

Personal Brands, Part 3: The “Elevator Pitch”

SUBMITTED BY: Kathryn McGinn

SUBJECT(S): Career Development

GRADE LEVEL(S): 9, 10, 11, 12

≡ OVERVIEW:

Drawing on their reflections from the previous two lessons, students will work to create individual 60-second elevator pitches, a concise statement of their goals and qualifications. Students will share their pitches with one another and offer constructive criticism.

≡ NBEA STANDARD(S):

- Career Development, I. Self-Awareness

≡ RELATED ARTICLES:

- [“You Have 60 Seconds to Make Your Elevator Pitch. Go!”](#)
- [“What Does That Selfie Say About You?”](#)
- [“MoZIAH BRIDGES IS BRINGING DAPPER BACK”](#)
- [“ManCans Founder Hart Main Is Well Prepared for College Life”](#)
- [“Forget Endorsements: Sports and Entertainment Stars These Days Want a Piece of the Action”](#)
- [“Educator Toolkit: Building Your Brand”](#)
- [“Career Insight: Sachin Rekhi on Why You Shouldn’t Fear Rejection”](#)
- [“Building a ‘Work Brand’ that People Will Brag About”](#)

Common Core Standard(s):

- ELA CCR Writing 3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
- ELA CCR Writing 4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- ELA CCR Writing 5: Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
- ELA CCR Reading 1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- ELA CCR Speaking and Listening 1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- ELA CCR Speaking and Listening 3: Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.
- ELA CCR Speaking and Listening 4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- ELA CCR Speaking and Listening 6: Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English where indicated or appropriate.

Objectives/Purposes:

- Students will identify their key qualifications for future employers.
- Students will craft and deliver concise statements about their strengths and how they relate to their career goals.

Other Resources/Materials:

- Computer/projector (if available)
- Elevator Pitch Assignment ([Handout A](#))
- Elevator Pitch Feedback Sheet ([Handout B](#))

Activities:

1. Have students read “Forget Endorsements...” to reinforce ideas about brand covered in the previous lessons. When students are done reading, discuss the following questions:
 - How is personal brand defined in the article?
A reputation that extends beyond the playing field. Name recognition that allows sports and entertainment stars to use their relationships to engage in both business and humanitarian activities.
 - How do the subjects in the article create their own personal brands?
Getting involved in philanthropic activities allows sports and entertainment stars to give something back to their communities and to build a reputation outside of sports. They also take part in entrepreneurial activities, such as owning record labels, starting clothing lines and running restaurants.
 - Why is having a personal brand important?
It builds equity: sports and entertainment stars can continue to earn money even after their recording/playing days are over.

(5 mins)

2. Explain that in today’s lesson, students are going to continue to develop their own personal brands by working on their own elevator pitches. Introduce the concept of “Elevator Pitch” to students. If you have access to a computer/projector, the following one-minute video provides a nice overview: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y1Y02_oZP8U

(5 mins)

3. Discuss elevator pitches with the students. The blog “Dumb Little Man” has a lot of useful information, and I drew from that site for the following definitions/tips: <http://www.dumblittleman.com/2007/08/how-to-craft-killer-elevator-pitch-that.html>
 - What is an elevator pitch?: A 30-60 second business description of what you do and why someone should work with you. It’s called an “elevator pitch” because it describes the challenge: How would you explain your qualifications

if fate placed you in an elevator with your dream employer and you only had the time it takes to get from the top of the building to the bottom?

- Elements of a Powerful Elevator Pitch
 - Concise: no longer than 30-60 seconds
 - Clear: use language that everyone understands
 - Powerful: use words that are powerful and strong (descriptive adjectives and interesting verbs!)
 - Visual: create a visual image in your listener's mind
 - Tell a story: explain how you solved a problem or overcame a difficult situation
 - Has a hook: something that snags your listener's interest and makes him/her want to know more

(5 mins)

4. Distribute Handout A (Elevator Pitch assignment) and give students time to work on drafting an Elevator Pitch. Go over the following steps with students:
 - Brainstorm what you are good at: get down as many ideas as possible!
 - Write a very (very!) short story that illustrates what you are good at; create a picture in your listener's mind
 - Brainstorm your objectives and goals
 - Brainstorm actions you will take or have taken to achieve your goal
 - Pick your best ideas and put them together in a 30-60 second statement

(10 mins)

5. Students pair up and practice pitches; students should offer constructive feedback to one another.

(5 mins)

6. Save the last 10-15 minutes or class for students to present to the whole group. For each pitch, students should complete (brief!) feedback sheet (Handout B; make enough copies so each student has enough slips to complete one for each presenter). Students trade feedback sheets at the end of the lesson.

(10 mins)

Tying It All Together:

Ask students to think about what is difficult and/or helpful about trying to put their goals and abilities into a 60-second statement. Were students surprised about what they decided to include or cut out? Why are first impressions so important? Is it fair to be judged on such a brief encounter? If you were an employer, what criteria would you use to make hiring decisions?

(5 mins)

Practice Outside of the Classroom:

Continue working on elevator pitches; integrate peers' feedback and try to develop a statement that is as clear and engaging as possible. Practice in front of a mirror, friends and family members.

What Worked and What I Would Do Differently:

It took students a bit longer than I anticipated to write their own elevator pitches, so there was not time for everyone to share their pitch at the end of class. That was okay, because some students were a bit hesitant to share in front of the entire class, anyway.

The feedback sheets may seem like a small detail in the lesson, but I've found that students really enjoy receiving written feedback from their peers. Moreover, students are extremely encouraging and supportive of one another when giving the chance to offer their feedback in writing.

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