

Eulogy template: what to include and how to write one

Key facts

- NFDA's consumer site recommends 2 to 5 minutes if you are not the only speaker, with 1 to 3 stories, or 7 to 10 minutes if you are the sole speaker (NFDA, Remembering A Life, checked 2026-09-21).
- Toastmasters International recommends a stand-alone eulogy run about 4 to 6 minutes, extending to as long as 10 minutes only if you also cover the person's life story in detail (Toastmasters International, "Delivering a Heartfelt Farewell," checked 2026-09-21).
- Toastmasters' core guidance: "a eulogy should not be the chronology of a life but a tribute to it" (Toastmasters International, "Delivering Eulogies," checked 2026-09-21).
- Family, friends, clergy and funeral directors are all typical eulogy speakers, and in many faiths clergy deliver it themselves (Everplans, checked 2026-09-21).
- The FTC's Funeral Rule lists "officiating clergy" honoraria among the cash advance items a funeral home may pay on your behalf and bill back to you (Federal Trade Commission, checked 2026-09-21).
- At VA national cemeteries, federal regulation says VA "will respect and defer to the expressed wishes of the personal representative for the content and conduct of a committal or memorial service" (38 CFR § 38.619(c), checked 2026-09-21).
- AARP's guide says the biggest eulogy-writing mistake is describing someone's qualities in the abstract instead of with a specific story that shows them (AARP, checked 2026-09-21).

Printable eulogy checklist

- ☐ Confirmed whether you are the only speaker or one of several
- ☐ Asked the funeral director, celebrant or officiant how much time is allotted
- ☐ Brainstormed the person's qualities and specific memories tied to each
- ☐ Called 2 to 3 people who knew the person well for their own stories
- ☐ Chosen 2 to 3 stories rather than a full biography
- ☐ Drafted opening, stories, what they meant to people, and a closing line
- ☐ Read the draft aloud and timed it against the target length
- ☐ Had someone else review the draft for tone and balance
- ☐ Practiced out loud more than once, including the hardest lines
- ☐ Printed a backup copy or brought notes
- ☐ Saved the final text for the family's records