Grade 5 – Opinion Writing Work Sample: Exceeds

Task: Your class is studying about the history of animals and how they have contributed to human growth and development. You are given three articles about service animals.

Read the sources carefully to write an opinion essay in which you give your opinion about whether you agree with a new rule allowing only service dogs and miniature horses in public places, or whether you disagree with the rule. 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 expresses a clear, consistent opinion with three reasons that logically support the stance. However, factual accuracy and use of text evidence are limited, and elaboration focuses more on fairness than on information from the readings.

Evidence from Student Work: Ideas and Content
✓ **Clear Opinion and Purpose** ○ The position is clearly stated: *"I think we should let any kind of animal in a public place that helps people with disabilities."* ○ The essay stays focused on fairness and equality, fulfilling "the writer's purpose and main ideas are easy to understand."
✓ **Relevant and Accurate Details** ○ Provides examples of animals: *"Monkeys can even help someone drink out of a straw or play a CD!"* — consistent with *Source #1 (Monkey Helpers)*. ○ Mentions fairness for people with disabilities but adds unsupported claims like "pigs, birds, cats or even a lizard" that go beyond the sources.
✓ **Development and Elaboration** ○ Each paragraph gives a clear reason (respecting choice, access barriers, cost) but stops short of explaining *why* or *how* these issues connect to the law. ○ Example: *"Now that they have banned all service animals except for dogs in public places the human can't go in because they need their animal to see!"* shows empathy but simplifies the situation.
✓ **Focus and Relevance** ○ All points align to the opinion, though elaboration is repetitive ("This law is not fair" appears in multiple places).

Organization: 5

The essay has a clear structure—introduction, three body paragraphs, and conclusion—with logical sequencing. Transitions are basic but effective.

Evidence from Student Work: Organization
✓ **Introduction** ○ Engages readers with a rhetorical question: *"Would you stand against an unfair law?"* ○ States thesis and previews three reasons in an organized way.
✓ **Grouping and Order** ○ Each body paragraph develops one reason; structure mirrors the introduction.

Evidence from Student Work: Organization
✓ **Transitions and Flow** ○ Uses simple transitions ("My first reason," "The second reason," "My last reason"), meeting rubric expectations for clarity.
✓ **Conclusion and Closure** ○ Restates opinion and reasons clearly: *"The 3 reasons are that we should respect people's choices… and remember that their animal was a lot of money."* ○ Provides strong closure though repetitive.

Voice: 5

The essay is passionate, empathetic, and clearly written from a student's point of view. The tone is persuasive, sincere, and consistent throughout.

Evidence from Student Work: Voice
✓ **Expressive and Engaging Tone** ○ The essay begins with emotional appeal: *"Would you stand against an unfair law?"* ○ Shows advocacy for equality: *"We should respect people's choices and not judge them by what animal they think is best."*
✓ **Sincerity and Personality** ○ Displays genuine compassion for people with disabilities: *"This law is not fair to all the disabled people."*
✓ **Audience Awareness** ○ Uses inclusive language ("we," "everyone," "people") to engage readers.
✓ **Consistency of Tone** ○ Maintains strong emotional voice without drifting off-topic.

Word Choice: 4

The vocabulary is lively, expressive, and grade-appropriate. Occasional informal or repetitive phrasing limits polish but supports reader engagement.

Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice
✓ **Descriptive and Engaging Words** ○ Uses vivid, playful phrasing ("From monkeys to pigs what will be next?? A frog???").
✓ **Topic Vocabulary** ○ Includes relevant terms ("service animals," "disabilities") though not academic (no use of "regulations" or "lawmakers").
✓ **Variety and Precision** ○ Repetition of "animal," "fair," and "people" reduces precision.
✓ **Tone Fit** ○ Language fits opinion writing but would benefit from slightly more formal diction.

Sentence Fluency: 4

Sentences flow naturally with energy and expression. Occasional run-ons and informal punctuation reduce polish but maintain readability.

Evidence from Student Work: Sentence Fluency
✓ **Readable Flow** ○ Sentences are rhythmic and expressive when read aloud.
✓ **Variety and Structure** ○ Mix of short and long sentences ("Monkeys can even help someone drink out of a straw or play a CD!").
✓ **Repetition and Run-Ons** ○ Some run-ons appear ("Now that they have banned all service animals except for dogs…").
✓ **Natural Cadence** ○ Conversational tone keeps flow smooth despite small errors.

Conventions: 4

Frequent punctuation and capitalization errors occur but do not obscure meaning. The writing demonstrates awareness of sentence structure.

Evidence from Student Work: Conventions
✓ **Capitalization and Punctuation** ○ Missing commas and double question marks ("From monkeys to pigs what will be next??").
✓ **Grammar and Spelling** ○ Minor issues ("payed" instead of "paid," "neither can the person" missing comma).
✓ **Sentence Control** ○ Most sentences complete but occasionally lengthy and joined with "and."

Use of Sources: 3

The essay demonstrates general understanding of source ideas (service animal fairness, monkeys' skills) but includes minimal direct evidence and no explicit citations.

Evidence from Student Work: Use of Sources
✓ **Understanding of Source Content** ○ Paraphrases accurate ideas from *Source #1* about monkeys' capabilities.
✓ **Balance of Sources** ○ Draws only from one source indirectly; ignores *Source #3*'s rule rationale and *Source #2*'s variety of helper animals.
✓ **Integration and Attribution** ○ No mention of sources by name or number.
✓ **Accuracy** ○ Introduces unsupported animals (frogs, pigs, lizards) not found in the readings.

Suggestions for Teaching Strategies to Support the Student Sample:

The following contain suggestions for teaching strategies and do not encompass a complete list of possible strategies.

Ideas and Content:

Evidence–Explanation Pairing Practice:

- Students match each opinion statement with one supporting fact from a source and one explanation sentence.

Fact vs. Opinion Sorting:

- Have students highlight factual details from the sources and opinions in separate colors to see balance.

Elaboration Ladder:

- Students extend each reason with one sentence explaining why it matters and one giving a concrete example.

Organization:

Transition Expansion Chart:

- Provide categories of transitions (sequence, cause/effect, addition) and model how to vary them.

Introduction–Conclusion Pairing:

- Teach students to mirror ideas from the introduction without repeating identical phrasing.

Paragraph Connection Practice:

- Have students add one linking sentence between two paragraphs for smoother flow.

Voice:

“Voice + Evidence” Chart:

- Show how to blend emotion (“This isn’t fair”) with data or facts.

Reader Reaction Check:

- Peers underline sentences that sound persuasive and those that need support.

Tone Revision Practice:

- Students rewrite casual expressions into persuasive, academic tone.

Suggestions for Teaching Strategies to Support the Student Sample:

The following contain suggestions for teaching strategies and do not encompass a complete list of possible strategies.

Word Choice:

Topic Word Wall:

- Display academic terms drawn from sources for students to incorporate.

Synonym Replacement Routine:

- Students highlight repeated words and replace them with alternatives.

"Precision Upgrade" Challenge:

- Students rewrite three general sentences using more specific language.

Sentence Fluency:

Sentence Combining Practice:

- Students revise by merging choppy sentences for smoother rhythm.

Transition Starter Chart:

- Provide examples of varied openings to avoid repetition.

Oral Read-Aloud Fluency Checks:

- Students read aloud to identify where natural pauses or punctuation are needed.

Conventions:

Proofreading Stations:

- Students rotate through spelling, punctuation, and capitalization checks.

"Comma Patrol" Practice:

- Have students identify places in their drafts where pauses are needed.

Error Hunt Challenge:

- Give small excerpts with similar errors to fix collaboratively.

Use of Sources:

Source Integration Mini-Lesson:

- Teach citation frames and practice quoting/paraphrasing from multiple sources.

Two-Source Detail Chart:

- Students gather one fact per source to balance evidence.

Fact Accuracy Check:

- Compare details in student drafts against the text to confirm correctness.