# Developing your elevator pitch

An elevator pitch is a brief summary of what you do, as if you had to explain it to someone in the time it takes to ride in an elevator.

That said, you should craft versions of your pitch that vary in length depending on your time and your audience's interest.

**Basic pitch:** 1-2 sentences explaining what you do. If this is for someone outside your field, there should be no jargon. For any audience, you should highlight the importance and relevance of your work.

**Mid-range pitch:** Thirty seconds to one minute of clear, memorable, relevant information about what you do and why it matters.

**Long pitch:** Two to three minutes on your work, giving it context and perhaps highlighting a very important element.

## Examples of a basic pitch:

*I study past climate through tree-ring research, which helps us understand what the world was like and also gives us insight into what it might become.*

*I help deploy marine sensors—tools we put out at sea that give us critical information about waves, currents, and the health of the ocean.*

*I study the moons of other planets in our solar system, partly because I love the wonder of space, and partly because it helps us understand our universe.*
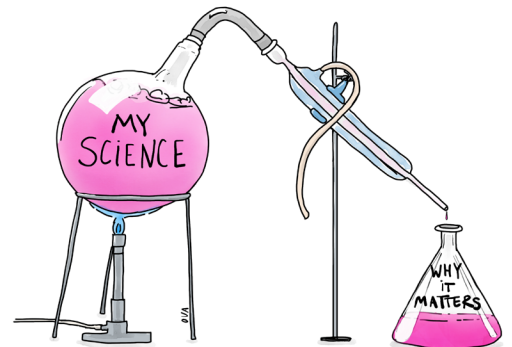
## Extending your pitch from basic to mid-range and long:

*On marine sensors:*

**Describe these sensors.**

- How do you deploy them?
- What do they measure?

**Expand upon the implications—what do the sensors tell us, and how does that affect people?**

- Does it help ships navigate?
- Does it help ships find areas with lots of fish?
- Does it help us understand weather patterns or get warnings for natural hazards?

*On planetary science/moons:*

**What moons do you study and what are some of their most interesting features?**

- Are there things that make them very different from Earth's moon?
- What got you interested in them?

**What does studying these moons help us understand?**

- Does it give us insight into how the solar system behaves?
- Does it challenge our ideas about how planets and satellites formed?
- Do the instruments and technology used have other purposes that are relevant for our lives?

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# Craft your pitch!

**In one sentence: What do you do or research?**

Don't focus on a single study but on your work/interests more broadly; this makes what you say more relevant and makes it easier to eliminate jargon.

*Example: I study the mating systems of marine snails.*

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**Now try it again and make the sentence clearer or snappier.**

*Example: I study the sex lives of sea snails.*

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**In one sentence: Why does it matter?**

Consider things like: How does your research advance our understanding of a longstanding or exciting idea?

*Example: Learning about this is fun, and it also increases our understanding of how marine animal populations grow.*

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**Now try it again and highlight the human interest or societal value.**

*Example: It's fun, and learning more about what affects marine-animal populations helps us when we want to support commercial species (like oysters) or get rid of invasive species (like zebra mussels).*

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