OBITUARY WRITING GUIDE

OBITUARY WRITING GUIDE IS AN ESSENTIAL RESOURCE FOR ANYONE TASKED WITH COMMEMORATING A LOVED ONE'S LIFE IN A RESPECTFUL AND MEANINGFUL WAY. CRAFTING AN OBITUARY REQUIRES CAREFUL ATTENTION TO DETAIL, SENSITIVITY, AND CLARITY TO HONOR THE DECEASED WHILE PROVIDING IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO FRIENDS, FAMILY, AND THE COMMUNITY. THIS GUIDE COVERS THE FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENTS OF OBITUARY WRITING, FROM GATHERING ACCURATE INFORMATION TO STRUCTURING THE CONTENT FOR MAXIMUM IMPACT. ADDITIONALLY, IT EXPLORES STYLISTIC CONSIDERATIONS, COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID, AND TIPS FOR SUBMITTING OBITUARIES TO NEWSPAPERS OR ONLINE PLATFORMS. WHETHER YOU ARE WRITING YOUR FIRST OBITUARY OR SEEKING TO IMPROVE YOUR SKILLS, THIS COMPREHENSIVE OVERVIEW WILL HELP ENSURE THAT THE TRIBUTE YOU CREATE APPROPRIATELY REFLECTS THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF THE DEPARTED. BELOW IS A CLEAR OUTLINE OF THE KEY SECTIONS COVERED IN THIS OBITUARY WRITING GUIDE.

- Understanding the Purpose of an Obituary
- ESSENTIAL INFORMATION TO INCLUDE
- STRUCTURING THE OBITUARY
- WRITING STYLE AND TONE
- COMMON MISTAKES IN OBITUARY WRITING
- SUBMISSION AND PUBLICATION TIPS

UNDERSTANDING THE PURPOSE OF AN OBITUARY

AN OBITUARY SERVES MULTIPLE PURPOSES BEYOND SIMPLY ANNOUNCING A DEATH. IT IS A FORMAL NOTICE THAT INFORMS THE PUBLIC ABOUT THE PASSING OF AN INDIVIDUAL, PROVIDING DETAILS ABOUT THEIR LIFE, ACHIEVEMENTS, AND SURVIVING FAMILY MEMBERS. OBITUARIES ALSO FUNCTION AS A HISTORICAL RECORD AND A SOURCE OF COMFORT FOR THOSE MOURNING.

RECOGNIZING THE ROLE AN OBITUARY PLAYS HELPS GUIDE ITS CONTENT AND TONE, ENSURING IT FULFILLS ITS INTENDED FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY.

THE ROLE OF OBITUARIES IN SOCIETY

OBITUARIES PLAY AN IMPORTANT SOCIAL ROLE BY SHARING THE NEWS OF DEATH AND INVITING COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO PARTICIPATE IN MOURNING OR MEMORIAL SERVICES. THEY ALSO DOCUMENT A PERSON'S LIFE STORY, PRESERVING MEMORIES FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS. UNDERSTANDING THIS CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE ENCOURAGES A RESPECTFUL AND THOUGHTFUL APPROACH TO OBITUARY WRITING.

EMOTIONAL AND INFORMATIONAL BALANCE

While obituaries convey factual information, they also evoke emotion by highlighting the deceased's personality and impact. Balancing informative content with a warm, dignified tone is key to creating an obituary that resonates with readers and honors the deceased.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION TO INCLUDE

ACCURATE AND COMPREHENSIVE INFORMATION IS THE FOUNDATION OF ANY WELL-CRAFTED OBITUARY. INCLUDING KEY DETAILS ENSURES THAT READERS RECEIVE A COMPLETE PICTURE OF THE DECEASED'S IDENTITY AND LEGACY.

BASIC PERSONAL DETAILS

THE OBITUARY SHOULD BEGIN WITH THE FULL NAME OF THE DECEASED, AGE, DATE AND PLACE OF DEATH, AND SOMETIMES CAUSE OF DEATH IF APPROPRIATE. THESE DETAILS PROVIDE THE ESSENTIAL CONTEXT FOR THE ANNOUNCEMENT.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

INCLUDING INFORMATION ABOUT BIRTH DATE AND PLACE, EDUCATION, CAREER, MILITARY SERVICE, HOBBIES, AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT HELPS CREATE A FULLER PICTURE OF THE DECEASED'S LIFE. HIGHLIGHTING ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PASSIONS ADDS DEPTH AND PERSONALITY.

SURVIVING FAMILY MEMBERS

LISTING CLOSE FAMILY MEMBERS SUCH AS SPOUSE, CHILDREN, SIBLINGS, AND GRANDCHILDREN IS CUSTOMARY. THIS INFORMATION ACKNOWLEDGES THOSE LEFT BEHIND AND MAY INFORM READERS ABOUT FAMILIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND SUPPORT NETWORKS.

FUNERAL AND MEMORIAL SERVICE INFORMATION

DETAILS ABOUT UPCOMING SERVICES, INCLUDING DATES, TIMES, LOCATIONS, AND WHETHER THE EVENTS ARE PRIVATE OR PUBLIC, ARE IMPORTANT TO INCLUDE. ANY SPECIAL REQUESTS SUCH AS DONATIONS OR CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS IN LIEU OF FLOWERS SHOULD ALSO BE MENTIONED.

STRUCTURING THE OBITUARY

A CLEAR AND LOGICAL STRUCTURE ENHANCES READABILITY AND ENSURES THAT ALL KEY INFORMATION IS CONVEYED EFFECTIVELY. ORGANIZING THE OBITUARY INTO DISTINCT SECTIONS HELPS GUIDE READERS THROUGH THE CONTENT.

OPENING ANNOUNCEMENT

THE OBITUARY TYPICALLY BEGINS WITH A STRAIGHTFORWARD ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE DEATH, INCLUDING THE DECEASED'S NAME, AGE, AND DATE OF PASSING. THIS OPENING SETS THE TONE AND PROVIDES ESSENTIAL INFORMATION UPFRONT.

LIFE SUMMARY

A CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY OF THE DECEASED'S LIFE FOLLOWS, HIGHLIGHTING MAJOR MILESTONES SUCH AS EDUCATION,

CAREER ACHIEVEMENTS, AND PERSONAL INTERESTS. THIS SECTION SHOULD BE CONCISE YET COMPREHENSIVE, FOCUSING ON THE MOST SIGNIFICANT ASPECTS OF THE INDIVIDUAL'S LIFE.

FAMILY AND RELATIONSHIPS

NEXT, THE OBITUARY LISTS SURVIVING FAMILY MEMBERS AND MAY ALSO MENTION PREDECEASED RELATIVES. THIS SECTION RECOGNIZES CLOSE CONNECTIONS AND HELPS READERS UNDERSTAND THE FAMILY CONTEXT.

SERVICE DETAILS AND FINAL NOTES

THE OBITUARY CONCLUDES WITH INFORMATION ABOUT FUNERAL OR MEMORIAL SERVICES AND ANY ADDITIONAL NOTES SUCH AS PREFERRED CHARITIES OR EXPRESSIONS OF GRATITUDE. THIS FINAL SECTION PROVIDES PRACTICAL DETAILS FOR THOSE WISHING TO PAY THEIR RESPECTS.

WRITING STYLE AND TONE

THE WRITING STYLE AND TONE OF AN OBITUARY SHOULD REFLECT THE PERSONALITY OF THE DECEASED WHILE MAINTAINING PROFESSIONALISM AND RESPECT. CAREFUL WORD CHOICE AND LANGUAGE USE ARE CRUCIAL TO ACHIEVING THIS BALANCE.

USING CLEAR AND RESPECTFUL LANGUAGE

Obituaries should avoid Jargon and overly complex language, opting instead for clear, straightforward phrasing. Respectful language honors the deceased and communicates the message appropriately to a broad audience.

INCORPORATING PERSONAL TOUCHES

INCLUDING ANECDOTES, QUOTES, OR DESCRIPTIONS OF CHARACTER TRAITS CAN PERSONALIZE THE OBITUARY, MAKING IT MORE MEANINGFUL TO READERS. THESE ELEMENTS SHOULD BE USED JUDICIOUSLY TO MAINTAIN A DIGNIFIED TONE.

LENGTH CONSIDERATIONS

While some obituaries may be brief, others can be more detailed depending on publication guidelines and family preferences. Generally, an obituary should be concise yet thorough, typically ranging from 200 to 500 words.

COMMON MISTAKES IN OBITUARY WRITING

AVOIDING COMMON PITFALLS ENSURES THE OBITUARY IS ACCURATE, CLEAR, AND RESPECTFUL. AWARENESS OF FREQUENT ERRORS HELPS IMPROVE THE OVERALL QUALITY OF THE TRIBUTE.

OMITTING KEY INFORMATION

FAILING TO INCLUDE ESSENTIAL DETAILS SUCH AS FULL NAMES, DATES, OR SERVICE INFORMATION CAN CONFUSE READERS AND DIMINISH THE OBITUARY'S EFFECTIVENESS. DOUBLE-CHECKING FACTS BEFORE SUBMISSION IS VITAL.

OVERLOADING WITH IRRELEVANT DETAILS

INCLUDING EXCESSIVE OR UNRELATED INFORMATION MAY DETRACT FROM THE OBITUARY'S FOCUS. PRIORITIZING RELEVANT LIFE HIGHLIGHTS AND FAMILY DETAILS MAINTAINS CLARITY AND IMPACT.

ERRORS IN SPELLING AND GRAMMAR

Typos and grammatical mistakes undermine the professionalism of an obituary. Careful proofreading and, if possible, having another person review the text can prevent such errors.

SUBMISSION AND PUBLICATION TIPS

KNOWING HOW AND WHERE TO SUBMIT THE OBITUARY ENSURES IT REACHES THE INTENDED AUDIENCE AND IS PUBLISHED CORRECTLY.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT PUBLICATION

SELECTING AN APPROPRIATE NEWSPAPER, ONLINE MEMORIAL SITE, OR COMMUNITY BULLETIN DEPENDS ON THE DECEASED'S CONNECTIONS AND THE FAMILY'S PREFERENCES. LOCAL NEWSPAPERS ARE COMMON CHOICES FOR REACHING THE COMMUNITY.

MEETING DEADLINES AND REQUIREMENTS

EACH PUBLICATION HAS SPECIFIC DEADLINES, WORD LIMITS, AND FORMATTING GUIDELINES. ADHERING TO THESE REQUIREMENTS FACILITATES TIMELY AND ACCURATE PUBLICATION.

COSTS AND PAYMENT

PUBLISHING OBITUARIES OFTEN INVOLVES FEES BASED ON LENGTH AND PLACEMENT. UNDERSTANDING AND BUDGETING FOR THESE COSTS IS IMPORTANT TO AVOID UNEXPECTED EXPENSES.

UTILIZING ONLINE OBITUARY PLATFORMS

MANY FAMILIES CHOOSE TO SUPPLEMENT PRINT OBITUARIES WITH ONLINE MEMORIALS THAT ALLOW FOR EXTENDED CONTENT AND MULTIMEDIA. THESE PLATFORMS CAN ENHANCE THE REACH AND LONGEVITY OF THE TRIBUTE.

- GATHER COMPLETE AND ACCURATE INFORMATION BEFORE WRITING
- USE A RESPECTFUL, CLEAR, AND CONCISE WRITING STYLE
- INCLUDE ESSENTIAL DETAILS SUCH AS DATES, FAMILY, AND SERVICE INFO
- PROOFREAD CAREFULLY TO ELIMINATE ERRORS
- FOLLOW PUBLICATION GUIDELINES CLOSELY WHEN SUBMITTING

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT ARE THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE IN AN OBITUARY?

AN OBITUARY TYPICALLY INCLUDES THE FULL NAME OF THE DECEASED, AGE, DATE AND PLACE OF DEATH, BRIEF BIOGRAPHY, NAMES OF SURVIVING FAMILY MEMBERS, FUNERAL OR MEMORIAL SERVICE DETAILS, AND SOMETIMES A PERSONAL MESSAGE OR QUOTE.

HOW CAN I WRITE A RESPECTFUL AND MEANINGFUL OBITUARY?

TO WRITE A RESPECTFUL OBITUARY, FOCUS ON HIGHLIGHTING THE DECEASED'S LIFE ACHIEVEMENTS, PERSONALITY, AND RELATIONSHIPS. USE CLEAR, COMPASSIONATE LANGUAGE, AVOID JARGON, AND CONSIDER INCLUDING ANECDOTES OR QUOTES THAT CAPTURE THEIR CHARACTER.

WHAT IS THE TYPICAL LENGTH OF AN OBITUARY?

OBITUARIES USUALLY RANGE FROM 200 TO 500 WORDS, DEPENDING ON THE PUBLICATION'S GUIDELINES AND THE FAMILY'S PREFERENCES. SHORTER OBITUARIES ARE COMMON IN NEWSPAPERS, WHILE LONGER ONES MAY BE USED ONLINE OR IN MEMORIAL BOOKLETS.

HOW DO I HANDLE SENSITIVE INFORMATION IN AN OBITUARY?

BE MINDFUL OF PRIVACY AND RESPECT THE WISHES OF THE FAMILY. AVOID INCLUDING CONTROVERSIAL OR OVERLY PERSONAL DETAILS, AND FOCUS ON POSITIVE MEMORIES AND FACTS THAT HONOR THE DECEASED'S LIFE.

ARE THERE DIFFERENT OBITUARY FORMATS FOR NEWSPAPERS AND ONLINE MEMORIALS?

YES, NEWSPAPER OBITUARIES OFTEN FOLLOW STRICT WORD LIMITS AND FORMATTING RULES, WHILE ONLINE MEMORIALS ALLOW FOR MORE DETAILED NARRATIVES, PHOTOS, VIDEOS, AND GUEST MESSAGES, PROVIDING A MORE PERSONALIZED TRIBUTE.

CAN I WRITE AN OBITUARY FOR SOMEONE ELSE, AND HOW SHOULD I APPROACH IT?

YES, YOU CAN WRITE AN OBITUARY FOR SOMEONE ELSE. GATHER ACCURATE INFORMATION FROM FAMILY OR CLOSE FRIENDS, VERIFY FACTS, AND WRITE WITH EMPATHY AND RESPECT. IT'S IMPORTANT TO CONSULT THE FAMILY BEFORE PUBLISHING.

WHAT ARE SOME COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID WHEN WRITING AN OBITUARY?

COMMON MISTAKES INCLUDE MISSPELLING NAMES, OMITTING KEY DETAILS, INCLUDING INACCURATE INFORMATION, BEING OVERLY LENGTHY OR TOO BRIEF, AND USING INSENSITIVE LANGUAGE. PROOFREADING AND FACT-CHECKING ARE ESSENTIAL TO AVOID THESE ERRORS.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

1. Writing Obituaries: A Practical Guide for Journalists and Funeral Professionals

THE DECEASED. THE AUTHOR EMPHASIZES EMPATHY AND ACCURACY IN EVERY PIECE.

- THIS BOOK OFFERS STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO WRITE RESPECTFUL AND MEANINGFUL OBITUARIES. IT COVERS THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE, ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS, AND TIPS FOR CAPTURING THE ESSENCE OF A PERSON'S LIFE. THE GUIDE IS DESIGNED FOR BOTH SEASONED JOURNALISTS AND THOSE NEW TO OBITUARY WRITING.
- 2. The Art of the Obituary: How to Write a Tribute that Honours a Life
 Focused on crafting heartfelt and memorable tributes, this book explores the narrative techniques that make obituaries impactful. It provides examples and exercises to help writers create engaging stories that celebrate
- 3. Obituary Writing Handbook: Techniques for Creating Lasting Legacies
 This handbook delves into the technical and stylistic aspects of obituary writing. Readers will learn how to balance facts with storytelling, and how to handle sensitive topics with care. The book also discusses the changing role of obituaries in the digital age.
- 4. From Life to Print: A Guide to Writing Meaningful Obituaries

 Aimed at funeral directors, Journalists, and family members, this guide covers the fundamentals of obituary writing. It highlights the importance of thorough research and offers templates for different types of obituaries. The book also addresses common mistakes to avoid.
- 5. OBITUARIES THAT INSPIRE: WRITING CELEBRATIONS OF LIFE

This title encourages writers to go beyond basic biographical details and create inspiring narratives. It includes interviews with professional obituary writers and tips on incorporating quotes, anecdotes, and personal reflections. The book is a valuable resource for anyone tasked with memorializing a loved one.

6. MASTERING OBITUARY WRITING: A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE

DESIGNED AS AN ALL-IN-ONE RESOURCE, THIS BOOK COVERS EVERYTHING FROM GATHERING INFORMATION TO FINAL EDITING. IT OFFERS GUIDANCE ON STYLE, TONE, AND STRUCTURE, ALONG WITH ADVICE FOR ADAPTING OBITUARIES FOR PRINT AND ONLINE PUBLICATION. THE AUTHOR ALSO DISCUSSES LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS AND PRIVACY CONCERNS.

7. THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO WRITING OBITUARIES

THIS CONCISE GUIDE PROVIDES CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPOSING RESPECTFUL AND ACCURATE OBITUARIES. IT IS IDEAL FOR PEOPLE NEW TO OBITUARY WRITING, WITH CHECKLISTS AND EXAMPLES THAT SIMPLIFY THE PROCESS. THE BOOK ALSO EXPLORES CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN OBITUARY TRADITIONS.

- 8. Obituary Writing for Beginners: Crafting Personal and Professional Tributes

 Targeted at novice writers, this book breaks down the obituary writing process into manageable steps. It

 offers practical tips on interviewing family members and gathering relevant information. Readers will find

 helpful advice on maintaining sensitivity and dignity throughout their writing.
- 9. THE STORY BEHIND THE OBITUARY: WRITING LIVES THAT MATTER

This book highlights the importance of storytelling in obituary writing, encouraging writers to capture the unique qualities of each individual. It includes case studies and examples that illustrate effective narrative techniques. The author stresses the role of obituaries in preserving personal and community histories.

Obituary Writing Guide

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2014-04-14 "There has never been a guide as comprehensive as this to writing in all its forms. . . .
Useful, clear and encyclopedic, this book is an essential guide for every household."—Examiner
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that will stand out? Wondering how to request a letter of recommendation for graduate school?
Trying to craft a get-well note that will really help? How informal is too informal when instant
messaging in the office? What do you write on the website for your small business? What should you
say in a wedding invitation? Or a divorce announcement? With over 200 how-to entries and
easy-to-use models organized into three comprehensive sections on work, school, and personal life,
How to Write Anything covers a wide range of topics that make it an essential guide for the whole
family.

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assisted her fifty-six-year-old widowed mother in Virginia, while still running her real estate business in California, after the early unpredicted loss of her father to cancer. In her groundbreaking book, Haverkampf shares how she and her sister-both in their early thirties-found success and managed struggles during their journey after their father's death. This is a reference guide grievers will refer to during the year after loss and years beyond.

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Worksheets: download and customize worksheets detailing information executors need to get organized, including an inventory of assets and debts (details inside).

obituary writing guide: A Tactical Guide to Science Journalism Deborah Blum, Ashley Smart, Tom Zeller Jr., 2022 A Tactical Guide to Science Journalism brings together award-winning journalists from around the world to share fascinating tales of science and how it works and to provide guidance into reporting specialties like infectious disease, climate change, astronomy, public health, physics, and statistics. Drawing insights from writers based at publications including The New York Times, the BBC, The Washington Post, Science, The New Yorker, National Geographic and more, this guide is designed to help journalists everywhere improve their craft and serve as a valuable resource for those seeking to understand the profession at its best.

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obituary writing guide: Achieving a Good Death Chris Palmer, 2024-10-01 Death is inevitable, dying badly is not. A good death is achievable, and this book explains how. There is an art to dying well that can be taught and learned. While death is inevitable, dying badly is not. This practical guide to achieving a good death will reduce the fear that often cloaks discussions about death and dying and give readers the knowledge and skills to achieve a peaceful and gentle death. With the multiple options available at the end of life, people can design and direct their end-of-life journey so they have as fulfilling and meaningful life as possible right up to the end and achieve the elusive good death when the time comes. Chapters focus on essential elements of living well and preparing

for a good death including: Death cleaning so we don't burden our loved ones with a big messTalking with loved ones and doctors about our end-of-life wishes and aspirations so they know what matters to us and how we want to be treatedWriting a legacy letter (an ethical will) and a memoir to let loved ones know what is deep in our hearts. Understanding caregivers, an under-appreciated group of people, usually unpaid women, who number in the millions. The benefits of palliative care, hospice care, and end-of-life doulas and the necessary vigilance to get the most out of these essential services. End-of-life options, including medical-aid-in-dying (MAID) and voluntarily stopping eating and drinking (VSED). What it's like to die and how to help people as they die. Options for disposition of the body of a loved one (or your own body) after death, especially in an economically and ecologically responsible wayPlanning commemorations and celebrations of life. The nature of grief, including how to deal with it, and why it is often unbearably painful. This thoughtful and gentle guide, exploring one of the most difficult human topics, equips every reader with the information they need to overcome the anxiety and confusion that so often overwhelms end-of-life planning so they may intentionally plan for "a good death" that will provide comfort for all during one's final act.

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obituary writing guide: Handbook on Animal-Assisted Therapy Megan Mueller, Zenithson Ng, Taylor Chastain Griffin, Philip Tedeschi, 2024-09-20 Handbook on Animal-Assisted Therapy, Sixth Edition continues to be the leading textbook and reference in this field for clinical practitioners. The book provides the evidence basis for the effectiveness of this treatment, as well as guidelines for how to perform it from the selection of treatment animal to application with patients. This new edition is fully updated and contains 15 new chapters on culture, research, standards, of practice, and more. Organized into four sections, the book explores the conceptualization of the animal-human bond, best practices for AAI professionals, considerations related to animal selection/training/welfare, and utilizing AAI in special populations. The book may serve as a study guide for the Animal Assisted Intervention Specialist Certification Exam. - Summarizes current research on AAT - Guides readers how to work with a therapy animal safely and effectively - Covers AAT with special populations and for specific disorders - Supports study for the Animal-Assisted Intervention Specialist Certification exam - Contains 15 new chapters on culture, research, standards of practice, and more

obituary writing guide: Handbook of Death and Dying Clifton D. Bryant, 2003-10 Dying is a social as well as physiological phenomenon. Each society characterizes and, consequently, treats death and dying in its own individual ways—ways that differ markedly. These particular patterns of death and dying engender modal cultural responses, and such institutionalized behavior has familiar, economical, educational, religious, and political implications. The Handbook of Death and Dying takes stock of the vast literature in the field of thanatology, arranging and synthesizing what has been an unwieldy body of knowledge into a concise, yet comprehensive reference work. This two-volume handbook will provide direction and momentum to the study of death-related behavior for many years to come. Key Features More than 100 contributors representing authoritative expertise in a diverse array of disciplines Anthropology Family Studies History Law Medicine Mortuary Science Philosophy Psychology Social work Sociology Theology A distinguished editorial board of leading scholars and researchers in the field More than 100 definitive essays covering almost every dimension of death-related behavior Comprehensive and inclusive, exploring concepts

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