High School – Argumentative Writing Work Sample: Approaching

Task: Your class is studying about computer technology and development. You are given five resources about 3-D printers and how copyright, patent, and trademark law apply to 3D printers.

*Read the sources carefully to **write an argumentative essay** supporting or opposing the school library getting a 3D printer for students to use. Make sure to address potential counterarguments in your essay and support your claim with information from the sources you have examined.*

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

Ideas and Content: 3

The essay presents a clear claim opposing the school library getting a 3D printer and provides several reasons: financial burden, legal risks, and lack of educational value. The stance is consistent and the body paragraphs remain aligned with the claim. The writer includes multiple references to the sources, but many of these references are partial, misinterpreted, or oversimplified. Reasoning is present but often underdeveloped, with several statements that contradict or inaccurately summarize the source material. The essay demonstrates understanding of the task but lacks the accuracy, nuance, and depth required for a higher score.

Evidence from Student Work: Ideas and Content
✓ **Clear Claim Stated Early and Maintained** ○ "The library should not purchase a 3D printer…" ○ The entire essay consistently supports the claim.
✓ **Relevant but General Reasons** ○ Financial burden: Cites cost of "$1,299 plus shipping," though this number comes from the prompt rather than the sources. ○ Legal issues: Mentions copyright and patent risks but misunderstands core source explanations. ○ Library mission: Claims printers have "no educational purpose," but does not address source-based counterexamples.
✓ **Partial and Sometimes Inaccurate Source Use** ○ Source 3: Misinterprets government "leniency" Source 3 explains that *most* printed objects are not protected by patent or copyright, which *reduces* legal concerns; the writer frames this as increased danger. ○ Source 4: Misstates that the system "does not work out" frequently; however, Source 4 shows that DMCA takedowns work effectively in many cases. ○ Source 1: Suggests library could get into lawsuits but does not mention the clear policies that protect institutions. ○ Source 5: Correct general idea (library mission concerns), but not cited directly or accurately.
✓ **Reasoning Is Underdeveloped** ○ Financial reasoning is shallow no comparison to typical library expenditures, no noted policy mitigations (Source 1). ○ Legal reasoning is largely speculative ("better to avoid any problems overall"). ○ Educational-purpose argument ignores the customization and innovation benefits outlined in Sources 2 and 3.
✓ **Counterargument Present but Weak** ○ Acknowledges a warning label and "caveat emptor," but does not use source-based benefits before rebutting. ○ Misinterprets Source 4's message that most disputes are resolved.
✓ **No Evidence of Synthesis Across Sources** ○ Sources are mentioned individually but not connected or compared.

Organization: 3

The essay has a recognizable argumentative structure: a clear claim, body paragraphs grouped by reasons, and a conclusion. Transitions are basic but functional. However, some paragraphs blend unrelated ideas or lack internal coherence. Sequencing is adequate but not fully logical or purposeful. The counterargument section is very brief and not well integrated.

Evidence from Student Work: Organization
✓ **Clear Introduction With a Firm Claim** ○ Opens with: "The library should not purchase a 3D printer…"
✓ **Body Paragraphs Organized by Reason** ○ One paragraph for cost, one for legal concerns, one for educational purpose.
✓ **Transitions Are Simple but Functional** ○ Uses "Another problem," "Also," "Besides," which provide basic connections.
✓ **Counterargument Is Weakly Positioned and Underdeveloped** ○ Briefly mentions label warnings and "buyer beware" but does not integrate source-based benefits before rebutting.
✓ **Paragraphs Sometimes Blend Ideas Without Development** ○ The "legal issues" paragraph mixes patent concerns, copying risks, and copyright misconceptions in ways that lack clarity.
✓ **Conclusion Restates Claim Without Synthesis** ○ Repeats stance but does not unify reasoning or reference the main themes.

Voice: 3

The voice is sincere and clearly expresses the writer's concerns about cost, misuse, and educational value. However, the tone becomes overly alarmist or speculative at times and lacks the academic control expected in high school argument writing. Audience awareness is inconsistent.

Evidence from Student Work: Voice
✓ **Clear Authorial Stance** ○ Strong personal voice shows conviction about the dangers and drawbacks.
✓ **Occasional Overly Emotional or Alarmist Tone** ○ Phrases like "end up being sued for something they didn't do," "dangerous prototyping," and "might be legally on the line" heighten drama without evidence.
✓ **Limited Academic Neutrality** ○ Several claims rely on fear rather than argument: "better to avoid any problems overall."
✓ **Audience Awareness Is Partial** ○ Addresses concerns relevant to school decision-makers, but tone at times feels aimed at peers rather than adults.
✓ **Some Effective Moments of Formal Voice** ○ When summarizing reasons, voice becomes more controlled and focused.

Word Choice: 3

Word choice is generally clear but often vague, informal, or exaggerated. The writer uses some source-related terminology but also relies on speculative or imprecise expressions that weaken argumentative effectiveness.

Evidence from Student Work: Word Choice
✓ **Attempts at Technical or Legal Vocabulary** ○ Mentions "copyright," "patent," and "illegal printing."
✓ **Vague or Overgeneralized Language** ○ "Many people could get in trouble," "dangerous prototyping," "very easy to make items that could get you sued."
✓ **Informal Word Choice** ○ Uses everyday language that lacks academic precision: "avoid any problems," "no educational purpose," "drain on funds."
✓ **Occasional Misuse of Terminology** ○ Confuses patent vs. copyright in ways that reflect misunderstanding.
✓ **Some Effective Diction** ○ When describing educational purpose concerns, language becomes more precise.

Sentence Fluency: 3

Sentences are generally readable but show uneven rhythm, repetitive structures, and occasional awkward phrasing. Some sentences combine unrelated ideas, and transitions within sentences are sometimes unclear.

Evidence from Student Work: Sentence Fluency
✓ **Readable but Not Smooth** ○ Sentences sometimes feel abrupt or stitched together.
✓ **Repetitive Sentence Structures** ○ Many sentences follow a similar pattern, reducing variety.
✓ **Awkward or Dense Constructions** ○ Example: "Another problem is that if a student uses a design he found online…" followed by multiple loosely connected ideas.
✓ **Some Run-On Tendencies** ○ Long sentences attempt to link multiple claims without clear transitions.
✓ **Basic Transitional Phrases** ○ "Another problem," "Also," "Besides" provide minimal fluency support.

Conventions: 3

The writing demonstrates basic control of grammar and punctuation, with errors that occasionally distract but do not impede clarity. The piece would benefit from more precise editing.

Evidence from Student Work: Conventions
✓ **Mostly Correct Grammar** ○ Sentences generally maintain subject–verb agreement.
✓ **Some Punctuation Errors** ○ Missing commas in complex sentences. Occasional run-on tendencies.
✓ **Minor Spelling Errors** ○ No major issues, but proofreading could catch small slip-ups.
✓ **Clear but Not Polished** ○ Errors do not impede meaning but reduce the professionalism of the writing.

Use of Sources: 3

The essay uses multiple sources, but interpretations are often partial or inaccurate. Source integration is present but not consistently clear or correct. Evidence sometimes contradicts source explanations or oversimplifies key points.

Evidence from Student Work: Use of Sources
✓ **Attempts to Use Several Sources** ○ Mentions legal concerns, creativity issues, and library purpose—all tied to the text set.
✓ **Inaccurate Interpretation of Source 3** ○ Writer claims government leniency increases danger; Source 3 states most objects are not legally protected, reducing infringement concern.
✓ **Mischaracterization of Source 4** ○ Suggests takedown system “does not work out” regularly, though Source 4 shows it often resolves disputes.
✓ **Source 1 Underutilized** ○ Does not acknowledge the staff-mediated policy protections that reduce risk.
✓ **No Clear Attribution** ○ Sources referenced implicitly without signal phrases.
✓ **No Synthesis Across Sources** ○ Sources are used separately, not combined to support reasoning.