



Toolkit Assignment -- Epitaphs

"An **epitaph** (in Greek, literally "*on the gravestone*") is a short text honoring a deceased person, strictly speaking that inscribed on their tombstone or plaque, but also used figuratively. Some are specified by the dead person beforehand, others chosen by those responsible for the burial. An epitaph may be in verse; poets have been known to compose their own epitaphs prior to their death, as W.B. Yeats did.

Most epitaphs are brief records of the family, and perhaps the career, of the deceased, often with an expression of love or respect - "beloved father of ..." - but others are more ambitious. From the Renaissance to the 19th century in Western culture, epitaphs for notable people became increasingly lengthy and pompous descriptions of their family origins, career, virtues and immediate family, often in Latin. However, the *Laudatio Turiae*, the longest known Ancient Roman epitaph exceeds almost all of these at 180 lines; it celebrates the virtues of a wife, probably of a consul.

Some are quotes from holy texts, or aphorisms. An approach of many successful epitaphs is to 'speak' to the reader and warn them about their own mortality. A wry trick of others is to request the reader to get off their resting place, as often it would require the reader to stand on the ground above the coffin to read the inscription. Some record achievements, (e.g. past politicians note the years of their terms of office) but nearly all (excepting those including the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, where this is impossible) note name, year or date of birth and date of death. Many list family and their relation to them; such as Father / Mother / Son / Daughter etc of." (Wikipedia)

To see examples of epitaphs, old and new, go to the following link:

<http://voicethread.com/#u81028.b186815.i991666>

When the Virgin of Small Plain's body was found, it was thought no one knew who she was. Her tombstone was simple and bore the epitaph *Peace Be Unto You*. What epitaphs could be given for the following characters in VOSP?

Judge Newquist
Nadine Newquist
Margie Reynolds
Dr. Quentin Reynolds
Sarah Francis
Marty Francis
Nathan Shellenberger