

A Guide to Help You Write an Obituary

By
[Angela Morrow, RN](#)

Updated on November 15, 2019



Tara Moore/Taxi/Getty Images

If you're writing an obituary for a deceased loved one, or working with a funeral director or another provider to create one, then you will need to gather and organize a lot of facts and information about your loved one. Here's a general guide that you can use as an outline, template, checklist, or sample format when writing an obituary.

Name and Announcement of Death

The information you'll need about your loved one's name and death includes:

- Full name of the deceased, including his or her middle name or initial, maiden name and/or nickname, if applicable
- Age at the time of death
- Where the deceased was living at the time of death (city and state)
- Day of the week and date of death (month, day, and year)
- Place and cause of death, if you wish to include this information in the obituary

The Deceased's Life Details

Here's what you'll need concerning your loved one's life:

- Birthdate (month, day, and year) and place of birth (city and/or state)
- Full name(s) of parent(s) and/or stepparent(s)
- Pertinent childhood facts/information involving siblings, stories, schools, friends (optional)
- Marriage(s), including date (month and/or year), location of marriage (optional), and name of spouse(s)
- Education: school, college, university and/or other, if applicable
- Achievements, awards, and other forms of recognition
- Employment history, if desired
- Place(s) of residence (city and/or state, as relevant, but *do not include the full street address for the deceased's residences*)
- Hobbies, sports, interests, activities, causes supported, and/or other forms of passion, enjoyment, or recreation
- Charitable, religious, fraternal, political, and/or other affiliations, including any positions held in an organization
- Personal stories about the deceased's special qualities, if relevant and/or desired

Family Members

This is the information you'll need concerning your loved one's family members:

Survived by (And City/State of Residence):

- Spouse, partner, or significant other
- Children and/or stepchildren (in order of date of birth, and their spouses)
- Grandchildren and/or step-grandchildren (by first name or just the number of)
- Great-grandchildren and/or step-great-grandchildren (names or just the number of)
- Great-great-grandchildren and/or great-great step-grandchildren (names or just the number of)
- Parents and/or stepparent(s)
- Grandparents
- Siblings (in order of date of birth)
- Others, such as nephews, nieces, cousins, in-laws (optional)

Predeceased by (Include Name and Month/Year of Death, If Known):

- Spouse(s), partner(s), or significant other(s)
- Children and/or stepchildren (in order of date of birth)
- Grandchildren and/or step-grandchildren
- Siblings (in order of date of birth)
- Parents and/or stepparent(s)
- Others, such as nephews, nieces, cousins, in-laws (optional)

Flowers And/Or Memorial Contributions

If you desire to include information about flowers or memorial contributions, here's what to include:

- Send flowers and/or contributions to a funeral memorial fund or designated charitable organization or cause, including details concerning how/where to donate (include a website address or link, when possible)
- Charitable organization suggestions for memorial donations to a hospice, disease-specific organization, or an organization or cause with which the deceased was personally involved

Funeral or Memorial Service Details

Here are the details about the funeral or memorial service that you'll need to include:

- Date, time (including a.m. or p.m.) and location (including the business name and physical street address, city and state, and a website address or link, if available)
- Name(s) of the officiant(s), pallbearers, and/or other information, as applicable
- Wake/visitation information, if applicable, including date, time (including a.m. or p.m.) and location (including the business name and physical street address, city and state, and a website address or link, if available)
- Reception information, if applicable, including date, time (including a.m. or p.m.) and location (including the business name and physical street address, city and state, and a website address or link, if available)
- Any other memorial, vigil, or graveside service information, if applicable, including date, time (including a.m. or p.m.) and location (including the business name and physical street address, city and state, and a website address or link, if available)
- Location of interment (including the business name and physical street address, city and state, and a website address or link, if available)
- Name of the funeral home/provider in charge of the arrangements (including the business name and physical street address, city and state, and a website address or link, if available)