Grade 5 – Opinion Writing Work Sample: Meets

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: 4

The opinion is clear and consistently supported by accurate reasoning drawn from the source. The essay demonstrates understanding of safety, hygiene, and practicality concerns, though elaboration and depth are limited.

Evidence from Student Work: Ideas and Content
✓ **Clear Opinion and Purpose** ○ Explicit stance: *"I agree with this law, and in this article, I will be explaining why I say this."* ○ Maintains focus on supporting the new law throughout.
✓ **Relevant and Accurate Details** ○ Accurately references risks mentioned in Source #3: *"Service animals could transmit diseases to other people"* and *"birds could leave behind droppings… which makes for an unhealthy environment."* ○ Mentions that dogs "listen to commands" and "sit quietly," showing understanding of their trainability.
✓ **Development and Elaboration** ○ Provides multiple reasons (safety, health, business convenience), but each is brief and lacks explanation. ○ Example: *"No one knows what the animal could do next"* is general rather than specific.
✓ **Focus and Relevance** ○ Stays entirely on topic, but humor ("service goat") and casual closing slightly weaken focus.

Organization: 4

The essay follows a clear, logical order with a straightforward introduction, body, and conclusion. Transitions are basic but effective.

Evidence from Student Work: Organization
✓ **Introduction** ○ States topic and position clearly in the first sentence.
✓ **Grouping and Sequencing** ○ Each paragraph introduces a new reason—safety, hygiene, business practicality.
✓ **Transitions and Flow** ○ Uses implicit transitions ("Also," "Overall") to connect ideas.
✓ **Conclusion and Closure** ○ Ends with a summary opinion, though the "Adios!" sign-off reduces formality.

Voice: 4

The tone is clear, confident, and personable. The writer's humor and conversational style engage the reader, though formality could be stronger for academic tone.

Evidence from Student Work: Voice
✓ **Engaging and Expressive Tone** o Conversational lines like *"Imagine walking to work with a service goat leading you there!"* show lively engagement.
✓ **Sincerity and Personality** o Writer's enthusiasm for the topic comes through naturally.
✓ **Audience Awareness** o Balances explanation and humor to hold interest.
✓ **Consistency of Tone** o Maintains positivity throughout, but informal sign-off shifts tone away from academic writing.

Word Choice: 3

Vocabulary is clear and accurate but limited in range. Repetition of general words and informal phrasing reduce sophistication.

Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice
✓ **Precision and Variety** o Common words like "law," "animal," and "people" are repeated.
✓ **Content Vocabulary** o Includes some relevant words ("transmit diseases," "environment") but lacks variety.
✓ **Descriptive Language** o Humor adds imagery but not technical precision.
✓ **Appropriate Tone** o Everyday language fits audience but needs more academic vocabulary.

Sentence Fluency: 4

Sentences are clear and readable. Minor run-ons and informal phrasing affect rhythm but not understanding.

Evidence from Student Work: Sentence Fluency
✓ **Readable Flow** o Sentences are complete and straightforward, making the essay easy to follow.
✓ **Rhythm and Variety** o Some variety in length and structure ("In public places, there are more people than just you there.").
✓ **Run-Ons and Repetition** o Occasional choppiness or run-ons, especially with conjunctions ("But with dogs, which we've lived with for hundreds of years, are less likely to hurt someone.").
✓ **Natural Cadence** o Conversational rhythm keeps the piece lively and readable.

Conventions: 4

Frequent minor spelling and punctuation errors appear but do not obscure meaning.

Evidence from Student Work: Conventions
✓ **Punctuation and Spacing** ○ Extra commas and missing periods (“service, goat leading you there”).
✓ **Capitalization** ○ Generally correct.
✓ **Spelling** ○ Few errors (“to bummed out” instead of “too bummed out”).
✓ **Grammar** ○ Minor subject-verb issues (“dogs… are less likely” phrasing slightly off).

Use of Sources: 3

Accurate understanding of *Source #3* is evident, and information is paraphrased appropriately. Evidence is correctly integrated, but the essay relies on a single source.

Evidence from Student Work: Use of Sources
✓ **Accurate Source Use** ○ Explicitly references *“Info from: Source #3”* at the end.
✓ **Relevance and Accuracy** ○ Reflects correct details from *Source #3* about hygiene and safety.
✓ **Balance of Sources** ○ No evidence from *Sources #1* or *#2.*
✓ **Citation and Attribution** ○ Acknowledged source number but could integrate citations within text.