**The Fundamentals of a Good Essay Structure [In-Class Session]**

**Activity 1 (5 minutes)**

Produce short written responses that show:

1. *One idea in the reading that you already use in your essay writing*
2. *One idea in the reading that you will now use in your essay writing*

**Activity 2 (10 minutes)**

Take part in a class discussion about the structure that a good essay should take. Specifically, think about and discuss:

1. *What is a thesis statement?*
2. *What are development statements? How are they linked to the thesis statement?*
3. *What is the purpose of these parts of an essay?*
4. *How should the main body of an essay be organized?*
5. *What is a topic sentence? Is it the same as a development statement?*
6. *What sort of information should appear in the conclusion to an essay?*

**Activity 3 (10 minutes)**

As a general rule, thesis statements in many essays are too general, which means it is not possible for the author to fully address them with reasons and evidence in his/her writing.Stronger thesis statements should provide narrowed or more focused points.

Rank the following four thesis statements (from best to worst) and justify your decisions:

A) Recreating deadly viruses to study their evolution has more downsides than upsides.

B) Recreating deadly viruses to study their evolution can bring many benefits by helping us better understand how rapidly they change and how we can better design vaccines in outbreak situations.

C) Recreating deadly viruses to study their evolution comes with many risks, seeing as these viruses can mutate into more deadly forms.

D) Recreating deadly viruses to study their evolution brings both downsides and upsides but we need to study how quickly they mutate and how dangerous they are.

**Activity 4 (15 minutes)**

In the homework, you were asked to identify a current controversy in science that interests you, and to state your opinion and think of some of the reasons that you could use to support your position.

Choose a partner and briefly speak to them about this (you should both aim to have spoken about your interests and opinions within five minutes).

Now, in the next five minutes, try to write a thesis statement and one or more development statements that you will use to begin your argumentative essay.

And, in the last five minutes, talk to your partner about your thesis statement and development statement(s) and see if you can help each other improve them.

*Hint: Are your statements too broad/vague, and do they list enough reasons that you will use to support the main claim made in the thesis statement. Re-writing a thesis statement can take some time, but revision is an important part of the writing process.* ***Try to settle on a good thesis and development statement by the next class but don’t rush things – in many ways, these are the most important parts of an essay.***