Fischer esterification is the esterification of a carboxylic acid by heating it with an alcohol in the presence of a strong acid as the catalyst.

**example:**

\[
\text{CH}_3\text{COOH} + \text{EtOH} \xrightarrow{\text{catalyst: conc. H}_2\text{SO}_4} \text{CH}_3\text{COOEt} + \text{H}_2\text{O}
\]

The overall reaction is reversible; to drive the reaction to completion, it is necessary to exploit Le Châteliers principle, which can be done either by continuously removing the water formed from the system or by using a large excess of the alcohol.

**Mechanism:**

**Contributors**

- Gamini Gunawardena from the OChemPal site (Utah Valley University)