

Writing an obituary

An obituary is a notice in a newspaper of a death and funeral arrangements, but it can be much more. It can be a factual record of what a person did during their life. It can include a record of the deceased's extended family, past and present. At its best, an obituary tells a compelling story about a life.

Essential information

Full legal name, and nickname (if commonly used)

Age at death

City and state of residence at death

Date and place of death

Date and place of birth

Parents' names

Education and degrees awarded (schools, college, university, other)

Military service, branch of service, war or conflict, where stationed

Occupation(s)

Places of residence

Marriage(s): spouse's name, date and place of marriage

Survived by (and their places of residence):

Spouse

Children (in order of date of birth, and their spouses)

Grandchildren, great-grandchildren, great-great-grandchildren (names or number of each)

Parents

Grandparents

Siblings (in order of date of birth)

Predeceased by:

Spouse

Children (in order of date of birth)

Grandchildren, great-grandchildren, great-great-grandchildren (names or number of each)

Parents

Grandparents

Siblings (in order of date of birth)

Time, date and place of memorial service, funeral, visitation, vigil, prayer service, wake, celebration of life or other event (if the public is invited)

Name and location (city and state) of funeral home

Optional information you may want to include

Cause of death

Other survivors, such as aunts, uncles, nephews, nieces, cousins, in-laws, close friends

Pets

Organizations, clubs, favorite charities

Religious affiliations

Awards, honors

Hobbies, passions

Ancestry and family lore

Unusual or interesting personality traits, attributes or experiences

Favorite saying, poem, quote

Thank you to individuals or organizations

Memorial contribution suggestions (with addresses)