

How to Write a Eulogy or Remembrance Speech

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A eulogy is a speech intended to commemorate a [loved one who died](#). Usually presented at a [funeral or memorial service](#) by someone who was close to the deceased, a eulogy recalls special qualities about the deceased that enhance the existing emotional and spiritual connections between the person who died and the living, thereby focusing and increasing a listener's appreciation of the life lost.

What Should You Include in a Eulogy?

A eulogy should be between 5 and 10 minutes long. Set aside an hour or two to write and revise the eulogy, with extra time for contacting other people to get anecdotes or details from them you may need. A eulogy generally includes some/all of the following types of information:

- A condensed life history of the deceased
- Insightful details about his or her relationships with family members and/or friends
- Relevant details about the deceased's work/career history, personal interests, and hobbies, and/or achievements
- The eulogizer's favorite memories of the deceased
- Appropriate poems, songs, quotations, proverbs, and/or religious writings

It's important to note that a meaningful, memorable eulogy should neither simply list all of the information listed above, nor should you necessarily present it in this order. Instead, the most meaningful and memorable eulogies are written from the heart. You should also review [five tips for writing a successful eulogy](#) before you begin.

1. Recall Your Memories

Think about the deceased and the relationship you had with him or her. For example, where did you first meet? If he or she is a family member, what is one of your earliest or most special memories? What things did you do together? Can you remember any particularly humorous or touching memories you might like to share? What will you miss about him or her the most?

2. Gather Information About the Deceased

In addition to your personal knowledge, you can also talk with family members and the deceased's close friends or co-workers to gather additional information about the departed. Some important details to gather (in case you don't already know them) might include:

- The deceased's age and date of birth
- The full names of family members and other close friends
- Specifics about his or her education, workplaces, and/or career
- Hobbies or special interests
- Places the person lived
- Other special accomplishments he or she achieved

- If there are going to be other speakers, coordinate with them so you aren't repeating the same biographical details.

3. Organize Your Info/Memories

Next, you should organize your notes, create an outline of your eulogy or remembrance speech and then fill in the information you gathered. Use whatever method is most comfortable and familiar to you, such as your computer, smartphone or tablet, or by writing on paper or note cards.

In terms of the eulogy's tone, some people prefer to prepare and deliver a serious eulogy while others want to keep their remembrance speech light.

A mix of solemnity and humor often proves effective because it allows time for the audience to grieve appropriately while also sharing in a celebration of a life well lived.

Keep in mind how much time you will have to deliver your eulogy. It's best to err on the short side, especially if other people will also speak.

4. Write

Don't get bogged down by the formalities of writing. Just write your speech in your own voice, which means you should write it in the same way you would normally talk. Your audience will want to feel like you are talking to them, not reading from a script. And as you write your eulogy, keep in mind the most important thing: *write from your heart*.

If you're having trouble getting started or need some inspiration, it's often helpful to build your eulogy around an appropriate quotation about mothers, fathers, children, grandparents, etc. You might also read a eulogy delivered for a famous person, such as Princess Diana or Abraham Lincoln, which can help you figure out the tone of your speech, the right length, what sort of things to mention, etc.

[20 Insightful, Moving Quotes About Grief and Loss](#)

5. Review and Revise

The first draft you write is usually not the final version. Once written, you should read through it and decide what to keep and what to toss out. You might also want to read it aloud to family or friends to get their feedback or record it so you can listen to it yourself.

When you think you are finished and happy with the result, let it sit for 12 to 24 hours. The next day, review it again when it will feel fresh and then make any necessary revisions.

6. Rehearse and Finalize

Once you feel happy with your eulogy or remembrance speech, practice delivering it out loud several times so you become familiar with it. You don't have to memorize it but you should know it well enough so you won't have to read it word-for-word.

Even if you want to deliver your eulogy from memory, you should still keep a written copy, or at least some notes or an outline, on hand that you could refer to if necessary. Also, be prepared for requests from other loved ones for a copy of your eulogy to preserve the memories.

As you rehearse your eulogy out loud, make notes about any spots that don't sound right to you or that you find tricky to say, and revise those words or sentences. Many people find it useful to practice in front of a mirror or while looking out of a window, which can help them deliver their speech to their audience and not to the paper they're holding.

7. Deliver Your Eulogy

Even if you are comfortable speaking to large groups of people, a eulogy can still prove difficult to deliver because of its emotional nature. Try to remember that you are doing this to honor the memory of a loved one and not to gain the approval of the audience.

Before you begin, close your eyes, take a deep breath, and picture the deceased in your mind. Try to speak slowly and remember to breathe normally. Many people hold their breath when nervous, so pause and take a deep breath when you feel yourself tense up or start to get emotional.

Finally, remember that just as you wrote from your heart, you should deliver your eulogy or remembrance speech from your heart.

Additional Tips

- Print the final copy of your eulogy using a large text size, and double-space it, so it's easier to read.
- Staple the pages together in the proper order, or at least number the pages in case they get mixed up.
- Have a glass or bottle of water handy, as well as a handkerchief or tissues.
- Remember that it's perfectly normal to show your emotions. If you start to cry, just take a moment to regain your composure before continuing.
- If you grow too emotional and can't continue, you should have someone else on hand who's prepared to deliver the speech for you. Give that person a copy of your eulogy beforehand, just in case.
- Save an electronic copy or print an extra copy or two in case you get requests from other loved ones for a copy of your eulogy.

Writing and delivering a eulogy or remembrance speech is truly an honor and an opportunity for you to help the audience to remember the person — who they were, what they did, and what they enjoyed about life. Your words will paint a picture of the deceased through the memories, anecdotes, and stories you tell. A eulogy does not have to be perfect. The people in attendance will appreciate whatever you write and deliver.