Grade 5 – Informational Writing Work Sample: Approaching

Task: Your class is studying about different animal habitats and behavior. You are given three sources about animal behavior and hibernation.

*Read the sources carefully to **write an informational article** about hibernation. Using more than one source, develop a main idea about hibernation. Choose the most important information from the sources to support your main idea.*

Scores, Justification of Student Evidence, and Suggested Areas of Student Improvement

Ideas and Content: 3

The paper shows a basic understanding of hibernation and includes some accurate information from the sources. However, it relies on simple listing of facts and lacks elaboration and synthesis. The main idea—that hibernation is difficult to study—is clear but underdeveloped and not consistently supported with reasoning.

Evidence from Student Work: Ideas and Content
✓ **Clear but Limited Main Idea:** ○ The introduction begins with a focused claim: "Hibernation is not easy to study." This establishes purpose, but it narrows the topic to *studying* hibernation rather than explaining *what hibernation is* or *why it matters* for survival.
✓ **Accurate but Surface-Level Details:** ○ Facts about bears looking for "rodents, insects, and berries before hibernation" and building dens from "leaves and brush" are drawn accurately from Source 1 (*Do Not Disturb*), but they are presented as standalone facts without commentary or connection.
✓ **Limited Analysis or Explanation:** ○ The statement "The food that they ate gives them fat which helps keep them warm" is correct but not expanded upon. The reader learns *what* happens, not *why* or *how* it supports the main idea.
✓ **Weak Closure and Synthesis:** ○ The conclusion ("Its hard but is not easy") repeats the introduction rather than summarizing insights. It fails to tie together preparation, temperature change, and survival.

Organization: 3

The essay follows a chronological order but lacks clear transitions and unity between sections. The introduction and conclusion are repetitive, and paragraph structure needs refinement to show clear relationships between ideas.

Evidence from Student Work: Organization
✓ **Logical but Basic Structure:** ○ The paper roughly follows the order of events (preparation → den building → hibernation), but ideas appear in isolated chunks.
✓ **Weak Transitions:** ○ Paragraphs begin abruptly ("Food is scarce close to winter…" "Getting ready for hibernation is not easy…"), offering little guidance for readers about how one idea connects to the next.
✓ **Uneven Paragraph Development:** ○ Each section contains short, simple statements without elaboration, leading to a choppy flow.
✓ **Ineffective Closure:** ○ The final sentence simply restates difficulty ("Its hard but is not easy") without reflecting on what was learned or summarizing the main points.

Voice: 3

The tone is factual but flat, showing minimal engagement with the topic. While the writer stays on task, the lack of descriptive phrasing and personal connection makes the piece feel mechanical.

Evidence from Student Work: Voice
✓ **Appropriate but Limited Tone:** ○ The language remains straightforward and neutral, avoiding errors but lacking enthusiasm or curiosity.
✓ **No Distinctive Voice:** ○ The essay reads like a list of statements without any sense of the writer's interest or confidence.
✓ **Consistent Objectivity:** ○ The tone stays factual throughout, which is appropriate for informational writing, but the absence of strong verbs or sentence variation limits engagement.
✓ **Limited Reader Connection:** ○ Without commentary or reflective statements, the piece doesn't invite readers to think or wonder about hibernation.

Word Choice: 3

Vocabulary is functional and mostly accurate but lacks precision and variety. Occasional word errors and simple phrasing limit sophistication.

Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice
✓ **Accurate but Plain Vocabulary:** ○ Words like "food," "den," and "warm" are correct but repetitive and general.
✓ **Missed Domain Terms:** ○ The piece omits key scientific vocabulary from the sources, such as "hibernating mammals," "hypothalamus," or "body temperature regulation."
✓ **Some Misuse of Words:** ○ "Ether" appears instead of *either*, and "cause" is used incorrectly for "because," slightly disrupting clarity.
✓ **Lack of Imagery:** ○ The essay gives no sensory or descriptive language to help readers visualize what happens during hibernation.

Sentence Fluency: 3

Sentences are generally complete but lack rhythm and variety. Repetitive sentence beginnings and short, choppy patterns reduce fluency.

Evidence from Student Work: Sentence Fluency
✓ **Simple Sentence Structures:** ○ Most sentences are short and declarative ("Food is scarce close to winter." "Bears like to look for rodents.").
✓ **Repetitive Beginnings:** ○ Several sentences start with the same subject ("Bears… Bears…"), creating monotony.
✓ **Limited Transitions:** ○ Few connecting phrases appear between sentences, making the flow abrupt.
✓ **Readable but Uneven Rhythm:** ○ Although easy to follow, the text lacks the smoothness expected in proficient writing.

Conventions: 3

Grammar and punctuation are mostly correct, but frequent small errors (spelling, commas, and capitalization) reduce polish and readability.

Evidence from Student Work: Conventions
✓ **Basic Control of Grammar:** o Sentences are complete and understandable, but informal constructions ("cause" instead of "because") weaken correctness.
✓ **Spelling Errors:** o "Ether" for *either* and inconsistent use of "Its" vs. "It's" appear multiple times.
✓ **Punctuation:** o Commas are missing after introductory phrases ("Now it is time for hibernation").
✓ **Capitalization:** o The title "HIBERNATION" is correctly capitalized, but inconsistent capitalization of "Its" vs. "It's" appears.

Use of Sources: 3

The writer effectively integrates accurate information from multiple sources, demonstrating a clear understanding of animals' adaptations to different environments. Details are paraphrased in the writer's own words, and examples from various habitats show thoughtful selection and comprehension of source material.

Evidence from Student Work: Use of Sources
✓ **Accurate Reference to Source 1:** o Mentions of food gathering, den digging, and temperature changes align directly with *Do Not Disturb*.
✓ **Missing Multiple Sources:** o No evidence from *Do Bears Hibernate?* or *A Barn for Bears* appears, limiting synthesis.
✓ **No Citation Phrases:** o Facts are presented as general knowledge ("Bears know it is time…") without attribution.
✓ **Limited Interpretation:** o The writer reports facts but does not explain their significance or connection to hibernation's purpose.