Guide 19: Develop your pitch

Your goal

Explain your business idea clearly to a prospective lender or investor. Help the listener understand the product, the customer, and the value you intend to create.

A pitch is short. It should give the listener a clear picture of your idea without hiding important uncertainty.

What to produce

A draft pitch. The CED suggests about 150-200 words for this task. The final project pitch has a maximum of 200 words and is intended for a 60-second delivery.

Include:

- A brief description of your product.
- Your target customer profile.
- The problem, need, or want the product addresses.
- How or why the product creates value for customers.

An oral recording is not required by the AP Program. Follow your teacher's instructions for classroom practice or presentation.

Key terms

- **Pitch:** a short explanation intended to persuade an audience to consider an idea.
- **Target customer:** the person or group the business aims to serve.
- **Customer value:** the benefit customers receive in relation to what they give up, such as money, time, or effort.
- **Lender:** a person or organisation that provides money to be repaid.
- **Investor:** a person or organisation that puts money into a business expecting a return.

Step 1: Review your evidence

Read your customer research, product tests, value proposition, production plan, and cost estimates. Select the details that best explain the idea.

Mark what is known, what is a forecast, and what still needs testing. A clear limit is more useful than a claim you cannot support.

Do not call your product successful simply because you like it or because classmates praised the presentation.

Step 2: Build the four-part message

Start with the customer and the experience that matters to them. Introduce the product and explain how it responds.

Include relevant details from your customer profile rather than saying “everyone.” Explain a benefit such as saving time, improving access, or providing enjoyment. A feature is what the product has; a benefit explains why that feature matters.

You may adapt the order to make your message clear. Use specific words instead of claims such as “the best product ever.”

Example: Ready Pouch

Ready Pouch is our fictional example business. Its proposed product is a small pencil pouch for students.

This is a fictional draft of about 150 words. It describes the proposed idea, not completed research or proven results.

> Ready Pouch is a compact fabric pouch designed to keep everyday school supplies together. Our proposed customers are students who move between classrooms and carry loose pens in their bags.

These students may find it difficult to locate a pen when a lesson begins. A parent may pay for the pouch even when a student uses it.

The proposed pouch has one main space and a simple opening. Its value would come from helping students find their supplies while using little space in a school bag. We plan to test both the size and the opening with potential users. We will also compare the design with products they already use.

Our next step is to check whether this problem is common enough and whether the design offers a useful improvement. We will revise the idea if customer evidence does not support it. Our cost and funding plans will also need checking before launch.

Your own pitch should use the genuine evidence available at your project stage. Do not copy the example's uncertainty if you have already completed a test; explain your actual finding instead.

Step 3: Adapt to the audience

A lender may ask how the business could repay borrowing. An investor may ask about the opportunity, risks, or ownership arrangement. Be ready to discuss these questions using your funding and cost plans.

Keep the four required pitch elements clear. Extra financial details should support the message, not replace the customer explanation.

Step 4: Read it aloud and revise

Read your draft slowly enough to understand. Check the word count and delivery time. Remove repeated points and words that are difficult to say.

Ask a partner to explain the product and customer back to you. If the partner cannot do this, revise the unclear part. Feedback on clarity is not evidence of demand for your product.

If you work in a team, make sure each person understands and can explain the whole idea.

Your turn

Write your draft pitch. Underline where it describes the product, customer, problem, need, or want, and customer value. Then check that evidence and uncertainty are stated accurately.

Check your work

- All four required elements are present.
- I explained benefits, not only features.
- My claims agree with my research and current canvas.
- Forecasts and untested ideas are not presented as facts.
- My final pitch will be no more than 200 words.

Next: Forecast financial performance

In Unit 3, Task 4, you will build a revenue projection and an actual or projected income statement.

Independent guidance based on the AP Business with Personal Finance CED, printed pages 148 and 169-170. This is not an official College Board resource.