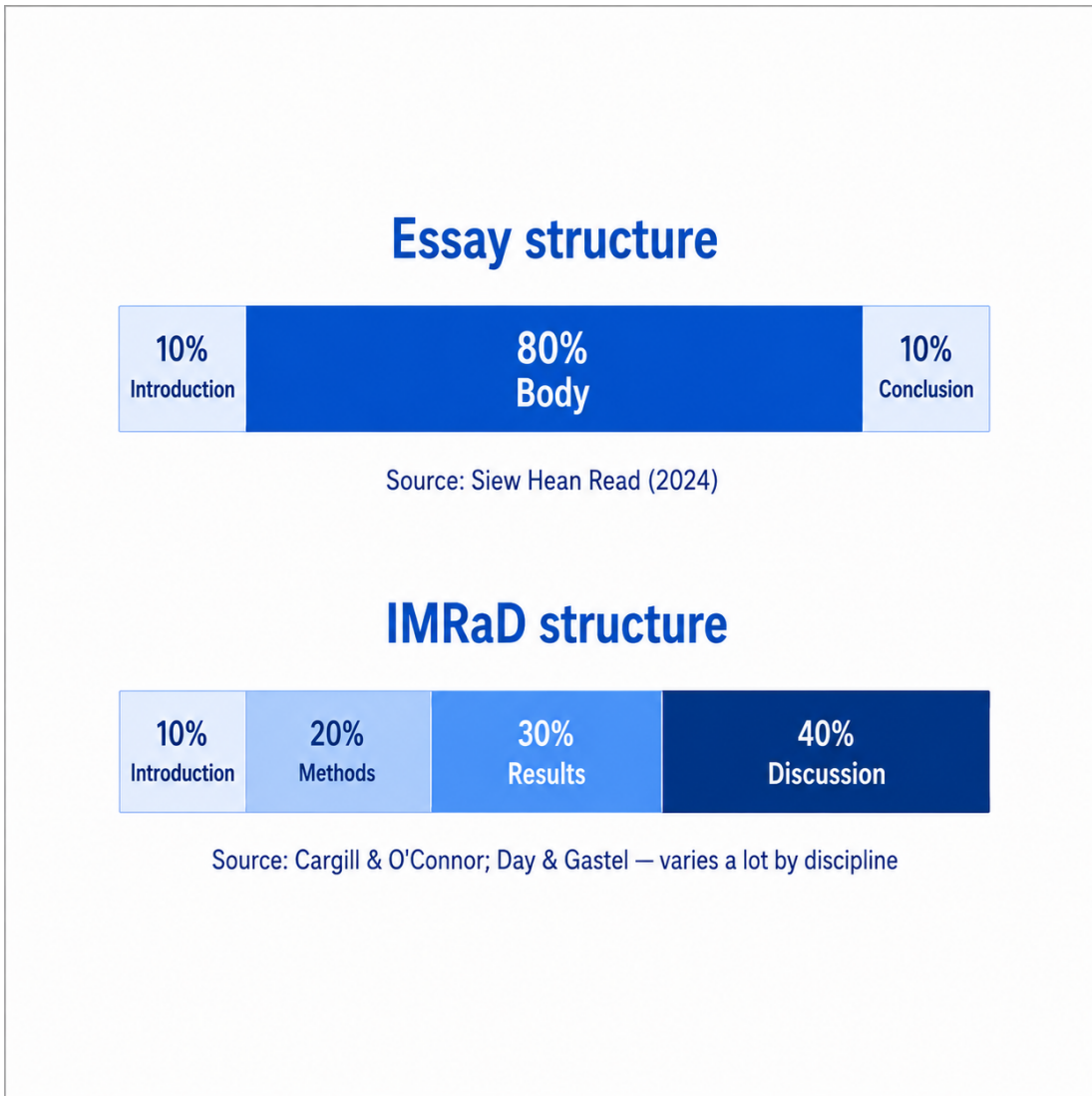


Lesson 4, Formal Macro Structure and Flow



When you write, pick the convention of your field. When you read, recognise that *Conclusion*, *Discussion* and *Implications* may be doing the same work.

Results, Discussion, Conclusion — distinctions

In a published research paper:

- **Results** sections deal with *factual statements* and their interpretation.
- **Discussion** sections deal with *claims that might be made* — especially new-knowledge claims.
- **Conclusion** sections close the paper, sometimes overlapping the Discussion.

The difference between a Discussion and a Conclusion is partly conventional, depending on field and journal. Paraphrased from Swales & Feak, p. 365.

Weissburger & Buker (1990) put it more memorably: in the Discussion you *step back and take a broad look at your findings and your study as a whole.*

Exercise 2

The paper has been adapted from one John wrote for a History of Art seminar he audited on nineteenth-century realism. Read it and answer the questions on page 333.
Thomas Eakins and the “Marsh” Pictures

(1) Thomas Eakins (1844-1916) is now recognized as one of the greatest American painters, alongside Winslow Homer, Edward Hopper, and Jackson Pollock. (2) Over the last thirty years, there have been many studies of his life and work, and in 2002 there was a major exhibition devoted entirely to his art in his home city of Philadelphia. (3) His best-known pictures include a number of rowing and sailing scenes, several domestic interiors, the two large canvasses showing the surgeons Gross and Agnew at work in the operating theater, and a long series of portraits, including several of his wife, Susan McDowell. (4) The non-portraits are distinguished by compositional brilliance and attention to detail, while the portraits-most of which come from his later period-are thought to show deep insight into character or “psychological realism.” (5) In many ways, Eakins was a modern late nineteenth century figure since he was interested in science, in anatomy, and in the fast-growing “manly sports” of rowing and boxing. (6) In his best work, he painted what he knew and whom he knew, rather than being an artist-outsider to the scene in front of him. (7) Among Eakins’ pictures, there is a small series of scenes painted between 1873 and 1876 showing hunters preparing to shoot at the secretive marsh birds in the coastal marshes near Philadelphia. (8) Apart from a chapter in Foster (1997), this series has been little discussed by critics or art historians. (9) For example, these pictures were ignored by Johns in her pioneering 1983 monograph, perhaps because their overall smallness (physically, socially and psychologically) did not fit well with her book’s title, *Thomas Eakins: The Heroism of Modern Life*. (10) These pictures are usually thought to have come about simply because Thomas Eakins used to accompany his father on these hunting/shooting trips to the marshes. (11) However, in this paper I will argue that Eakins focused his attention on these featureless landscapes for a much more complex set of motives. (12) These included his wish to get inside the marsh landscape, to stress the hand-eye coordination between the shooter and “the pusher,” and to capture the moment of concentration before any action takes place.

From Swales, J. M. & Feak, C. B. (2012). *Academic Writing for Graduate Students (3rd edn)*. University of Michigan, pp. 332–333. Reproduced for classroom use under fair-use academic provisions.

1. Divide the text into the three basic moves.
2. How many paragraphs would you divide the text into? And where would you put the paragraph boundaries?
3. Look at Figure 16 again. Where in this Introduction would you divide Move 1 into 1a and 1b?
4. What kind of Move 2 did you find?
5. What kind of Move 3a did you find?
6. Underline or highlight any words or expressions in Sentences 1 through 4 that have been used “to establish a research territory.”
7. How many citations are there in the text and footnotes?

Introductions — Lester’s alternative frame

After Lester (16th edn) §12a.

Lester names the same work using slightly different vocabulary. Either frame is fine; use whichever fits your field.

Lester’s element	What it does	CARS equivalent
Subject	Names the topic and narrows it.	(sets up territory)
Background	Relevant context, key prior sources.	Move 1 — territory
Problem	The complication that justifies the paper.	Move 2 — niche
Thesis (or enthymeme, or hypothesis)	The direction of the study.	Move 3 — occupy

Two or three paragraphs of introduction is normal. Don’t try to cram all four elements into one short opening paragraph.

8.1 Must include

- **Subject** — name *and narrow* the topic. “*Climate change*” is a topic; “*How Pacific Island states are framing climate adaptation in 2024 UN submissions*” is a narrowed one.

- **Background** — context that bears on *this* paper, not generic biography or “*since the dawn of time*” filler.
- **Problem** — the complication. If you cannot paraphrase the problem in one sentence after reading the introduction, the writer hasn’t established one.
- **Controlling idea** — thesis, enthymeme, or hypothesis (see L03 handout §8).

8.2 Must avoid

- “*The purpose of this study is ...*” — except in APA empirical reports, where it is expected.
- Repetition of the title as your first sentence.
- Complex language or trick rhetorical questions in the opening line.
- Simple dictionary definitions — “*Webster defines monogamy as ...*”. (An expanded definition is fine.)
- Humour — except when humour is the subject.
- Hand-drawn artwork. (*Yes, really.*)

§9. Conclusions

After Lester (16th edn) §12c.

The conclusion mirrors the introduction. It restates the controlling idea, summarises the evidence, looks beyond the paper, and gives the reader closure.

9.1 Must include

- **Restate the thesis** — in different words, not a copy-paste from the introduction.
- **Summarise** the main points or evidence.
- **Reach beyond the paper** — implications, future work, what now.
- **Closure** — the reader should know the essay is finished.

9.2 Must avoid

- New arguments or new evidence — they belong in the body.
- New citations or sources.
- Apologies or self-doubt about the conclusions.
- Pure summary with no judgement.
- “*In conclusion, ...*” as your only signal that the reader has reached the end.

§11. References

- Hean Read, S. (2024). *Academic Writing Skills for International Students* (2nd edn). Bloomsbury — Part I §3 (“Formal structure, organisation and layout”).
- Lester, J. D. & Lester, J. D. Jr. (16th edn). *Writing Research Papers: A Complete Guide*. Pearson — §12a (introduction checklists), §12c (“Writing the Conclusion of the Research Paper”).
- Swales, J. M. (1990). *Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Settings*. Cambridge — origin of the CARS model.
- Swales, J. M. & Feak, C. B. (2012). *Academic Writing for Graduate Students* (3rd edn). University of Michigan — pp. 331–368 (introductions, results, discussion).
- Weissburger, R. & Buker, S. (1990). *Writing Up Research: Experimental Research Report Writing for Students of English*. Prentice Hall.