

Make your pitch work even harder by including any of the following (if you can do it in a way that doesn't sound forced): your website address, Twitter username, email address, etc. Alternately, consider carrying a business card or bookmark with information about you and your book. Make it easy to hand out at a moment's notice!

Minute 10

Minute 1

Decide on the goal of your pitch. Do you want the listener to visit your website? Follow you on Twitter? Send you an e-mail? Google your book? Choose what your pitch will convince the listener to do. Remember, you're probably not going to make a book sale right there in the elevator. Focus on what you want the listener's next step to be!

Edit your pitch. Focus on removing unnecessary words and making it sound natural. Read it out loud and be sure it's in your natural speaking voice, not your writing voice! Ensure it is clearly directed toward your goal.

Minute 9

The Perfect Elevator Pitch

Minutes 2-4

Brainstorm 3 potential opening lines. If one of your opening lines is "It's about this (girl/boy/man/woman) named _____" cross it out and try again. Similar to the beginning of a blog post (or your novel), you want something attention-grabbing that will grant you the listener's attention for the rest of your pitch.

Decide on a closing line. Make it an active call to action, perhaps a question. It can be something as simple as, "Does it sound like something you'd be interested in?" This is the final step in guiding the listener toward your goal.

Minute 8

Minutes 5-7

This Contextualizes your content, Write a 20-30 second pitch. Any shorter and you'll sound like an advertisement, longer and you'll lose your listener. Keep your goal in mind! Use your skill as a writer and passion for your book to craft your pitch in such a way that piques the listener's interest, encouraging them to learn more. Focus on being compelling and intriguing but DON'T overthink it! As for your pitch's content, every pitch is unique, but some of the questions your pitch can answer include: What is your book about? Who is your book for? Is there a particular genre or author you can compare or contrast your work to? Have you received any awards or glowing reviews from famous reviewers?

Being asked what your book is about can make you feel like you're under those Law and Order-type interrogation lights. It's totally understandable — it's an overwhelming and pressure-filled situation, for sure. But it's imperative not only that you have an answer, but a stellar one. This is THE #1 question authors are asked. So, how do you prepare?

You may or may not realize this, but when you're asked to describe your book, the answer you give is called an "elevator pitch." This is the formal name for any quick, catchy pitch you can deliver in the time it takes for an elevator to reach its destination (like in the example with Matt). By preparing your elevator pitch in advance, you're ready for whenever (and wherever) this question comes up! The best part? We can craft that winning pitch in just ten minutes.

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Pitch, Rinse, Repeat

Remember, your pitch won't be perfect the first time. Every time you give it, however, you can refine your pitch and make it even more effective. I definitely recommend practicing on friends and family first! They'll give you feedback you hadn't thought of and help you work out any jitters BEFORE you meet an agent in that elevator.

It is so crucial to have a great elevator pitch in your back pocket, no matter what you do.

It's incredibly hard to sell a book if you don't know how to promote it.

