

## Elevator Pitch

The elevator pitch is sometimes referred to as the “log line” or the “high concept.” Technically, high concept is different from the elevator pitch in that it concentrates on the big picture of a commercially successful plot. Sometimes the high concept of a story will use movies as references. Example: Pretty Woman meets Alien.

The elevator pitch is a short plot synopsis that makes the listener want to know more about your story.

Here are some examples from the Internet Movie Database (imdb.com). (Another great resource: Netflix.)

*When his secret bride is executed for assaulting an English soldier whom tried to rape her, a commoner begins a revolt and leads Scottish warriors against the cruel English tyrant who rules Scotland with an iron-fist. (Braveheart)*

*Acting under the cover of a Hollywood producer scouting a location for a science fiction film, a CIA agent launches a dangerous operation to rescue six Americans in Tehran during the U.S. hostage crisis in Iran in 1980. (Argo)*

*After his son is captured in the Great Barrier Reef and taken to Sydney, a timid clownfish sets out on a journey to bring him home. (Finding Nemo)*

*A woman flies to France to confront her straying fiancé, but gets into trouble when the charming crook seated next to her uses her for smuggling. (French Kiss)*

One of my favorite examples of how to write an elevator pitch comes from the Story Sensei blog. (<http://storysensei.blogspot.com/2005/08/50-word-elevator-pitch.html>)

Camy Tang recommends writing a 50 word elevator pitch using:

**Character:** Your protagonist or focal character. You can sometimes have two protagonists, but even then, often the story of one character is slightly more dominant than the other.

**Situation:** The troubling situation your character is stuck in that forces him to act.

**Objective:** What your character desires and strives for. It could be something he wants to retain/protect or attain, which is endangered.

**Opponent:** Your antagonist who works directly against your protagonist's objective. An antagonist who simply makes general "trouble" is not as vibrant a character as one who deliberately works against what your hero/heroine is working toward, someone who resists and fights back.

**Disaster:** The climax of your story, the Black Moment, the point at which everything is hopelessly lost.

In your pitch: Sentence one states character, situation, and objective. Sentence two is a yes/no question that asks if character can overcome opponent and disaster.

Here's Ms. Tang's example using the TV show *Alias*:

**Character:** Sydney Bristow, secret agent

**Situation:** Discovers she's been tricked into thinking she's working for the CIA when in truth it's a terrorist agency

**Objective:** To topple the powerful organization called the Alliance by working as a double agent

**Opponent:** Her boss Arvin Sloan, who has been a family friend for years, who lied to her about her job

**Disaster:** Sloane suspects her because she told her fiancé, and he had him killed.

**Summary:** *After discovering she was tricked into thinking she's working for the CIA, agent Sydney Bristow becomes a double agent, determined to take down the terrorist group called the Alliance. But can she fool her boss Arvin Sloane when he kills her fiancé and suspects her enough to kill her?*

### Your Turn: Craft Your Elevator Pitch

**Character:**

**Situation:**

**Objective:**

**Opponent:**

**Disaster:**

**Summary:**

Sentence one (character, situation, and objective):

Sentence two (yes/no question, asking if character can overcome opponent and/or disaster):