

CREATING A RESEARCH SPACE (CARS)



The CaRS Model can help you build an introduction, especially in STEM fields. The model consists of three rhetorical moves that help identify the background, motivation, and focus of the research. This framework can help give your reader a basic overview of your larger project.



Move 1: Establish a Research Territory

The research territory, or broad topic, is the context required to both understand and conduct the research being explored. Your goal is to explain the current state of scholarship in the field and answer the question, "Why is this general research area important?"

Language for Establishing a Research Territory

- + _____ has been extensively studied...
- + Interest in _____ has been growing.
- + Recent studies have focused on...
- + _____ has become a major issue...



For more ideas about what type of language to use in different scenarios, visit the Manchester Academic Phrasebank at www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk



Move 2: Establish a Niche

The niche is the reason or motivation for the research. You are preparing your audience to understand how your research relates to the background you have given, highlighting gaps/problems in current knowledge that justify or explain the need for further investigation.

Methods for Establishing a Niche

- + Make a counter-claim (something is wrong)
- + Indicate a gap (something is missing)
- + Raise a question or make an inference (something is unclear)
- + Continue a tradition (adding something)

Language for Establishing a Niche

- + Previous studies of _____ have not examined...
- + Such studies are unsatisfactory because...
- + One question that needs to be asked, however, is...
- + Research on _____ has mostly been restricted to _____ so...



Move 3: Occupy the Niche

This step is an **explanation of how** you are responding to the need for further investigation. Explain how your research addresses the need you identified in the previous step and **list your specific research objectives, questions, or methods.**



Strategies for Occupying the Niche

- + Outline purpose(s) of your research
- + List research questions or hypotheses
- + Announce principal research findings
- + Indicate structure of your research process

Language for Occupying the Niche

- + The purpose of this literature review is to...
- + This study aims to...
- + The evidence collected from this study demonstrates...
- + This review outlines/examines...

The way you decide to occupy the niche will depend on where you are in the research process and whether you are proposing new research or reporting research you have already completed.

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



Example

① Stress is a seemingly ever-present factor in the lives of university students, and many have difficulty regulating stress and functioning to their fullest potential. Many individuals choose to relieve their stress by listening to music, and stress relief as a result of music listening has been researched through both physiological and self-perception studies. Music listening decreases physiological stress by indirectly decreasing cortisol levels (a hormone linked to high stress levels) through a down-regulation of the Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Adrenal (HPA) Axis (Linnemann, Ditzen, Strahler, Doerr, & Nater, 2015). Studies focused on self-perceived stress levels found that listening to music with the goal of relaxation is significantly more effective than listening to music for the purpose of distraction according to self-report measures (Linnemann et al., 2015). While the positive relationship between music listening and stress relief has been supported within the general population, little research has been done to examine music's effect on the mental health and stress levels of university students in particular. University students exhibit a higher rate of both stress-induced depression and anxiety than the general population due to the pressures of completing complex programs while often living away from home for the first time (Hanser, 1985, p. 419; Regehr, Glancy, & Pitts, 2013). As a result, student stress relief is a critical part of ensuring student wellbeing, especially with student mental health at the forefront of many recent discussions among university faculty, staff, and students. This investigatory survey is the first step in a multi-stage ③ study on how undergraduate residents at Conrad Grebel University College use music in relation to stressful situations, and how stress relief through music listening is perceived. We hypothesize that students will report stress-relief as one of the primary reasons they choose to listen to music, and that they will report choosing music they enjoy when they need to relieve stress. Patterns observed in student responses will be used to determine specific research questions for further investigation, and research on student stress relief could help to inform university policy makers on ways to create healthier campuses.