freeland

Pitch Guide for Students

FREELAND Hackathon: how to present your project in five minutes

Your pitch at a glance

When: 24 March 2027, online on Zoom. Rehearsal: 17 March 2027.

How long: 5 minutes for your presentation, followed by questions from the jury (up to 5 minutes)

Who: you, the students. Your teacher can help you prepare, but the pitch is yours.

Recorded: yes. The jury can watch the recording again during the evaluation.

What is a pitch?

A pitch is a short, convincing presentation. In five minutes, you take the jury from a neglected place to your idea for its future, and show why your idea is the right one. You do not need to tell everything you did. Choose the strongest evidence and tell it as a story.

What the jury will look at

The pitch is worth 10 points. The jury scores five things, each with 0, 1 or 2 points:

The jury checks whether…	How to make sure you get the points
You present the problem and the solution within 5 minutes.	Rehearse with a timer. If you go over, cut words, not slides, about your solution.
The presentation is clear and convincing.	Follow one clear storyline, speak simply and explain why your solution is the right one for this place.
You use data and visuals from the FREELAND platform.	Show at least one chart from the Chart builder and your 3D scenario.
Several team members take part.	Share the pitch among at least two or three speakers, and agree who answers which kind of question.
You answer the jury's questions with arguments.	Prepare for likely questions and answer with facts from your work: data, what people told you, your plan.

Remember that the jury also reads your report. The pitch does not need to repeat everything. It should make the jury remember your project.

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A simple structure for five minutes

Time	Part	What to say and show
0:00–0:30	**Hook**	Start with something that makes the jury look: a striking photo of the place, a surprising number from your measurements, or a question.
0:30–1:15	**The place and the problem**	Where is it, what is it like today and why does it matter? Who uses it now, and who cannot?
1:15–2:15	**Our evidence**	What did you measure and how? Show one or two charts and explain the main finding in one sentence each.
2:15–2:45	**What people told us**	Who did you talk to, and what did you change because of it?
2:45–4:00	**Our solution**	What will change, and why? Show your 3D scenario: the place today and after your proposal. Link each main idea to your evidence.
4:00–4:40	**Bringing the community in**	Which activities will bring people to the place, and how can it stay alive after the Hackathon?
4:40–5:00	**Closing**	End with one clear sentence the jury will remember, for example what you are asking decision-makers to do.

This is only a suggestion. You can change the order or the timing, as long as the problem, the evidence and the solution are all clear.

Preparing your slides

- **Keep it short:** 8 to 10 slides are usually enough for five minutes.
- **One message per slide:** give each slide a title that says the point, for example “The square is 6°C hotter than the park” instead of “Temperature”.
- **More pictures, less text:** use photos, charts and your 3D scenario. If you need text, use a few key words, not full sentences.
- **Readable charts:** show only the charts you talk about, with a title, labelled axes and units. Point out what the jury should notice.
- **Before and after:** two screenshots of your 3D scenario side by side, the place today and your proposal, are one of the strongest slides you can have.
- **Large letters and good contrast:** text at least 24 pt, dark text on a light background or the other way round.
- **Credit your sources:** if you use photos, maps or data made by others, write the source on the slide.
- **Respect privacy:** use photos in which people can be recognised only if your school has the consent to use them.
- **Save a PDF copy:** if something goes wrong with your presentation software, you can share the PDF instead.

You can make slides in any tool you like, such as PowerPoint, Google Slides or Canva.

Speaking

- Talk to the jury, not to your slides. Know your part well enough that you do not need to read it.
- Speak a little slower than usual. Online, it is easy to rush.
- Use short sentences and everyday words. If you use a technical term, explain it in a few words.
- Use “we”: it is a team project.
- Plan how you pass to the next speaker, for example “Now Ana will show you what we measured.”
- Look into the camera, not at your own picture on the screen.

On Zoom

- Use a computer, not a phone, and a stable internet connection. If possible, use a cable instead of Wi-Fi.
- One person shares the screen and moves the slides for everyone. Agree on a signal for “next slide”.
- Speakers keep the camera on. Everyone else stays muted while others speak.
- Choose a quiet room with light in front of you, not behind you.
- Join at least 15 minutes early to check sound, camera and screen sharing.
- Have a plan B: a second person who can share the PDF if the first connection fails.
- Use the rehearsal on 17 March to test everything exactly as you will do it on the day.

Answering the jury's questions

Questions are a chance to show how well you know your project. Prepare answers to questions like these:

- Why did you choose this place?
- How reliable are your measurements? Would you get the same results at another time of year?
- Who did you talk to, and did anyone disagree with your idea?
- Why did you choose this solution and not another one?
- How much would it cost, and who could pay for it or take care of the place?
- What is the first step that could happen next month?

When you answer: listen to the whole question, take a second to think, and answer with a fact from your work. If you do not know something, it is fine to say so and explain how you would find out.

Checklist before the pitch

☐ Our pitch lasts 5 minutes or less (we timed it at least three times).

☐ We show at least one chart from the Chart builder and our 3D scenario.

☐ We explain the problem, our evidence and our solution.

☐ At least two or three of us speak.

☐ We prepared answers to likely questions and agreed who answers what.

☐ Our sources are credited, and all photos of people can be used.

☐ We tested sound, camera and screen sharing, and we have a PDF copy ready.