

ELEVATOR PITCH

Poets are like baseball pitchers. Both have their moments. The intervals are the tough things.
~Robert Frost

An “elevator pitch” is a short summary of an idea that you explain to someone verbally—basically it’s a short conversation. The name comes from the premise that you have the duration of an elevator ride with a colleague (or perhaps boss you want to impress!) to communicate your idea clearly and succinctly. Generally an elevator pitch takes from 30 seconds to 2 minutes.

Not only is it valuable to be able to articulate your idea in this sort of succinct way, it can really be an aid to your thinking to practice doing this type of elevator pitch while you’re trying to formulate your idea. We will employ this in class as a technique to help you on Paper 3. The goal of these discussion groups is therefore twofold: 1) to help you articulate your argument more clearly; and 2) to help you make sure your argument isn’t just a summary of the evidence, but rather does something *with* the evidence.

DIRECTIONS:

In groups of 3 people, you will each take turns giving an elevator pitch, responding with feedback, and transcribing.

1. Everyone take 5 minutes to quietly review your Paper 3 introduction and think about how you’ll present your elevator pitch. What is your thesis? What is your evidence? How does this context set up your motive? Write some notes to yourself to organize your thoughts.
2. For each round, please assume the following roles:
 - a. **Pitcher:** In **2 minutes**, present your paper idea. You should include a brief introduction of your thesis, provide a sense of the context (probably from the literature), and try to convince your listeners of the value/veracity of your proposed ideas/argument.
 - b. **Skeptic:** Listen to the pitcher’s 2 minute presentation. After s/he ends, take **2 minutes** to ask questions of the pitcher. Ask about things that didn’t make sense, or places where you were confused. The pitcher can respond to your questions during this time.
 - c. **Mirror:** Listen to the pitcher’s 2 minute presentation, then assist the pitcher by taking notes on what questions are asked, AND how those questions are answered. You can also ask questions, but make sure to transcribe these as well. By recording this conversation, you will be able to provide a clearer sense of what needs to be articulated differently and how that could be done more effectively. After the conversation, give a recap about what was said. Take **1 additional minute** to make sure you’ve recorded the main points.
3. After you go through each round, return the transcribed feedback to the speaker for his/her reference. Everyone should therefore leave class with a sheet of helpful feedback, as well as having practiced articulating Paper 3 ideas clearly.

Things to AVOID:

- Going through the sequence of ideas in the *essay* (e.g. “First I talk about this, then I talk about this.”) While this may be helpful in outlining your paper, it’s not the argument itself.
- Describing your topic instead of your argument (e.g. “I’m writing about HPV in women.”) Remember the components of what makes a good thesis: A topic is not a thesis, (nor is a statement of fact, etc).

Pitcher: _____

Skeptic: _____

Mirror: _____