The Elevator Speech in Academic Contexts

By Edcel Javier Cintrón Gonzalez
Graduate Writing Facilitator (GWF)
Graduate Research and Innovation Center (GRIC)
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Description of Writing Clinic

- Are you thinking of a way to impress your employer on the day of your job interview? Perhaps you want to make an impact on multiple companies at the annual job fair? Are you planning on visiting your top school for PhD and impress faculty members? Learn how to effectively present yourselves, your research ideas, and your curriculum in this interactive writing clinic. The clinic will allow participants to learn writing strategies on how to prepare an elevator speech and give space to practice it among fellow graduate students. This clinic will focus on how to conduct an elevator speech in a career and academic environment, which will also include details on professional attire, body language, and speech performance.
Objectives

Learn

• About the Elevator Speech in Career and Academic contexts.
• About the use of body language and facial expressions during elevator speech performance.
• About proper use of professional attire.

Write

• Example elevator speeches through different writing prompts.
Warm up exercise: One-Minute Speeches
Instructions

• Everyone will team up in pairs, as in groups of two.

• Each graduate student in the workshop will pick one topic card from the facilitator.

• One person will talk about their selected topic for one minute while the other persons listens.

• When the time is up, the person who was talking will stay silent and vice versa.
Instructions

• After students finish practicing with themselves, the facilitator will ask for 5 volunteers to give their one-minute speech.
Introduction

- As graduate students, it is important to master not only our language skills but also our performance in displaying our language in the form of conversation and speeches.

  - Introductory speech
    - Q & A session
      - Award ceremony
        - Acceptance speech
        - Persuasive speech
      - Informative speech
        - Advertisement commercial
The same way you would engage in a conversation, an elevator speech is an organized and spontaneous way to project your research and career ideas in less than one minute.
What is an Elevator Speech?
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- An elevator speech is a clear, brief message or “commercial” about you.

- It communicates who you are, what you’re looking for and how you can benefit a company or organization.
Think of the Elevator Speech as Riding an Elevator

- The idea behind having an elevator speech is that you are prepared to share this information with anyone, at anytime, even in an elevator.
What should you think about before engaging in an Elevator Speech?

• In any situation where you will need to do an elevator speech, you need to be able to say who you are, what you do, what you are interested in doing, and how you can be a resource to your listeners.

• Before writing any part of your elevator speech, research your audience. You will be much more likely to succeed if your elevator speech is clearly targeted.

• Having a generic elevator pitch is almost certain to fail.
What should you think about before engaging in an Elevator Speech?

• Key Questions:
  • What are your key strengths?
  • What adjectives come to mind to describe you?
  • What is it you are trying to “sell” or let others know about you?
  • Why are you interested in the company the person represents?
What should you think about before engaging in an Elevator Speech?

• Follow up questions:
  • Who am I?
  • What do I offer?
  • What problem is solved?
  • What are the main contributions I can make?
  • What should the listener do as a result of hearing this?
Hi, my name is Samantha Atcheson, and I am a senior Environmental Sciences major. I’m looking for a position that will allow me to use my research and analysis skills. Over the past few years, I’ve been strengthening these skills through my work with a local watershed council on conservation strategies to support water quality and habitats. Eventually, I’d like develop education programs on water conservation awareness. I read that your organization is involved in water quality projects. Can you tell me how someone with my experience may fit into your organization?
Examples

• Nice to meet you, I’m Alex Biondo. I’m currently a senior and am studying Computer and Information Science. I hope to become a computer programmer when I graduate. I’ve had a couple of internships where I worked on several program applications with a project team. I enjoy developing computer applications for simple business solutions. The position you have listed in UO-JobLink seems like it would be a perfect fit for someone with my skills. I’d like to hear more about the type of project teams in your organ.
How to Prepare a Self-Introduction (Elevator Pitch)
The Elevator Speech
"If there's one thing I'd like you to remember, it's..."
Writing Activity: Elevator Speech Outline

• The following slides will demonstrate key questions and phrases on what do to in a career or academic context where you need to demonstrate your speaking skills through an elevator speech.

• You will create and write your own elevator speech outline to then practice it with the audience around you. We will follow the same strategy as the one-minute speech activity.

• You will have more time to write and practice your speaking for this part of the writing clinic.
Situation 1: JOB FAIR
**Situation 1: JOB FAIR OUTLINE**

- Who am I? (introduce yourself)
- What field or research am I in or currently involved?
- What group of people do I service? What position am I in? In what capacity do I serve?
- What makes me different from the competition?
- What benefits can employers derive from skills, based on my proven accomplishments?
- Why should I (or any employer) hire me?
Situation 2: ACADEMIC CONFERENCE
Situation 2: ACADEMIC CONFERENCE OUTLINE

- Who am I? (introduce yourself) What is my academic background? (mention your degrees, minors, certificates).
- What are your current research interest and how are they related to theirs (to the faculty or presenters for networking)?
- What are your current roles, positions, or what are you currently working on? (this could be thesis or dissertation work, research, publication, and others).
- What kind of work would you collaborate with other scholars? (this would depend on who you are addressing to and what work they have done).
Body Language & Facial Expressions
Body Language

• Your **handshake** should be firm, but not bone-crushing. Avoid the “limp fish” handshake. Be sure your palms are dry; use a handkerchief on them right before the interview.

• In terms of your **posture**, once the interviewer invites you to take a seat, sit up straight and try the psychological trick of sitting slightly toward the edge of the chair to appear eager.

• It’s fine to use **hand gestures** in a job interview, but keep them small, contained, and close to your body. If you know you tend to get wildly carried away with hand gestures — or if nerves make your hands shake — try firmly holding a pen.
Body Language

• Confident voice projection and avoiding verbal tics: Technically, these are not exactly nonverbal behaviors since they involve speech, but because they do not relate to interview content, they’re included here. The best way to demonstrate confidence — a hugely important interview factor — is to project your voice strongly. Avoid a weak, timid, or baby-soft voice.

• Remember, avoid **filler words**, such as “umm”, “ahh”, “mmmm”, “ehh”, “ugh” and others...
Facial Expressions to Avoid

• Frown at questions
• Chew chewing gum
• Eat food
• Look bored or uninterested
• Raise your eyebrows too much – this could look like you don’t agree with what they are saying and could appear confrontational

Facial Expressions You Should Do

• Smile
• Keep eye contact
• Laugh (when appropriate)
• Pause and look away – to demonstrate you are thinking about the question
• Relax – keep your facial expressions natural and let them occur on their own. If you force a smile it will look wrong.
Professional Attire
What to wear:

Men
- Present a clean-shaven face or neatly trimmed beard.
- A tailored suit or if you don’t own one, a sports jacket is preferred and a shirt and tie are a minimum.
- Comfortable dress shoes.
- Dark conservative suits are appropriate business attire. A white, pressed shirt is preferred for underneath.
- A sports jacket and slacks may be appropriate for a co-op or internship interview.
- Wear dark socks with polished dress shoes.
- Hair should be combed, clean and neat.

Women
- Wear minimal makeup. Avoid bright colors, sparkles or glitter.
- Traditional business attire is a dark conservative skirt suit or pant suit.
- Skirts should be no shorter than two inches above the knees.
- Wear a blouse with a tailored collar or jewel neckline.
- Avoid large scarves that are distracting.
- Wear polished dress pumps. Heels should be no higher than two inches.
- Hosiery should be neutral or blend with the suit color.
- Wear an appropriate watch and keep other jewelry to a minimum.
- Hair should be combed clean and neat with long hair pulled away from the face.

Check out Career Services Pinterest page to see even more examples of business attire for all occasions! Pinterest.com/psucareer

Professional Attire for Women

Jewelry:
- Limit jewelry to three pieces
- Earrings (1), watch, ring, necklace, bracelet
- Bracelet/Necklace/Earrings should not jingle
- Remove all piercings (1 set of earrings is acceptable)

Hair:
- Simple, conservative

Suit:
- Fitted: Top and Bottom
- Navy Blue/Black/Gray

Dress Shirt:
- Crispy ironed
- Button-up
- Solid color

Accessories:
- Purse should be moderate size
- Purse should match shoes

Footwear:
- Polished and well-maintained
- Closed-toe preferred
- Hose should be nude or skin-tone

Hygiene:
- Always wear deodorant
- Maintain fresh breath
- Wear light perfume
- Cover tattoos
- Nails should be neatly trimmed/filed
- Nail polish should be clear or a natural tone
Professional Dress for Men

- Tan suit
- Navy suit
- Brown suit
- Black suit

Matching shoes and ties are shown for each outfit.
What items to bring when using an Elevator Speech?

Career Environment (Job Fair)
- Bring several copies of your resume
- Bring a career portfolio (optional)
- Bring a general cover letter to keep in mind the main ideas you have for your elevator speech
- Bring a leather folder to carry your materials, never go to a job fair or interview with a backpack

Academic Environment (Conferences)
- Bring several copies of your business card
- Bring a tablet to show your current Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- Bring a physical copy of your conference paper or research
Always have Business Cards

• Think of this as the cover letter for your resume.

• Include only the necessary information:
  • Name
  • Position/Title
  • Phone #
  • Email (make sure it’s a professional or academic address)
  • Institution/Company
  • Web address (LinkedIn, online portfolio, academic blog, website, and others)
References

• Edward Contreras Ph.D. A.B.D.
References


Thank you for your attention!