

Elevator pitch by Kat Robb

Age:	Adults
Level:	Intermediate +
Time:	60 minutes
Objectives:	To learn to deliver an effective two-minute elevator pitch
Key skills:	Speaking
Materials:	Students' smartphones or tablets

Procedure

1 Warmer (6 minutes)

Write the following questions on the board for students to discuss in pairs or small groups. Monitor, helping with vocabulary, and write on the board any relevant emergent language. Conduct whole-group feedback, with each group providing ideas, until the definition and use of elevator pitches are established.

1. What is a **sales pitch**?
2. What do you think an **elevator pitch** might be?
3. Who would use such a pitch and in what situations?

Key: 1. *the things that you say to persuade someone to buy something or to support you*; 2. *a short and persuasive sales pitch*; *The term originates from a scenario of an accidental meeting with someone important in a lift. If your elevator pitch is interesting, it may lead to new business opportunities.*; 3. *project managers, salespeople, jobseekers, policy-makers; to outline the benefits of a product, service or project; to 'sell yourself' during a job interview*

2 Speaking and writing (6 minutes)

In small groups, students brainstorm the features of a good presentation and the features of a good communicator and produce lists. They reflect on and discuss presentations they have seen and given in the past.

3 Speaking (6 minutes)

Conduct whole-group feedback for task 2. Write the ideas on the board in two separate columns: physical features and linguistic features. If few ideas are produced, help or elicit more. For example: physical features – eye contact, body language, facial expressions, gestures; linguistic features – hesitation, pronunciation, stress, intonation, pausing, speed, volume.

4 Writing (6 minutes)

All students copy down the lists from the board. They should then take time to think about which things on the lists they think they do when they give a presentation in English. Students put a tick next to the things they think they do and a cross against the things they don't.

5 Speaking and writing (8 minutes)

Write on the board suggestions and ideas from the students until a template elevator pitch is elicited. Encourage students to be creative but, if they are stuck for ideas, you could use this example:

A: Hi. Lovely day, isn't it?

B: Yes.

A: Have you got a minute?

B: Erm yes, of course.

A: Let me introduce myself. I'm ... I work in ... at ... Here's my card. And may I ask your name?

B: ...

A: Pleased to meet you, ... And what do you do?

B: I'm a(n) ...

A: Really? What a coincidence. We're working on a project at the moment that may be of interest to you. If you give me your card, I'll get in touch. Oh, this is my floor! Nice talking to you. Bye!

B: Bye!

6 Writing (8 minutes)

Students write a short elevator pitch. The objectives of the pitch are:

- to provide basic information about their position in the company;
- to outline the functions of the company;
- to find out what the other person does;
- to find a common point of interest;
- to exchange business cards with the person they meet in the lift.

7 Speaking (6 minutes)

In pairs, students give their pitches. Each student videos their partner's pitch with their partner's smartphone or tablet. Plugging in the headphone jack into the phone and speaking into the ear piece reduces background noise. Make sure the volume on the device is turned up to maximum.

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Students play back their recordings and, using the checklists from earlier, compare what they *think* they do when giving a presentation with what they *really* do. Students grade their own pitches from 1 to 5 and set two personal objectives to help them to improve or change. Encourage students to peer correct.

9 Speaking (6 minutes)

Students change pairs and give their pitches to their new partner trying to make the improvements they identified.

Extension activity

Student A imagines they are in one of the situations below. They have two minutes to give their pitches to their partner.

1. You are trying to negotiate a deal with a large company but you are frustrated because your contact at the company has no decision-making powers and your negotiations are going nowhere. You find yourself face-to-face with the decision-maker in the lift. You have two minutes to seal the deal.
2. You are an entrepreneur. You have an excellent idea for a new business but you need to find someone to invest in your company. You find yourself face-to-face with a venture capitalist in the lift and you have two minutes to sell your idea.

Student B is a busy and important high-net-worth individual. They listen to their partner's pitch politely. After two minutes, they decide whether they are interested in their offer. They should make mental notes while listening to their partner's elevator pitch and justify their acceptance or refusal accordingly. Students can then swap roles.