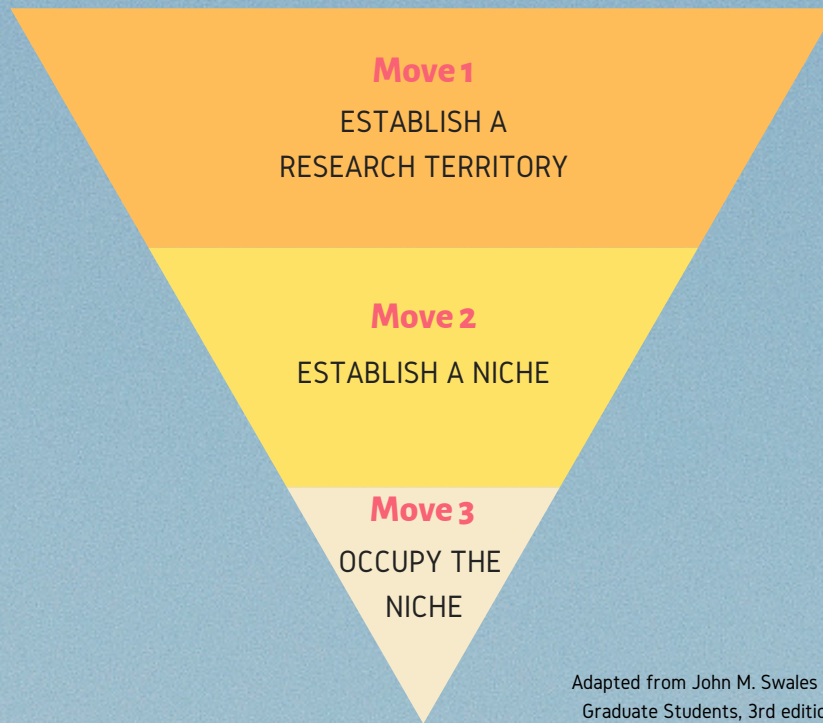


Creating A Research Space [CARS] Model

FOR ACADEMIC INTRODUCTIONS

The most effective introductions set up a context of the general research topic, provide a brief background on the topic based on existing scholarship, and then narrow to the specific argument or research question. Writing scholars John M. Swales and Christine B. Feak have identified a general structure of introductions in academic papers called the CARS model (Creating A Research Space). The model is made up of three moves:



Adapted from John M. Swales and Christine B. Feak (2012), *Academic Writing for Graduate Students*, 3rd edition (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press).

MOVE 1: ESTABLISH A RESEARCH TERRITORY

A. Argue for the centrality of your research area

- Argue for the importance of your topic area: *Why is the topic significant?*
- Articulate a problem in your topic area: *What is the problem you are going to be tackling? What is wrong in/with this important topic area?*
- Articulate the harms or effects of the problem: *So what? Why is the problem a problem? Who or what is being harmed, and what happens if the problem continues to go unaddressed?*

B. Argue that current (real-world) efforts to address the problem are insufficient

- *What has been done to address the problem? What has been done to address so significant and harmful a problem?*
- *Why are those efforts inadequate to address the problem? Why isn't that enough?*

MOVE 2: ESTABLISH A NICHE OR GAP

A. What previous scholarly research has been conducted into your problem?

- *What do "they say"? What research are you building on, and/or what are you refuting?*

B. What are the limitations of that research?

- *What is the gap in the existing research that you are going to fill? What have "they" not said?*
- (NB "no one has done this before" is not a sufficient reason on its own)

Options for establishing a niche:

- *counter-claiming (something is wrong)*
- *indicating a gap (something is missing)*
- *raising a question or making an inference (something is unclear)*
- *continuing a tradition (adding something)*

MOVE 3: OCCUPY THE NICHE OR GAP

A. Articulate the purpose of your research

- *How does your research fill the gap you've identified in 2b?*

B. State your research questions and/or hypotheses

- *What are the specific questions you are trying to answer in filling that gap?*

C. State principal findings

- *What are some notable results that attempt to answer your research question?*

D. State value of your research

- *How does your research advance what we know about your topic or field?*

E. State the structure of your paper

- *What is the structure of the rest of the document, and how does it elaborate the story you've told in your introduction? (Mostly metadiscourse.)*

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