

Literature reviews (Part B) for graduate students: Writing the review

The Introduction

Creating-A-Research-Space (CARS):

Move 1: Establishing a research territory:

- a. By showing that the general research area is important, central, interesting, problematic, or relevant in some way
- b. By introducing and reviewing items of previous research in the area

Move 2: Establishing a niche:

- a. By indicating a gap in the previous research, or by extending previous knowledge in some way

Move 3: Occupying the niche:

- a. By outlining purposes or stating the nature of the present research
- b. By listing research questions or hypotheses
- c. By announcing principal findings
- d. By stating the value of the present research
- e. By indicating the structure of the research project

Source: Swales, John and Christine Feak. *Academic Writing for Graduate Students*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013. 331 Print.

Example 1:

Paper Title: Survival on the Margins: Civilian Self-Protection and the Limits of International Aid

Author: David Morgan

Move 1: There is growing acceptance that if states are unable or unwilling to prevent and react to mass atrocities within their borders, this “responsibility to protect” must fall to the international community. Academics working on this issue typically focus on the dilemmas involved in protecting civilians on the ground, highlighting the failures and, less often, the successes of international approaches. **Move 2:** Less recognized, however, are the strategies and mechanisms that civilians themselves develop to survive violence and continue to fulfill various ‘life projects’. **Move 3:** In an attempt to address this gap, this paper examines the self-protection strategies that Syrian refugees used to escape the violence in their country and begin life anew on the margins of Jordanian society. Beginning with the lived experiences of the refugees themselves, it explores the various social and cultural resources and networks on which they have drawn, and highlights the frequent isolation of these activities from international aid efforts. This paper thus challenges the conventional view of civilian protection as a commodity to be delivered by actors external to the conflict. Instead, survival and protection are understood as living processes, as local actors strive to navigate insecurity, break cycles of conflict and foster sustainable development in their surrounding environments.

Source: CASID Annual Conference Program. 3-5 June 2015. University of Ottawa.
<https://www.casid-acedi.ca/sites/casid-acedi.ca/files/CASID2015FINALProgramWeb.pdf>

Example 2:

Move 1: More immigrants entered the United States during the past decade than in any comparable period since the 1920s. Among the issues raised by this influx, none is as controversial as its effect on the labor market opportunities of native-born workers. **Move 2:** Evidence of the labor market consequences of immigration is limited (see Greenwood and McDowell 1986 and Borjas 1990). **Move 3:** This paper presents new evidence on the effects of immigration, based on changes in the distributions of wages in 24 major cities during the 1980s. Although immigrant inflows are small relative to the populations of most cities, recent immigrants are a significant fraction of less-educated workers in many cities. We therefore concentrate on measuring the effects of immigration at the lower tail of the wage distribution. In particular, we ask whether recent declines in the real earnings of the least-skilled workers in the U.S. economy are related to immigration. Our empirical analysis reveals large differences across cities in the relative growth rates of wages for low-and high-paid workers...

Source: Butcher, Kristin and David Card. "Immigration and Wages: Evidence from the 1980s." *American Economic Review*. 81.2 (May 1991): 292. Web. 10 Sept. 2015

Move 1: Language for Establishing a Research Territory

- ... has been extensively studied ...
- ... there has been growing interest in ...
- ... has become a major issue ...
- Recent studies have focused on ...
- ... remains a serious problem ...
- ... there has been increasing concern ...
- ... has been investigated by many researchers ...
- ... has become an important aspect of ...

Move 2: Some Options for Establishing a Niche

- A. counter-claiming (something is wrong)
- B. indicating a gap (something is missing)
- C. raising a question or making an inference (something is unclear) (Kwan and Chan, 2011)
- D. continuing a tradition (adding something)

Stronger



Weaker

Source: Swales, John, and Christine Feak. *Academic Writing for Graduate Students*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013. 339; 348. Print.

Activity: Here are four Move 2 statements about self-citation. Would you categorize them as A, B, C, or D?

1. These finding suggest that the number of co-authors might affect the self-citation rate.

2. However, in all three cases, the methodologies used for analyzing self-citations are flawed.
3. Studies so far lead to a question that has as yet no clear answer: Do self-citations pay?
4. It would therefore be interesting to have further information about the citation practices of Norwegian scientists.

Source: Swales, John and Christine Feak. *Academic Writing for Graduate Students*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013. 349. Print.