Grade 4 – Opinion Writing Work Sample: Exceeds

Task: Your class is studying about weather and weather patterns in the United States. You are given three sources about thunderstorms.

Read the sources carefully to write an opinion essay in which you give your opinion about which place you would rather live, Florida or Colorado. 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 opinion is clear and supported by several reasons. The writing demonstrates understanding of Florida's weather and includes on-topic elaboration. Details are relevant but general and sometimes inaccurate or unsupported by sources.

Evidence from Student Work: Ideas and Content
✓ **Clear Opinion and Purpose** ○ The opinion is stated immediately: *"I'm talking about Florida the sunshine state."* ○ The writer's purpose—to explain why they prefer Florida—is easy to understand, meeting "writer's purpose and main ideas are easy to understand."
✓ **Relevant Details** ○ Gives reasons that align with the topic: *"I like the warm weather," "I can tell what the weather will be,"* and *"the rain can help us."* ○ These reasons connect to source ideas about Florida's heat and rainfall, aligning with "specific details support main ideas."
✓ **Development and Elaboration** ○ Each paragraph offers multiple related points, showing growth beyond listing. ○ However, reasoning often remains general ("rain helps us") rather than supported with specific evidence from the sources (like humidity or rainfall data).
✓ **Accuracy and Focus** ○ Some statements show misunderstanding of the sources (e.g., "the weather won't change every hour like in Colorado" is correct but oversimplified; "rain makes the air less humid" is inaccurate). ○ The opinion and details remain on-topic throughout, meeting "details are on-topic."

Organization: 5

The essay follows a logical structure with a clear introduction, body paragraphs organized by reason, and a conclusion that summarizes the opinion. Transitions are functional but repetitive.

Evidence from Student Work: Organization
✓ **Introduction** ○ Opens with a hook ("Imagine the perfect warm, sunny day") and introduces the opinion early. ○ Meets the rubric's "introduction identifies the topic and makes the reader want to keep reading."
✓ **Grouping and Order** ○ Body paragraphs are organized by reason: warm weather, predictable weather, and helpful rain. ○ The information is grouped logically and makes sense to the reader.
✓ **Transitions and Sequencing** ○ Uses simple connectors ("One of the reasons," "I would also want to live…") that guide readers clearly, though with some repetition.

Evidence from Student Work: Organization
✓ **Conclusion and Closure** ○ The essay ends with a restatement and direct address to the audience ("I hope to see you in Florida someday!!"). ○ Meets "concluding statement or section is about the opinion presented."

Voice: 4

The voice is friendly, confident, and inviting. The writer's enthusiasm for Florida is clear, though the tone is more conversational than persuasive.

Evidence from Student Work: Voice
✓ **Engaging and Honest Tone** ○ Conversational phrasing ("Can you guess what I'm talking about?" "Wouldn't you hate it if…") invites the reader in.
✓ **Sincerity and Energy** ○ Positive, cheerful tone throughout ("I hope to see you in Florida someday!!") matches the writer's preference.
✓ **Audience Awareness** ○ Directly addresses readers ("Don't you just love warm weather?"), maintaining engagement.
✓ **Formality and Focus** ○ Tone remains consistent but sometimes too casual for academic opinion writing.

Word Choice: 3

The language is clear and appropriate for grade level, but vocabulary is simple and repetitive. Few precise or content-based words from the sources appear.

Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice
✓ **Precision and Variety** ○ Repetition of "warm weather," "Florida," and "rain" limits vocabulary variety.
✓ **Content Vocabulary** ○ Uses general weather terms but lacks topic-specific words like "humidity," "climate," or "thunderstorms."
✓ **Descriptive Detail** ○ Some imagery appears ("Imagine the perfect warm, sunny day"), but it's not maintained through the essay.
✓ **Purpose and Audience Fit** ○ Vocabulary is understandable but basic, meeting "words get the message across."

Sentence Fluency: 4

The writing flows naturally with complete sentences and readable rhythm. Sentence beginnings and lengths show some variety, though transitions remain basic.

Evidence from Student Work: Sentence Fluency
✓ **Smooth Flow** ○ Sentences read easily aloud; punctuation supports natural pauses.

Evidence from Student Work: Sentence Fluency
✓ **Variety of Sentence Patterns** ○ Includes both short and compound sentences ("Also I can go outside and play with my friends. Also Warm weather helps make rain.").
✓ **Repetition in Structure** ○ Multiple sentences begin with "Also" or "I," creating a predictable rhythm.
✓ **Readable and Natural Sound** ○ The piece meets "the writing is easy to read out loud."

Conventions: 4

Basic punctuation and capitalization are correct, but errors with capitalization, commas, and possessives are noticeable. Minor grammar issues appear.

Evidence from Student Work: Conventions
✓ **Capitalization and Punctuation** ○ Missing commas after introductory words ("Imagine the perfect warm, sunny day"). ○ Inconsistent capitalization ("Also Warm weather").
✓ **Spelling** ○ Misspellings include "geuss," "woln't," and "florida."
✓ **Grammar and Sentence Control** ○ Sentences are complete but occasionally repetitive or loosely joined.

Use of Sources: 3

The essay reflects basic understanding of Florida's climate but provides no direct reference to source material. Information is paraphrased or inferred rather than explicitly cited.

Evidence from Student Work: Use of Sources
✓ **Accurate Understanding of Topic** ○ Mentions Florida's "warm weather" and "rain," aligning with *Source #3's* description of hot, humid conditions.
✓ **Limited Integration** ○ No direct citations or factual data (e.g., thunderstorm frequency or rainfall amounts).
✓ **Paraphrasing** ○ General references to predictable weather and rain show awareness but lack precision.
✓ **Source Variety** ○ Only Florida information is used; Colorado is mentioned only once as a contrast.