

An **obituary** is a public account of the life of a person who has done something significant or important, and who has died recently.



Reading

Read some obituaries on the internet. For example, on [The Independent](#) and [The Telegraph](#) obituaries can be found in the 'News' tab.

As you read, answer the following questions:

1. What information is given about the person?
2. How is the obituary structured?
3. What tenses are used?
4. How would you describe the tone of the obituary?

Key features

1. Obituaries tend to include:

- ✓ a photo of the person
- ✓ the name and title of the person
- ✓ their dates of birth and death
- ✓ the person's background: their family, and where they were born and lived
- ✓ the person's profession and how they rose to prominence
- ✓ more recent events in their personal history
- ✓ brief details of how they died*
- ✓ reflection on the significance of their life and possible legacy.

*Note that unless the death is newsworthy in itself – e.g. they were murdered – most obituaries do not explain in any great detail how the person died.

2. Information in obituaries usually follows the order above (i.e. largely chronological).
3. Obituaries are written in the **past tenses** (as the subject is dead!).
4. The language is usually quite formal and the tone is respectful.

Key words and phrases

Obituaries often contain expressions like these:

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Sadly ... | It is with great sadness ... | much-loved father/mother of ... |
| passed away | He/She will be remembered as ... | He/She devoted himself to ... |
| His/her friends paid tribute to ... | Tragically ... | He/She has been described as ... |

Please remember that, apart from the typical expressions above, you need to use your **own words**: do not cut and paste from websites.

Writing frame

Obituary of

Born:Died:

Family still alive:

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Cause of death:

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Early life:

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Key achievements:

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How will they be remembered?

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