**The Importance of Peer Review**

Peer review ensures that only high-quality work appears in the science literature; it also allows a writer to improve his/her work based on feedback provided by someone within his/her field. Today you will get the chance to provide constructive feedback on someone else’s essay, while having them comment on yours. This exchange should help you improve your work greatly.

**Activity 1 (10 minutes)**

Take part in a class discussion about peer review and its importance. Some specific questions to think about include:

1. What would happen if scientists didn’t have their work reviewed by their peers?
2. Are they any downsides? What happens if there is a disagreement?
3. What sort of feedback is the best to give/receive?

**Activity 2 (30 minutes)**

Choose a partner (preferably someone you haven’t worked with before) and swap your essay drafts. First of all, read through their essay in its entirety before going back and reading it in smaller chunks. Comment on it by annotating the work where you are confused, or where you think improvements can be made. Rather than editing it, suggest other options that would lead to improvements (e.g. don’t make the improvements yourself).

Pay extra attention to the most important elements that dictate whether an essay has a good structure and reads well:

1. Are the thesis and development statements clear? Are they too narrow or too broad?
2. Is the work split up into paragraphs that focus on one main point each?
3. Does the essay follow a logical path of development? Do the reasons that are supplied to support the original thesis follow the order that they were set out in the original development statement(s)?
4. Are topic sentences used effectively so that someone who was lost (just started reading halfway through) would understand the route being taken (what the author was going to elaborate on in a given paragraph)?
5. Are transition words and phrases used effectively so that each sentence transitions smoothly into the next one?
6. Is the conclusion clear and concise? Does the author introduce any new material here that is confusing in any way?
7. Is the essay interesting? Do you feel you have learned something new? Do you agree with the thesis statement now that you have read the whole essay (have you been convinced by the author’s argument)?

**Activity 3 (10 minutes)**

Read through the comments you have received from your partner and make sure you understand them all. Once you are satisfied that you do, spend the remaining time making improvements based on their feedback. You will not be able to finish all of these in class, but you can take the feedback away with you and use it to improve your essay before handing it in.