How to Write an Ode

By an eHow Contributor

The ancient Greeks and Romans often sang their odes in celebration of great athletes, memorable events and magnificent places. Through time the ode was transformed by English scholars into something more meditative and private. It evolved again, when Romantic Era poets reached back into history and tried to emulate the great poets, combining both previous forms into an even more unique exploration of the form. Whether you've been assigned to write an ode as a classroom project, or you're simply looking to expand your poetic horizons, read on for instructions on how to write an ode.

Created by Pindar out of the traditional forms of Greek tragedy, the ode is generally defined as a rhymed poem of irregular meter that praises its subject. The English ode consists of an undefined number of 10-line stanzas.

Instructions

1. Consider the subject matter that you wish to write about, and remember that beauty can be found in the least expected places. (ie: A bag floating on the wind, light reflected through a raindrop on a window, etc.)
2. Write a 10-line stanza of iambic verse using an a-b-a-b-c-d-e-c-d-e or a-a-b-b-c-c-d-d-e-e-f-f-g-g-h-h rhyme scheme.
3. Proceed to write as many 10-line stanzas as desired. Use the same rhyme scheme pattern in the following stanzas, but with different rhymes. If you do this correctly, the "a" of a stanza will rhyme only with the "a" of that same stanza.
4. Revise as needed

Read more: How to Write an Ode | eHow.com http://www.ehow.com/how_16706_write-ode.html#ixzz188EcDlr

**Note: You must write at least one 10-line stanza for this choice.

Example of an Ode:

Ode to a Loved One (by Sappho)

Blest as the immortal gods is he,
The youth who fondly sits by thee,
And hears and sees thee, all the while,
Softly speaks and sweetly smile.

'Twas this deprived my soul of rest,
And raised such tumults in my breast;
For, while I gazed, in transport tossed,
My breath was gone, my voice was lost;

My bosom glowed; the subtle flame
Ran quick through all my vital frame;
O'er my dim eyes a darkness hung;
My ears with hollow murmurs rung;

In dewy damps my limbs were chilled;
My blood with gentle horrors thrilled;
My feeble pulse forgot to play;
I fainted, sunk, and died away.
How To Write A Eulogy

A funeral eulogy speech or remembrance is a sincere tribute and an inspiring gift to a deceased person delivered at a memorial service. Eulogy means blessing or praise. It comes from the Greek term eulogia. The basic rules in this tutorial: draw the contours of the life of the person who died, and honor his or her merits, character and virtues. A eulogy is a well-crafted speech intended to commemorate a loved one who has died. It is usually presented at a memorial service or funeral by someone who was close to the deceased and knows them well.

A eulogy may contain:

- a condensed life history of the person who has died
- details about family, friends, work/career, interests, and achievements
- favorite memories of the deceased
- favorite poems, songs, quotes, or religious writings

The most touching and meaningful eulogies are written from the heart. A eulogy does not have to be perfect. Whatever you write and deliver will be appreciated by the people in attendance.

Here's How:

1. **Start by realizing the task at hand.**
   Writing and delivering a eulogy is truly an honor. It is an opportunity for you to bring the deceased person back into the minds of those in attendance. Your words will paint a picture of the deceased through the memories, anecdotes and stories you tell. A eulogy allows the audience to remember the person -- who they were, what they did and what they enjoyed about life.

2. **Recall your own memories.**
   Think about the deceased and the relationship you had with them. Where you met (if your not family), things you did together, humorous or touching memories, and what you will miss the most might be things you decide to share.

3. **Gather information about the deceased.**
   Talk with family members and close friends to gather important information about the departed. Even co-workers may have valuable things to share. Some important information to include in the eulogy:
   - Persons age/date of birth
   - Family and other close relationships
   - Education/work/career
   - Hobbies or special interests
   - Places the person lived
   - Special accomplishments

4. **Organize.**
   You may want to organize your notes and drafts on a computer program, plain paper or note cards. Use whatever method is most comfortable and familiar to you.
   Some people prefer to prepare and deliver a serious eulogy while others will want to keep the tone light. A mix of both elements, solemnity and humor, is usually best. It allows the audience to grieve appropriately but to also share in the celebration of a life well-lived.

   Create an outline of your speech and fill in the information you gathered about the person.
Keep in mind how much time you will have to deliver your eulogy. It's best to err on the short side, especially if several people will be speaking.

5. **Write!**  
Write your speech in your own voice. That means to write it in the same way you would normally talk. Don’t get bogged down by the formalities of writing. Your audience will want to feel like you are talking to them, not reading from a script.  
Keep in mind the most important thing: write from your heart.

6. **Review and revise.**  
The first draft you write is usually not the last. Read through it and decide what to keep and what to toss out. You may want to read it to family or friends to get their feedback or read it into a recording device so you can listen to it yourself.

When you think you are done, let it sit overnight. Review it again the next day when it will be fresh again. Make any necessary revisions.

**What You Need:**  
- Memories, stories, and anecdotes  
- Poems, stories, and/or religious writings  
- Paper and a pen, or a computer

**Note: Your Eulogy must be 3-5 paragraphs for this choice.**

**Example:**

**Eulogy for a Grandmother**

To tell you the truth I had a hard time putting all my granny’s good traits into writing. No matter how hard I try, I can never do justice to what she overcame in her lifetime. I know we are all grieving today for we all lost a great lady. But I know wherever she is now she’s happy and contented with what she left us.

She was a mother, a sister and a friend to all of us. I’m sure each and every one of you here today has something to share on how my grandmother touched your life. She shared a lot of good memories, especially with me, her favorite grandchild. We shared lots of things together and she was one of my favorite mentors. I don’t know if I can still be the same person I was now that she’s gone. I can remember the last activity we did together; we went out to watch a movie. As some of you already know my grandmother really loved to watch classic love stories. Although we never agreed on what to watch, I always enjoyed our times together. She’d always ask odd questions about the actors or about the story. And I’d just laugh at her and she’d keep on asking until she got the answer she wanted.

My granny was a very strong woman and she always got her way. Maybe that’s one quality I got from her. She was also a very good adviser. I personally would seek her advice before I’d go to my parents. We always had short talks. Even if I didn’t finish what I wanted to ask her she already had an answer for it. She was also the kind of person that would think about other people before herself. She never liked asking for help but she was always ready to lend a helping hand to others. She would do everything in her power to help other people.

Although she never got the chance, I think in her own way she was able to show us how important we all were to her. We may no longer see her but we’ll always have these special moments we shared with her. She will always have a special part in our hearts. Let’s just be thankful that we knew a special lady like my grandmother.
How to Write an Elegy Poem

An elegy poem is a poem written on the occasion of someone’s death. How to Write an Elegy Poem explains everything you need to know to create a lasting work of art.

Writing an Elegy Poem Tips

1. Fitting subjects includes the death of a loved one or a president.
2. The poem must be somber in tone.
3. There is no set form, but a good elegy should include a metrical pattern or rhyme scheme.
4. Try to create distinctive imagery.
5. Include some of your own thoughts about death and dying.

Introduction

An elegy is a type of poem written on the occasion of a death, be it someone the poet knows personally, a public figure or a group of casualties. The best elegies use the death, or deaths, as a starting point on a meditation about death and dying. Somber in tone, the elegy dates back to ancient Greek poetry.

Step 1: Poetry Basics

For thousands of years, poets have been able vent to their passions and inspire listeners through poetry. The success of a poem, whether an elegy or a love poem, depends on the writer’s command of language, not to mention their knowledge of poetic devices. Here are a few to get you started.

Rhyme. Rhyming is one of the most basic poetic skills that we have. Succeed to Read: Rhyme

Rhythm. Rhythm is another basic skill that children come across just by learning language. Rhythm involves the combination of accented and unaccented syllables to produce something pleasing to the ear.

For example, iambic pentameter is a very popular rhythm in poetry. Cummings Study Guides: Meter

Alliteration. This device consists of finding two words that begin with the same letter, as in crazy cats, hairy hippos or terrible toucan. Think Quest: Alliteration

Simile. Compare two unlike nouns using “like” or “as.” Think Quest: Simile

For more poem basics, check out Mahalo’s How to Write a Poem.

Step 2: Choose a Topic

While the theme of an elegy poem is always death or dying, the person or persons about whom the poem is being written can range from a loved one to a group of people the poet has never known personally.

Death of a Friend. For his elegy, Lycidas, poet John Milton (1608-74) mourned the loss of an old classmate, Edward King. Consolatio: John Milton: Lycidas is Dead, Dead Ere His Prime

Death of a Loved One. Ben Jonson wrote an elegy after the death of his young son in 1616. Luminarium: On My First Son

Death of a Hero or Public Figure. Percy Shelley composed Adonais after fellow poet John Keats died. English History: Adonais

Step 3: Choose a Form

There is no set metrical pattern or rhyme scheme for an elegy. Eduqna: What is the Format for Writing an Elegy Poem?\(^{10}\) An elegy, therefore, is a creative opportunity in which the poet can let the spirit move them. The following are a few forms you might want to try:

- **Free Verse.** Free verse is the easiest of the poetic forms, because it involves no fixed metrical pattern and no rhyming. Writing U Penn: Free Verse\(^{11}\)

  Walt Whitman (1819-92) was a pioneer of this form, which he used for *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, an elegy on the death of Lincoln. glbqt: Literature\(^ {12}\)

- **Rhymed Couplets.** Adding an elevated tone to a poem, rhymed couplets mean that a line will rhyme with the line that follows, then the following two lines will rhyme, and so on. Literary Explorer: Patterns and Types of Poetry\(^ {13}\)

  John Milton wrote the elegy *Lycidas* basically in this form, with some unrhymed lines added to make it somewhat irregular.

- **Epigram.** Ben Jonson's *On My First Son* has been called an epigram, meaning that it is concise, fitting of an epitaph. Dictionary: Epigram\(^ {14}\) An epitaph is something that is short enough to fit on a tombstone, a pithy tribute to someone who has been laid to rest. Goliath: Elegies Ending "Here"\(^ {15}\)

  These are just a few of the poetic forms that would make your elegy stand out. The Word Shop: Poetic Forms and Terminology\(^ {16}\)

Step 4: Set the Tone

Because an elegy is a poem exploring death and dying as a theme, it's important to express that theme through motifs that emphasize the tone of sadness.

- **Nighttime.** Setting the poem at twilight or nighttime gives it a sad or contemplative mood, as Thomas Gray does in his classic *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*. Thomas Gray Archives: The Primary Poetry\(^ {17}\) Gray's references to "parting day," "drowsy tinklings" and the "moping owl" establish the time of day and the motif of darkness.

- **Solitude.** Death can make survivors feel alone. Put this in your poem through imagery or word choice. The image of a solitary bird in Whitman's elegy for Lincoln is one of the more moving images in all of poetry, symbolizing the sense of loss the speaker feels. Bartleby: When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd\(^ {18}\) Choose words such as "solitary," "alone" and "lonely" to help create the feeling of emptiness.

- **Religion.** An elegy is the perfect opportunity to explore your religious views. How does the death of this person or persons make you feel about your own life? God and Jesus are the first references in Tennyson's *In Memoriam A.H.H.*, written in the 19th century. Online-Literature: In Memoriam A.H.H.\(^ {19}\) You can also describe things you might see in a church or churchyard to further the emphasis on religion.

Conclusion

If you follow the above steps in writing your elegy poem, you will be following in the footsteps of some of the finest writers from the last few centuries. It's now time to put your pen to paper (or your fingers to keyboard) and let your creativity flow.

**EXAMPLE:**

*Farewell by Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)*

Tie the strings to my life, my Lord,
Then I am ready to go!
Just a look at the horses --
Rapid! That will do!
Put me in on the firmest side,
So I shall never fall;
For we must ride to the Judgment,
And it's partly down hill.

But never I mind the bridges,
And never I mind the sea;
Held fast in everlasting race
By my own choice and thee.

Good-by to the life I used to live,
And the world I used to know;
And kiss the hills for me, just once;
Now I am ready to go!

**Note : Your Elegy must be 3-4 stanzas for this choice**