

# GETTING READY FOR THE DEAD WORDS MEMORIAL SERVICE

1. Write date of service here
2. Sign up for food for the wake if OK with parent. Let parents know what you (they) are preparing.
3. Volunteer to provide music if you play an instrument or sing.
4. Gather appropriate clothing/costume
5. Sign up for the word gaffe you will eulogize, and research its correct and incorrect usages. You may work individually or in pairs. (Gaffes are listed on the back of this page.)
6. Prepare a one-page eulogy that covers the following:

**-State the dead word mistake you are mourning.**

**Use appropriate format**

(model on Benjamin Franklin's *Receipt for a New England Funeral Elegy* and the "Tributes" done by Emmeline Grangeford in *Huck Finn* if you wish.)

**-Give examples of the dead word's friends, family, and associates**  
(i.e. similar mistakes)

**-Where did the deceased mistake/word spend most of its time/life?**  
(i.e. where/when/how did the dead word/mistake usually occur in speaking and writing?)

**-What did the dead word/mistake do/cause to mess up proper writing and speaking?**

**-What finally "did it in"?**

**-Very important! Who are its survivors? That is, what correct usage lives on to replace the dearly departed mistakes?**

**You** may decorate your tribute, add little rhymes, "a scrap of Latin," whatever your creativity wants to do to make it look authentic and sound "sad." Just be sure you write a tribute (eulogy) that will help the mourners recall the mistake and learn how to use the survivors correctly from now on.

**You** will be reading your tribute during the memorial service; you don't have to ad lib, but you should dramatize as much as you wish. I will provide Kleenex for fake tears and paper on which to write the name of your dead word/mistake that will be cremated at the end of the service.

Here is the rubric by which your Dead Words Memorial grade will be calculated.  
Please give it, and your completed Eulogy, to me on our class meeting before the event.

Your name \_\_\_\_\_

Your dead word/mistake \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Tribute looks authentic, shows creativity

\_\_\_\_ Tribute is neat and clearly teaches (reviews) style or diction

\_\_\_\_ Tribute was read with clarity and feeling (performance grade)

\_\_\_\_ Participation as audience member was enthusiastic yet not disruptive (dress, help, food, music, focus)

\_\_\_\_ Final grade \_\_\_\_\_

## POSSIBLE DEAD WORDS/MISTAKES TO CONSIDER MOURNING:

1. **Dead verbs (get, said, walk, go...) See your handout.**
2. **Cliches (dead as a door nail, have a nice day) See your handout.**
3. **Needless repetition in writing (e.g. "true facts", BS-ing to fill space, repeating the same idea only slightly reworded)**
4. **General/label words ( nice, little, place, thing, etc) rather than specific/concrete words  
See your handouts**
5. **Piling on adjectives**
6. **Overusing "very" and "really" with weak adjectives. See your handout.**
7. **"Dead constructions" (there is...the thing is... passive voice)**
8. **Common misspellings that make us look ignorant**
9. **Common mispronunciations that make us look ignorant**
10. **Cruel words (shut up...stupid...etc.) and bigoted words (n-word, b-word, retard, etc),  
bullying**
11. **Cussing**
12. **Lies**
13. **Overly formal words, stilted, boring language (due to the fact that...)**
14. **Common style mistakes (misplaced modifiers, fragments/run-ons, etc) See the handouts I gave you for more.**
15. **Misused homophones (its/it's...there/their/there...to/too/two...) See handout**
16. **Too much slang (you know slang) and cutesy-tootsie words (sorta, luv, stuff, etc.)**
17. **Useless place fillers: like, um, etc.**
18. **Structurally weak or off-focused essays**
19. **Common grammar gaffes (comma mistakes, subject/verb not agreeing, esp in compound subject sentences, when to use who/whom, you and I/you and me, etc.)  
See handouts I gave you.**
20. **Incomplete essay (lacks title, intro, strong support, conclusion, and/or transition)  
Remember the objet d' arte with bricks and funnels? Also refer to handout.**
21. **Rambling, unfocused writing**
22. **Poetry that lacks good rhythm, line breaks, or imagery (i.e. boring, obvious, simplistic,  
forced rhymes, confusing, etc.) See handouts.**

**B**esides all the handouts available, I have plenty of grammar and style books, humorous style blunders handouts, Epitaph books, etc. in the classroom for you to use for "research." You should also Google your mistake and be overwhelmed with the plethora of information you find. I have saved some sample Eulogy pamphlets from past years as well to inspire you.

**A**tached you will see Franklin's "Receipt for a New England Funeral Elegy" and an excerpt from Twain's "At the Funeral" to provide a model and further inspiration. I'll show you a few clips from past "Funerals" as well, and you can view photos of past occasions on the Harrellland website.