



STAGE 32 PITCHING TEMPLATE

Congratulations on taking the next step in your screenwriting career by participating in the Stage 32 Happy Writer Pitch Sessions! This template will help you craft your written or verbal pitch. Please note that this is a template only - it's a reference point for you to start from and develop further around the needs of your particular story.

**You can find a complete list of our upcoming pitch sessions at the following:
www.stage32.com/happy-writers**

Stage 32 Happy Writers allows you to pitch directly to executives via two distinct methods. Please review the following carefully.

Written pitches: Stage 32 written pitches are two-pages max and must be submitted in DOC(X) or PDF format ONLY. You will receive an upload link after signing up, and via email after completing your purchase.

Verbal pitches: Verbal pitches are done face-to-face over Skype, or via telephone if a skype connection cannot be completed. You have 8 minutes to pitch your material, though we recommend keeping your pitch to 4-6 minutes to allow room for questions. Please fill out your contact information in the designated fields after signing up.

Due to the volume of sessions and reservations, we cannot review or critique pitches prior to submission. **This is *your* story, not ours – this is your chance to prove you know how to tell it in a succinct and direct manner.**

THE INTRODUCTION

You'll want to start your pitch with a short introduction that details your inspiration for writing this story, or stating something that brings authenticity to the story you're about to tell (IE: if you have a medical show and are a doctor, bring this up; if your script is based on a true story, or an established intellectual property, etc.).

This should take no more than 30-45 seconds of your verbal pitch, or 3-4 lines of your written pitch.

INTRODUCE "THE SPECS"

"The specs" are the most basic pieces of information of your script. The title, format, genre, nutshell, and logline.

FORMAT: Is it a film, half-hour sitcom, hour-long pilot, miniseries, or digital series?

GENRE/SUBGENRE: Include the main genre and sub-genre of your script. If you're pitching a TV show, include what networks this would play on ("it's an FX-style comedy", "it's an AMC-style drama").

NUTSHELL: Two comparisons to similar films or TV shows. "It's *Sicario* meets *Mad Max*". Don't go into unnecessary detail as to why you're comparing it to those two films/tv shows, just state "it's X meets Y" and move on. Use films which are tonally similar to your film, not ones that are merely similar in plot.

If you are pitching a movie, your comparisons should be modern (within 5-8 years), noteworthy (not some obscure movie no one has heard of), and successful. **If you are pitching a TV show**, your comparisons should be of the same format. That is, if you are pitching a 1/2 hour sitcom, compare it to two other 1/2 hour sitcoms. If you are pitching an hour-long drama, compare it to two other hour-long dramas.

LOGLINE: Give the logline to your story. This should not be a 3-4 line sentence, sum it up in one or two lines. It's a *logline*, not a *logparagraph*.

SETTING: Where does your story take place? When does it take place? Modern day Texas oil fields? 18th century Victorian London?

This is the proper way to introduce your story. It should take no longer than 1/4 of a page, or 1 minute.

DIVE INTO STORY

From here, it's time to dive into your story. Start with Act I and the opening scene. Be sure to paint a picture so the executive can feel like they are *watching* your pilot or feature, instead of just hearing you talk about it.

You will want to run through your story in full. You do not have to hit every detail, but the overall arc of the plot (including the ending and any surprise twists), the arcs of your characters and themes should all be properly explored.

The story portion of your pitch should take up most of the space you have available for your pitch, both verbally and for written pitches.

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CHARACTER INTRODUCTIONS

Introduce your characters as they are introduced in the story. When do we, as the audience, first meet your lead character? How? What's the scene like? When you introduce them, give a quick comparison to a popular actor or actress you could see playing the role.

Do NOT say or suggest that a certain role was written for, or must be played by one actor or another. Who will eventually be cast as your lead (or any other) character is not up to you.

You'll want to spend a little more time when you introduce your protagonist and antagonist as opposed to other, side characters. These are your two most important characters, tell us a bit about them - what kind of person are they? What's their temperament? How do they carry themselves?

If doing a written pitch, you can introduce your character like this:

Once Wesley leaves the room, we finally meet ROBERT (late-20's, brutish, Chris Pine-type) when he walks inside. He snoops around, suspicious that Wesley has robbed him.

If you are doing a verbal pitch, be more casual about it. Say something like:

"So Wesley leaves the room, and that's when we finally meet Robert, late-20's, Chris Pine-type - he's the kind of guy you *really* don't want to get in a fight with, but the kind of guy who's *looking* for one. He's *certain* Wesley has stolen from him, so he checks every nook and cranny but finds nothing."

When introducing your characters, let us know what makes them special. What makes your characters unique? Try not to introduce too many characters, even if it's an ensemble piece. It can be very hard for an executive to keep track of who's who, especially if you're listening to a verbal pitch. For instance, if ROBERT has a confrontation with STEVE (his boss), but we never see Steve again, just refer to Steve as "Robert's boss".

TONE

Tone is one of, if not the most important part of your pitch. If you're pitching a comedy, your pitch needs to be funny. If there's drama there, make sure we feel the drama between the characters and situations. Is it a thriller? Make it tense! Horror? Make us scared! **Tone is everything.**

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SUMMING UP

There are different ways in which you'll want to sum up your pitch depending on the format of the material you're pitching.

If you're pitching a TV show, you'll have just finished summarizing your pilot episode. What you'll want to do next is give an overview of your series. Where does the story go from here? What's the season arc? Give a brief (brief) overview on what season two looks like. The executive will want to know that you've thought about this - it's a demonstration of a TV show's story engine, it's a demonstration of what will make the show last 100 episodes.

If you're pitching a movie, you'll want to wrap up with the final themes and arcs of your story. How does your lead character change over the course of the story? What's the overriding theme? Don't just say "the theme is don't judge a book by its cover" - **SHOW** us how that message is delivered and why it's an important message relevant to a modern audience.

This should take up the last paragraph of your written pitch, or the last 30-45 seconds of your verbal pitch.

IMPORTANT NOTES

Pitching is a first impression. You aren't just pitching your project, but yourself as well. Features and pilots can take years to get made – that's years of working together with an executive... you have to make yourself known as someone the executives want and are excited to work with. A good attitude goes a long way and this is a business of relationships, so make your first impression count!

If you're submitting a written pitch, remember that this is, for all intents and purposes, a writing sample. If your written pitch is poorly written and riddled with grammatical, spelling and contextual errors the executive will have no reason to believe you can properly execute a screenplay.

A written pitch should be easy to read. Use font, bold, italics, underlines, and spacing to your advantage to make sure your pitch is easy to read. An executive will NOT want to open your pitch document and see a giant, unformatted wall of text. Do NOT use Courier Final Draft font in your pitch document. It's great for screenplays, but terrible for pitch documents.

Do not overly manipulate margins or font size to fit more content. An executive will NOT want to read two pages of 10 point font. They will know immediately why you chose that small size and it will serve as an example of you trying to circumvent the rules they very well know you're supposed to follow. **REMEMBER: WRITTEN PITCHES ARE FIRST IMPRESSIONS, TOO!**

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If you're pitching verbally, keep your pitch conversational. Try not to read off notecards, and try not to sound too rehearsed. An executive doesn't want to be talked *at* - **pitch as though this were something that happened to you over the weekend, and you're simply relaying that story.**

It can be tempting to use the entire allotted 8 minutes to pitch your story. DON'T! Alter your pitch however is necessary to fit it into 4-6 minutes. The extra two minutes to allow an executive ask any questions they might have is **INVALUABLE**. Sometimes, a correctly answered question can mean the difference between a **PASS** and **REQUEST**.

**REMEMBER: PERSISTENCE AND PATIENCE IS THE NAME OF THE GAME!
MAKING A MOVIE OR TV PILOT IS A LONG PROCESS, BUT IT ALL STARTS
WITH THE PITCH!**

**TAKE ALL FEEDBACK YOU RECEIVE WITH GRACE AND USE THE PROVIDED
EXECUTIVE BIO'S TO TAILOR YOUR PITCH MORE SPECIFICALLY TO THEM
AND THEIR INDIVIDUAL SENSIBILITIES.**

THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING STAGE 32 HAPPY WRITERS! GOOD LUCK!

**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE REACH OUT TO US AT
WRITERHELP@STAGE32.COM**

**Don't forget to join us in the screenwriting lounge at Stage32.com for daily discussions on
writing, pitching, and the industry at large!**

