



Creating an Elevator Pitch

An elevator pitch is a short summary used to show who you are, what you're good at/interested in, your previous relevant experience, and what you are looking for in your interaction with another person. The name reflects the idea that it should be possible to deliver the summary in the time span of an elevator ride.

When to Use an Elevator Pitch

- Talking to people about yourself, your career goals, and your background in an informational interview.
- Introducing yourself when networking.
- Answering "Tell me about yourself" in an interview.

An Elevator Pitch Should Be

- **Specific**

Be specific about who you are and what you offer and include the outcome you're looking for, whether it's an informational interview, new contacts, internship leads, or advice.

- **Tailored**

Adjust your elevator pitch to match the situation at hand. The terms you use, the specific outcome, and the content of your pitch should be tailored to your audience.

- **Practiced**

Rehearsing your elevator pitch can help you sound more natural when the time comes to quickly make an impression in real life. We recommend writing it out first, then practicing aloud until you have a good handle on it.

- **Brief**

Aim for 45 seconds – most people don't have the attention span to listen much longer than that!

Organizing Elevator Pitches

- **Basic Introduction**

Start with your name, major (or anticipated major), college, class year, and perhaps something that differentiates you from your peers (awards/honors, hometown, athlete, veteran, etc.).

- **Relevant Experience, Coursework, Accomplishments, and Interests**

Demonstrate your interest and experience in the field with examples of things you have done. Don't just say, "I have always wanted to be a doctor," but rather, "I have taken pre-med courses and am planning to field work at the hospital this semester." Highlight experience that is relevant to the person you are talking to or the opportunity you are discussing. This might be jobs, internships, research, coursework, shared interests, etc.

Remember that experience is not limited to having specific experience in that field. Highlight skills you are cultivating through your liberal arts education (communication, critical thinking, teamwork, problem solving, research, leadership, etc.).

A brief overview is best – make it a goal to get them to want to ask follow-up questions!

- **Specific Goal/Question/Request for Assistance**

Make it clear to the other person exactly what you are seeking. Never ask outright for an internship or job. Instead, ask if you might set up a time to chat with them to learn more about their work in that industry, if they know of any organizations you should be considering, or if they recommend any colleagues or alumnae/i for additional conversation.

- **Close with Enthusiasm**

Make it clear how excited you are to learn more about an industry or interview for a specific internship/job. Make your pitch flow naturally as you can – this is essentially your story for why you are now talking to a specific person (whether it's at a networking event or in an interview).

While it is important to practice your elevator pitch, make sure it doesn't sound too scripted. It is not necessary to cover all the points above; rather, use your judgment about what highlights your skills and abilities the best.

Elevator Pitch Examples

Example Pitch #1

"Hi, my name is Matt Vassar. I am a sophomore at Vassar College majoring in Economics with a minor in Art History. I am the Secretary of the Vassar Business Club, and last summer I worked at a local bank in my hometown of Anchorage, Alaska. As I begin to plan for this upcoming summer, I am hoping to find a finance internship on the East Coast, preferably in New York City. I am excited to have the opportunity to meet you and would love to get your business card so I can set up an informational interview to learn more about the finance industry."

Example Pitch #2

"Hi, my name is Ana Vassar. I am a sophomore at Vassar College majoring in Sociology and Education. I spent the last semester tutoring 7th graders at Poughkeepsie Middle School through the VAST program, and this coming semester I will do community-engaged learning at R.E.A.L Skills. I also work as a Writing Consultant in the Writing Center on campus. This summer, I am hoping to find an opportunity to continue working with middle school age urban youth in LA. I would love to hear more about your graduate work in education and your current position at Sesame Workshop."

Example Pitch #3

"Hello, my name is Sarah Brewer. I am a senior majoring in Political Science and Philosophy. I've been interested in law since I enrolled at Vassar, and loved the Philosophy of Law class I took with Professor Kelly last semester. I have maintained a 3.65 GPA while also participating in student organizations, including Vassar's Debate team and Vassar Law Club. The past two summers I interned with two local legal services organizations in New York City and I am now looking for a full-time paralegal position when I graduate from Vassar College in May. Knowing how competitive the field of law is, I was wondering if you knew of any law firms I should look into working for when I graduate? Alternatively, I would appreciate the opportunity to give you a call to discuss your career path and how I might find opportunities within the legal profession."

Sample Elevator Pitch Script

1. Hello, my name is _____ and I am a *senior* majoring in _____ at Vassar College.
2. I am interested in pursuing a job in the _____ industry (field).
3. I have been involved (during college) in _____ (leadership, activities, sports).
4. And developed skills in _____. I have also had a position (employment, internship, volunteer) as a _____ with _____ and discovered I really enjoy _____.
5. Could you tell me more about _____?