Grade 5 – Opinion Writing Work Sample: Approaching

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 essay presents a clear, balanced opinion supported by relevant reasoning. It shows understanding of the debate and references source-aligned ideas (disease, damage, fairness), though evidence is mostly paraphrased and not cited.

Evidence from Student Work: Ideas and Content
✓ **Clear Opinion and Purpose** ○ States position clearly: *"I personally think it is good but at the same time bad."* ○ Concludes decisively: *"The law should change to permit service dogs and monkeys."*
✓ **Relevant and Accurate Details** ○ References key facts from the sources: *"Big service animals can wreck things that are flimsy and fragile and make too much noise."* ○ Demonstrates awareness of disease concerns and access issues, consistent with *Source #3 ("New Service Animal Rules")* and *Source #1 ("Monkey Helpers")*.
✓ **Development and Elaboration** ○ Includes reasoning for both sides, showing fairness ("The good is that… The bad side is…"). ○ However, elaboration is minimal — few details explain *why* monkeys should be exceptions beyond being "under control."
✓ **Focus and Relevance** ○ Focus remains on the law, but several examples (like the snake scenario) are hypothetical rather than text-based.

Organization: 3

The essay shows logical intent with a "pros vs. cons" format but lacks paragraph transitions, topic sentences, and balanced development.

Evidence from Student Work: Organization
✓ **Introduction** ○ Begins conversationally: *"Do you like the new law that only permits service dogs…?"* but delays clarity of stance.
✓ **Grouping and Order** ○ Uses a simple "good vs. bad" structure that gives balance but little transition between ideas.
✓ **Transitions and Flow** ○ Limited connecting language ("Then there is the bad side") without smooth linkage.
✓ **Conclusion and Closure** ○ Ends with a clear statement proposing change ("permit service dogs and monkeys") but no summary of reasons.

Voice: 4

The tone is sincere, conversational, and fair-minded. The writer demonstrates awareness of multiple perspectives and connects with the reader through inclusive language.

Evidence from Student Work: Voice
✓ **Engaging and Honest Tone** ○ The student writes directly to readers ("Do you like the new law…?") and shows empathy for people with disabilities ("It would not be fair to them because it is like they have no rights").
✓ **Sincerity and Balance** ○ Treats both sides thoughtfully before stating a personal opinion.
✓ **Consistency of Tone** ○ Maintains a neutral, reasonable tone throughout, even when disagreeing.
✓ **Audience Awareness** ○ Appeals to fairness, helping readers see both perspectives.

Word Choice: 3

Word choice is clear and appropriate but simple. Repetition and vague phrasing limit precision and sophistication.

Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice
✓ **Precision and Variety** ○ Repeats common terms ("good," "bad," "law," "service animals").
✓ **Content Vocabulary** ○ Includes topic-related words ("disabled person," "disease") but lacks variety or elaboration.
✓ **Descriptive Language** ○ Few vivid details; relies on conversational terms like "big animals," "bad side."
✓ **Appropriate Tone** ○ Language fits purpose but needs stronger academic vocabulary.

Sentence Fluency: 3

Sentences are readable but structurally simple, often beginning the same way. Some are choppy or run together without proper punctuation.

Evidence from Student Work: Sentence Fluency
✓ **Flow and Rhythm** ○ Sentences read smoothly but are repetitive in pattern.
✓ **Variety of Structures** ○ Many sentences start with "The" or "It."
✓ **Punctuation and Run-Ons** ○ Missing commas in compound ideas ("The good is that the the men and women who passed the law are right").
✓ **Readability** ○ Despite errors, sentences remain understandable.

Conventions: 2

Frequent punctuation, capitalization, and spelling errors interrupt flow. Errors distract but do not obscure meaning.

Evidence from Student Work: Conventions
✓ **Punctuation and Capitalization** ○ Missing commas and double "the" ("the the men and women…"). ○ Inconsistent capitalization of sentence beginnings ("II n conclusion").
✓ **Spelling Errors** ○ Misspellings ("can not" instead of "cannot," "law of not" for "law or not").
✓ **Grammar and Mechanics** ○ Incomplete and fragmented sentences appear ("A disabled person who does not have a service dog but does have a service monkey can not go to a restaurant or even go out to any place except for their front or back yard.").

Use of Sources: 3

The essay reflects understanding of the readings, paraphrasing key ideas about disease, size, and fairness. However, it lacks direct citation or variety across sources.

Evidence from Student Work: Use of Sources
✓ **Accurate Understanding** ○ Mentions disease risks and destructive animals aligned with *Source #3*. ○ Notes that monkeys help disabled people, referencing *Source #1.*
✓ **Paraphrasing** ○ Information is summarized accurately but without attribution ("big service animals can wreck things").
✓ **Balance of Sources** ○ Covers both sides of the debate but favors general reasoning over direct quotes.
✓ **Citation and Attribution** ○ No explicit mention of "Source #1" or "Source #3."