

“ELEVATOR” SPEECHES

One of the most challenging – but crucial – parts of scholarly work is describing our research to others. Academics need to be quick on their feet (and with their words), as important networking opportunities often occur in brief encounters – in quick conference chats, in coffee and bathroom lines, and, yes, in elevators. It is thus imperative to have a brief but descriptive “pitch” of one’s project that can be communicated with ease and enthusiasm.

For this activity, you will practice two different versions of your “pitch” for your final research paper: a **15-second pitch (elevator)** and a **minute-long pitch (hallway walk)**.

The best **15-second pitches** are crisp and to-the-point but give your listener a good sense of your topic and intervention (yes, this *is* possible to do in 15 seconds!). As we’ve discussed in class, some great starting points include phrases like: “My research focuses on...” “I’m interested in...” “I show how...” **Minute-long pitches** can go into further detail about your specific argument and the sources you’re using. These longer speeches are in some ways trickier; it’s tempting to get bogged down in details when you have a bit more time.

For this activity, you and a partner will travel to different spots in the building to practice your pitches.

Step One: Elevator pitch

For this step, you will give your 15-second speech *in* the Siena Hall elevator. Ride up and down and try your 15-second pitches a couple of times. Give your partner feedback on how they might improve their speech.

***Be mindful of others in the building who need to use the elevator; please let them go first.*

Step Two: Hallway walk

If you are able, walk the length of the hallway outside our classroom, practicing your one-minute version of your speech. For this, add more details, describe some argument sources or pieces of textual evidence, and flush out your claim a bit more.

If walking is not an option for you today, no problem! Feel free to sit on one of the benches outside our classroom and time yourselves.

***Be mindful that there are classes going on, so please use “indoor voices.”*