but flat. The writer’s interest in the topic shows slightly, but energy and engagement are minimal. The essay lacks the lively personality or persuasive tone typical of stronger opinion writing.

Evidence from Student Work: Voice
✓ **Engagement and Energy** ○ The essay’s voice is straightforward and informative but lacks enthusiasm (“you should visit the cold islands because…”).
✓ **Sincerity and Interest** ○ The writer seems somewhat interested in cold islands, particularly when describing “brightly colored houses” and “beautiful ice,” but doesn’t show excitement or personal connection.
✓ **Audience Awareness** ○ There’s little attempt to engage the reader directly; sentences are factual and lack persuasive appeal.
✓ **Consistency of Tone** ○ The tone is even and controlled but too neutral for a persuasive piece.

Word Choice: 3

The student uses simple and correct words to express ideas, but vocabulary lacks precision, variety, and descriptive language.

Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice
✓ **Precision and Variety** ○ Repeated use of “cold islands” and general words like “beautiful,” “fun,” and “stuff” reduces variety.
✓ **Content Vocabulary** ○ Includes correct topical terms from the source (e.g., “plants,” “birds,” “ice,” “houses”). ○ Does not use more specific words like “glacier,” “Arctic,” or “tradition.”
✓ **Accuracy and Clarity** ○ Word meaning is clear but plain; no misused words.
✓ **Appropriate for Purpose** ○ Meets rubric’s “words get the message across,” but limited sophistication keeps it below “Strong.”

Sentence Fluency: 2

The writing is readable but lacks rhythm and variety. Most sentences are short and begin in the same way.

Evidence from Student Work: Sentence Fluency
✓ **Smoothness and Readability** ○ Sentences are short and complete but often follow a repetitive “At the cold islands…” pattern.

Evidence from Student Work: Sentence Fluency
✓ **Smoothness and Readability** o Sentences are short and complete but often follow a repetitive "At the cold islands…" pattern.
✓ **Sentence Variety** o Few compound or complex sentences; minimal variation in structure.
✓ **Flow and Pacing** o The text is choppy in places because of repeated beginnings and abrupt shifts between ideas.
✓ **Natural Rhythm** o The writing is understandable but not fluid when read aloud.

Conventions: 2

Frequent spelling and capitalization errors, along with occasional missing words and inconsistent punctuation, interfere with readability.

Evidence from Student Work: Conventions
✓ **Spelling Errors** o Common misspellings include "verity" (variety), "beutiful," "diffrent," and "thisty."
✓ **Capitalization and Punctuation** o Errors like "Their are More than 1,000 plants" and missing punctuation marks show inconsistent control.
✓ **Grammar and Sentence Structure** o Some incomplete sentences and missing words reduce clarity.

Use of Sources: 3

The writer uses several facts from the cold island source accurately but provides no evidence from the tropical island source for comparison. Citations are absent.

Evidence from Student Work: Use of Sources
✓ **Accurate Source Information** o Facts about *"moist soil," "more than 1,000 plants,"* and *"brightly colored houses"* accurately reflect *Source #1*.
✓ **Limited Source Variety** o Only the cold island source is used; no information from *Source #2* about hot islands is included.
✓ **Integration and Paraphrasing** o Facts are paraphrased clearly but without citation or sentence framing.
✓ **Citations** o No reference to "Source #1" or "Source #2" appears.