Pitching your research

in 2 min as clearly, accurately, and engagingly as possible

ÉCOLE DE PHYSIQUE DES HOUCHES

Jean-Baptiste Bayle – 11 October 2025 – LISA School for Early-Career Scientists (Les Houches)

Pitching my research?

- Communicating **complex ideas** in a **clear and engaging** way

  - Work on storytelling & analogies

  - Be aware of your voice, rhythm, and body language

  - Foster confidence and playfulness

- Build a research pitch for different types of audience

  - Address people **beyond your subfield**

  - Lose bad reflexes

  - Improve adaptability

Organization

Group photo and coffee break

Warm-up exercices in groups of 5

Find a partner from a different field

Some advice on how to build a good pitch

Pitch building in pairs

My research in 120 seconds competition

Register for the competition

REGISTER

- Prepare in pairs but **compete solo**

- Objective: **present your in 120 seconds as clearly, accurately, and engagingly as possible**

- No slides (but you can move or gesture)

- ⏱️ **Strictly 120 seconds** (visible timer)

- Jury composed of 5 people (mix of **speakers and nonspecialists**)

- 🏆 **Prizes** for the best performances!

- Should remain **playful**

Criteria

Clarity	Is the talk understandable to non-specialists?	/5
Structure	Is there a clear beginning (question), middle (method), and end (impact)?	/5
Engagement	Was it lively, confident, and captivating?	/5
Time discipline	Stayed within 120 seconds, smooth flow?	/5
Scientific soundness	Does the explanation feel technically correct and not misleading, even when simplified?	/5

Some advice

1. **Start with a question or a story**
   "How do we explain these observed ginormous black holes?"

2. **Define the problem clearly**
   What's the mystery, challenge, or unknown?

3. **Explain your approach simply**
   What's the key method or idea?

4. **Conclude with the impact (or poesy)**
   Why does this matter? What could it change, reveal, or inspire?

5. **Avoid jargon and acronyms**
   Imagine you're explaining to an engineer or a curious family member

6. **Use analogies**
   "It's like detecting a whisper from billions of light years away"

7. **Use your voice**
   Practice aloud to tune rhythm, pause, and energy

8. **Use your body**
   Gesture to highlight important ideas, move in space to give context

Working in pairs

- Each partner must **understand the other's research** (context, problem, method)

- Advice to help build the understanding and then pitch

  - Make notes with **key concepts, ask to clarify** jargon or obscure concepts

  - **Rephrase**, then correct, rephrase, etc.

  - Co-develop a 2-minute **outline**

  - Work on **analogies**

- It's not a test of scientific accuracy, but of clarity and connection

Working in pairs

In pairs:

1. A **explains** their research in 2 minutes

2. B **rephrases** it in their own words (max 1 minute)

3. A gives **feedback**: what was well understood / what was lost

And then switch.

This helps to listen for **misunderstandings** and to realize what parts of your own explanations are **unclear or overly technical**.

Give a **30-second summary** of your research to your partner:

1. as they would to a **peer**

2. as if to a **scientist** in another field

3. as if to an informed **non-scientist**

What did you remove? What stayed essential?

This helps **distill the true "essence" of your message**.

Working in pairs

On your draft pitches, work in Paris to **highlight the keywords or key concepts**.

Now read it aloud and **insert 1-second pauses before and after** each keyword. Your partner should make sure you have not missed any.

This exercise builds pauses in the pitch to **help the audience process content**.

Choose **one complex concept** from your research and find a clear **analogy**/**metaphor** that makes sense for a non-specialist.

- What's it like in the real world?
- What happens if your analogy is pushed too far? Where does it break?
- How can you correct it with one short sentence?

This builds the skill of **simplifying without distorting**.