

How to write a Eulogy

BRAINSTORM

1.

First, jot down the first things that come to mind when you ask yourself the questions below.
(Don't think too long about one question, just skip it and come back to it later if you want.)

2.

Next, circle the questions that you need to ask someone else about, and write the name of the person who might have that information.

(Remember that siblings, partners, workmates, and offspring will all have different insights and experiences about a person.)

Family Information

Make a list of useful facts.

- Full name of deceased:
- What they liked to be called (or other nicknames):
- Date of birth:
- Place of birth:
- Parents names:
- Siblings' names and birth order (i.e. were they youngest or eldest?):
- Grandparents:
- Changes to family (i.e. blended or chosen):
- Partner/Spouse:
- Date of marriage:
- Children:

School

Where did they go and who were their friends?

- Youngest years (before school):
- Primary School name(s):
- Secondary School(s):
- Further Education:



Activities, Sports, Hobbies

What kept them busy?

- What did they like to do before and after school?
- How did they spend weekends and holidays?
- As an adult, what were the things that they made time for?
- Why do you think they enjoyed doing these things?

Skills, Achievements, Passions

What were they most proud of, and what would other people recognise them for?

- When did they first start to display talent in this area?
- What efforts did they make to excel in this area?
- Who supported them to achieve these goals?

Work Life

What was their career journey?

- What was their very first job?
- What job(s) did they do over the course of their life?
- What career path do you think they enjoyed most?
- If they could have done anything else, what would it have been?

Challenges

What experiences shaped their character?

- What did they do when faced with difficulties and setbacks?
- What struggle do you think they were most proud of overcoming?

Adult relationships

Who shared their life?

- Who were the significant people in their life?
- How did they demonstrate their love for those people?
- What would they be most grateful to these people for?



Legacy

How will they be remembered?

- What stories do you think you'll be telling about this person for years to come?
- Which people are better off today because of their impact?
- How is their community/workplace better because they existed?
- What kindness did they show to people/animals who were vulnerable?

Personal Qualities

What did they value?

- How did they see themselves? (funny, silly, quiet, modest, extroverted etc.)
- How did others see them? (kind, generous, messy, reliable, trustworthy etc.)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How long does it have to be?

Most people speak for 5-10 minutes, but a carefully crafted eulogy can still hold people's attention if it's longer. Also, just sharing a couple of paragraphs is perfectly fine as well.

What if I need help?

Your celebrant can help with the writing or reading, or both. Send them your dot points or draft and they can make suggestions and edits. Then on the day, take your time, deep breaths, and sips of water, but if it all gets too much, your celebrant can take over and read it on your behalf.

Do I have to cover their whole life?

It's usually interesting to people attending a funeral to hear a detail or story that they didn't know before. Remember that family and friends know people at different stages of their life, so it's a good idea to briefly mention as many key points as you can.

What's the difference between a "Eulogy" and a "Special Tribute"?

The Eulogy is more biographical and covers the events of a person's life. Special Tributes are usually focussed on just one era or aspect in particular (like a work colleague, community group, family group etc.)



TIPS for writing

1. Match the tone to the person. If the eulogy is for a dignified or reserved person, then you may want to make your language more formal and factual. If it's for someone who would have preferred a more casual approach, then blend in some humour and stories.
2. Share from the heart. Your warmth, and genuine expression means more than finding the perfect combination of words.
3. Look through old messages, letters, photos etc. for inspiration.

TIPS for delivery

1. Practice reading it aloud. This helps you become familiar with the flow but also helps to release some of the emotion so that it's not so overwhelming for you on the day.
2. Ask someone to come up and share the reading or even just stand by you as you deliver it at the funeral. And you can always request that the celebrant reads it, should you not feel able to.

Eulogy Template

On the page below is a tool to get you started in putting all that information together.

Once you have personalised the template with all the details about your loved one, it will reflect the uniqueness of your personal relationship and the impact that your loved one had in the world.



Hello everyone, my name is **[your name]**, and I am **[your relationship to the person who has died]**.

We've known each other since **[how you met]** and at first **[what this person meant to you at the start]** and over time **[how your relationship grew and changed]**.

[First name] was born on **[date]** in **[place]** to **[parents' names]**. They grew up with **[siblings, family details, location]**.

In their younger years they **[school, sports, hobbies, friends]**.

Later on, they would pursue **[education, work life, relationships, children]**

One of the most significant moments in their life was **[achievements, challenges]**.

They loved **[hobbies, passions, places, traditions]**, and they will be remembered for **[legacy]**.

What made **[first name]** special to me was **[personal qualities]**. One of the things I will always remember is **[short story or memory from your experience]**.

If **[first name]** was here now, I would say **[your personal message]**.

[Closing lines can be "Rest in peace, we will miss you dearly," or a quote, poem, or simple thank-you.]

