



Writing a Great Obituary

Basics: Name, age (if you so choose), where they lived/died, date of death.

- Some people also choose to include a general cause of death in this section.

Biographical Sketch: It's helpful to pull these things together ahead of time, if possible. If you forget someone, spell someone's name wrong, or intentionally decide to leave someone out that is OK!

- Most people include the following:
 - Date and place of birth
 - Parent's names
 - Name of spouse(s)
 - Education
 - Military Service, if applicable
 - Work history
 - Awards/Achievements
 - Hobbies
 - Qualities/Superpowers
- Do not be afraid to let the person's personality shine here. If their work was important to them then include it, if not then don't. The true purpose of this section is to show the highlights reel of a person's life, not their resume.
 - Try answering the following questions:
 - What three words perfectly describe this person?
 - What did they major in in college? Is it a miracle they graduated?
 - How did they meet their spouse?
 - What was their favorite thing about their job?
 - If they weren't at work, where could you find them?
 - Were they a good cook? Did they share a favorite recipe before they died?
 - What were they the best at? (What did they only *think* they were best at?)

Family: This section is usually filled with family who predeceased the person who died as well as the survivors. Again- if you forget someone, spell someone's name wrong, or intentionally decide to leave someone out that is OK. Family isn't just blood relations, it is anyone that meant something to the person who is dead, including pets!



Services Times: Be sure to include viewing times/funeral mass/celebration of life information toward the end of the obit. If there aren't any, a statement that none will happen per request is fine.

Special Messages: If the person who died had a favorite charity or organization that they wanted money donated to in their memory this can be added. Some like to close with favorite quotes, song lyrics, or Bible verses. Find what best represents the person!

Pictures: Many choose to include a picture with the obituary.

- When selecting a picture consider the following:
 - Do you want their high school graduation picture or a more recent one?
 - Do you have a favorite picture of yourself (if it's yours you're writing)?
 - Is there a great story behind the picture? Can you tell it in the obit briefly?

Money Matters: A death notice is typically free to run in local newspapers however, an obituary is typically charged for by column inch. If you're looking to save money be aware of length of the obit.

- Ways to save space include:
 - Removing last names from immediate family
 - Using just years rather than full dates for events in the past
 - Removing locations of family