

epitaph

Epitaph – More than a line on a monument

An epitaph is a phrase or form of words written in memory of a deceased person. Epitaphs are added to monuments and plaques and can vary in length from a few words to several sentences, size permitting. They can include vague or provide intimate details of a person's life or feature a quote.

Epitaphs have always been a way of showing our love for our loved ones. Choosing an epitaph is one of the most difficult things to do.

What to consider when choosing an epitaph:

1. An epitaph tells the world how people felt about the deceased, with simple phrasing such as “so loved”. Try to focus on celebrating the love for the deceased, rather than grief.
2. An epitaph can tell something about the character or achievements of the deceased. Most epitaphs focus on the deceased position in the family, such as “much-loved mother and grandmother”.
3. An epitaph can share a message and have people stop and think. Often it looks for quotes or messages about mortality, love, relationship, faith, loss, or literature. A couple of lines from a poem might be appropriate.
4. An epitaph can also be advice or something the deceased has said regularly. This quote can comfort the family and friends when visiting the headstone.
5. An epitaph can heal, comfort and console family and friends when visiting the headstone. An epitaph can be very person such as an inside joke, quote, or something secret that only people close to the deceased would understand.
6. An epitaph can also be an intergenerational message. It can stand the test of time for generations to come and be a place of importance for the family and friends of the deceased. Often, the family motto can be chosen and remain relevant for future generations.

The size and type of monument can be a determining factor for any epitaph. Some monuments might be able to accommodate a single line or can allow multiple sentences.

Another determining factor might be the rules and regulations within the cemetery, especially with military or paramilitary cemeteries, that have predetermined requirements for each headstone.

Here are a few common examples to serve as inspiration:

- Always in our thoughts
- A beloved mother/father/husband/wife
- Forever in our hearts
- It is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all
- An inspiration to us all
- Always together
- Always loving, always loved
- At peace
- At rest
- Devoted in love
- Great love lives on
- Generous of heart, constant of faith
- In loving memory
- Loved and remembered
- May his/her memory be eternal
- Remembered with love
- Rest in peace
- Together again
- Until we are together again

An epitaph can be as personal as family and friends would like. It can be inspired by poetry, music, arts, religious texts, sayings, stories or even a family inside joke. Epitaphs are a lasting statement on a monument and should always reflect the deceased. Remember that the epitaph should honour the deceased persons in a way that best fits them.

Beechwood is here to help and will always provide the information you need to make the right decisions for you, your families and, most importantly, your loved one.

