

Due First Media Session Week 4:

Writing the Film Pitch 1-2mins

What should it include?

Include the vital parts of your story and just a bit more that make it stand out. A film pitch should include all the important story beats. It should be familiar enough that the person hearing the pitch gets it, but original enough that it doesn't sound like other movies that have already been made.

Traditionally, you get three sentences to hook listeners into the premise, the genre, and the scope of your film. When crafting this pitch, pay particular attention to what you think they might be listening for.

If you follow those requests, your first sentence introduces the characters, the next sentence illustrates their conflict, and the final sentence leaves listeners wanting more. The conflict generally suggests the film's genre, but if not, consider alluding to that in the final sentence as well.

Here are some examples:

Europe, 1912. Jack Dawson and Rose DeWitt Bukater enjoy a secret and passionate romance after they meet on a ship chartered toward New York. That ship happens to be the Titanic.

Northern England, 1984. Young Billy Elliot, the son of a poor local miner, decides to start training for a career. In ballet. (Billy Elliot)

These examples suggest the skeleton of a short pitch. You might use them at the onset of a meeting to rope listeners into a more detailed explanation, or perhaps insert more details in between these sentences. In any case, practice your pitch at home with a stopwatch. Never exceed two minutes — try to do it in one, if you can. If you maintain the three to five page limitation, timing shouldn't be a problem; you'll finish in well under two minutes. Be animated, enthusiastic, and concise.

Think of it as a summary of your idea, but also make sure to include anything that will heighten the idea, like funny moments, or unique aspects of the story. You want the pitch to keep your listener interested, so tell your story, but don't include extraneous points. In order to really illustrate a character it can be good to use an actor's name or a character from another film if that's an accurate description.

Try your best to stick to these principles. Short, clear, entertaining and easy to imagine the possibilities blooming from it. Whether you're standing in front of a camera or you've staged an elaborate short film, your pitch has to capture the viewer's imagination and make them want that idea to explode onto the screen.