**Step 1: Draft the Initial Short Pitch**

The first step to learning how to pitch a movie is to draft a movie pitch (it can be rough).

Try the following formula with five elements:

**“My story is a (genre) called (title) about (hero) who wants (goal) despite (obstacle).”**

Typically, a story that is clear can be framed in terms of an entity (the hero) that is seeking something (the goal) despite some significant problem (the obstacle). Using the formula, here’s an example initial pitch:

*It’s a comedy called Nerd Ops about the National Security Administration’s nerdiest technical people who must become field operatives to save the world from a terrorist hacker organization.*

**Step 2: Identify Possible Genres**

Genre gives context to the project, suggests a structure for the story, and has implications for budget, scope, and potential revenue. The 1-2 words you use to categorize your project, therefore, should be chosen with care.You may already know how your project should be categorized. If not, here’s a way to generate ideas for genre descriptions:

* Go to boxofficemojo.com;
* Look for produced projects that are the most like your idea;
* See how they are classified.

For *Nerd Ops*, is “comedy” the best description of genre? Could we find something more specific?

Here are some other possible genres:

* Dark comedy
* Buddy comedy
* Action comedy
* Spy comedy

**Step 3: Identify Themes**

While I do believe that it’s important for a finished project to have one core thematic premise, at this stage of our movie pitch example we’re interested in looking at themes more broadly. Here are some themes that could be relevant:

* Weaknesses can be strengths (and strengths weaknesses)
* Warriors for the 21st century
* The brotherhood (and sisterhood) of geekdom
* Humans vs. machines

**Step 4: Identify Structural Elements**

Structural elements are obvious, relevant aspects of the project but not themes. Some structural elements of this story could be:

* The culture of elite hackers
* The NSA recruiting process
* “Hell Week” SEAL training
* Powerful supercomputers

Be ready to “pitch” the idea for your film to the class with the appropriate data for consideration. Each student will be pitching their own idea using the four steps above, their character reference sheet, and their data chart on similar films.