

What is a eulogy?

A eulogy, or funeral speech, is an opportunity to pay tribute to someone who has died, by giving a short speech about their life and what they meant to you. It's regarded as an honour to be asked to give a eulogy for a loved one or friend, and is a sign that you played an important part in that person's life.

What is the purpose of a eulogy?

The eulogy at a funeral is a way for someone who knew the person who has died well to sum up their life, remind people who have come to mourn about the character of that person, and pay respect to them.

If you're feeling anxious about the responsibility of getting it 'right,' remember that every eulogy is meant to be unique. Although there are guidelines you can follow, writing a eulogy is also about things that come from the heart.

Why is a eulogy important?

Hearing a eulogy gives people a way of remembering the important parts of the person they've come to mourn. A well written eulogy should not only sum up a person's life, character and impact, but if possible, it should shed light on less well known aspects of that person.

Who gives a eulogy at a funeral?

Usually the one chosen to give a eulogy at a funeral is someone close to the person who has died. Often children will give a eulogy at their parents funerals and husbands or wives will give a eulogy at their partners funerals.

Sometimes the occasion might be too overwhelming for the person closest to them to perform a eulogy, and they may ask another loved one to give a eulogy in their place.

How do you write a eulogy?

To write a eulogy you will need to speak with relatives and loved ones of the person who has died, think about your own experiences with them, and give yourself time to write and edit down your eulogy to the most appropriate parts.

There's no one size fits all approach to writing a eulogy. Every person is unique so every eulogy will be unique as well. You will have to think a lot about the type of person you are eulogising and how best to communicate that to the people who have come to mourn them.

One of the best ways to begin writing a eulogy is to talk to family members and close friends about the person who has died. Is there anything that they would like you to include or mention, or a favourite anecdote or story they'd like you to share?

You may also get inspiration from obituaries and tributes shared online and on social media.

What do you say in a eulogy?

To decide what you're going to say in a eulogy, think of the things you've discovered and discussed that best remind you of the person you are eulogising. If you think that a certain story is the most appropriate, as someone close to the person who has died, you're probably right. Your own and other people's memories could not only provide things to talk about, but inspire a way of summing up at the beginning and end of the eulogy who they were and what they meant.

What are some examples of things you could say in a eulogy?

Here are some suggestions of things you could say in a eulogy. If you are writing a eulogy, use these examples as a way to get started:

Expressing what you have to say in a eulogy

A bereaved family usually asks someone to give a eulogy because that person is important to them and to the person who has died. This can

matter more than words, but there are a few different ways of adding meaning to a eulogy.

You may want to keep it mostly fact-based, written in chronological order with a small personal note of remembrance at the end.

Alternatively, you could base it on personal anecdotes and stories that capture the personality of your loved one. These might even be more light-hearted anecdotes, which often helps the assembly feel more at ease.

If they were close to the person who has died and bereaved family, some people even choose to include jokes in their eulogies, though you should use your judgement as to whether this would be appropriate.

In the end, writing a good eulogy depends on writing from the heart. If you aim to describe what made the person special and important to you, this will show through in your writing.

How long should a eulogy be?

A eulogy should normally be around three to five minutes long and take no longer than ten minutes. A funeral eulogy of between 500 and 1000 written words will take from around three and a half to seven and a half minutes to speak.

Some funeral venues allocate a specific period of time for a funeral. The funeral director should be able to advise you, if you ask how long should a eulogy last, as part of the order of service.

- When and where they were born
- The names of their close family
- Nicknames
- How they met their spouse or partner
- Any military service
- Education

- Favourite poems, songs or quotes
- Acknowledgement of the guests (especially those who have travelled a long distance)
- Sporting achievements
- Anything they have contributed to the community
- Clubs and society memberships