

ELEVATOR SPEECH

An elevator speech is a 30-second to one-minute overview of your knowledge, skills, experiences and interests. The term comes from the time it would take to introduce yourself or answer the question “Who are you?” during an elevator ride. You can use it when introducing yourself to someone you don’t know. Alternatively, when you do know something about the person you’re meeting with, you can tailor your speech to highlight things that might interest them. Either way, since the Elevator Speech is a way to pitch yourself and get the conversation started, make sure to end with a question that engages the contact you’re talking to.

WHEN WILL YOU NEED TO USE YOUR ELEVATOR SPEECH?

Anytime! You never know when it will be important to have your elevator speech ready. When you’re on campus, you might use your elevator speech when you meet an employer at a career fair, a speaker at a campus event, or a Brown alum participating in an alumni career event. Off-campus, you might use it when you’re volunteering in the community, attending an academic conference, or just meeting people who are doing work that you’re curious about. Considering the potential of each and every personal encounter you have is a great way to build your community and is a vital part of the internship or job search process.

TIPS FOR CREATING AN ELEVATOR SPEECH

KNOW YOURSELF (and, when possible, KNOW YOUR CONTACT) — If you are attending a conference or event and can research your contacts in advance, make sure to tailor your pitch to their background or interests. Take time to consider the questions below:

- What are your key strengths?
- What adjectives come to mind to describe you?
- If your contact is a potential employer or works in a field that interests you, which of your key strengths, skills, or experiences would be most interesting to them?
- Why are you interested in the organization or field that this person represents?

Be sure to include:

- Your name, graduate year, concentration or possible concentration and/or department.
- Key research, internships, projects or jobs.
- A job, internship or career you might be interested in exploring.
- A question at the end of your pitch to get the person you’re connecting with to talk in response.

Example elevator speech:

“Hi, my name is Abigail Nieves. I’m a sophomore/graduate student at Brown studying History of Art and Architecture. I’m passionate about museums and European art and I’m also a painter. I’ve taken a number of courses related to business and entrepreneurship because I’m interested in how organizations function. Last summer I completed an internship in the European Art Department at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. This summer I’d like to be in the Boston area working on the business side for a museum. In the future, I’m hoping to find work at the intersection of art and business. Can you tell me about your work at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts?”

Example questions for different situations:

If the contact is a Brown alum and you know their current profession:

- “Can you tell me about your journey from Brown to your current job at the museum?”
- “Do you have any advice for students looking for jobs or internships at museums?”

If you don’t know much about the person you’re connecting with, but you’re at an event or discussion that focuses on a field that interests you:

- “What brings you to this event?”
- “Do you work in the museum world or does this event interest you for other reasons?”

If you don’t know the person you’re connecting with (you may use a shorter version of your elevator pitch):

- “What do you do for work?”