

## Writing 6: Communicating Your Science

### Due Monday Dec. 7th by 5pm

In your final writing assignment, you will write about your research project. This is meant to help you write your presentation.

For this assignment, you are to write the following:

1. An elevator pitch (under 100 words)
2. A summary of your research, i.e. what you have done and why (no word limit)

#### 1. The Elevator Pitch

An elevator pitch is a concise explanation of your research that can be delivered in the time span of a short elevator ride. This can also be useful for as a starting point for a research blurb for a personal statement. Randy Olsen explains in his book “Don’t be Such a Scientist” that an elevator pitch should follow basic structure of a story:

*Set up your subject (first act) give it a twist at the end of the first act (first plot point) reveal a possible solution (second plot point) and then weave all the content together to release the source of tension (third act)*

*“I study a star fish on the California coast – the only species that spawns in the dead of winter. I thought it might be due to predators of the eggs being less common that time of year, then I thought it was due to the best timing for the spring algae bloom, but now it looks like it has something to do with the seasonal migration of the starfish, which is what I now study—the way spawning season may be related to adult movements of starfish.”*

*“Starfish on the California coast” is the first act set up. “The only species” is the establishment of tension (sets up the question “Why is it different”). “Predators” and “algae bloom” are the multiple themes in the second act. “Seasonal migration” is the release of tension and “What I now study” is the wrap-up*

#### 2. Research Summary

In writing this summary make sure to explain your research assuming your audience does not come from a science background. This means that if you use a specific astronomical term or a discuss a certain method, be sure to define it, or otherwise use clever analogies to explain your work via everyday examples. Be sure to not only explain **what** you have done, but also **why** your research work is important.

#### Group Research Presentations

We’ll be giving each other **practice presentations in class on Wednesday, December 9**. You should have your talk ready then. This presentation will be done with your research partner(s). You can choose how to divide up the talking, but the total presentation will be 8-10 minutes plus two minutes at the end for questions. **The final presentations will be to the Astronomy department on December 11, during class time in C520.**