

DEATH-INTRODUCTION

Death and Funerals

Death is often a subject people prefer not to discuss.

WRITE a list of things that are said when people want to avoid saying 'has died'. Why is it so difficult to talk about?

Newspapers often have obituaries. These are announcements of deaths and accounts of people's lives. Gravestones sometimes have 'epitaphs'. These may be simple or elaborate words or poems which say something about that person.

Imagine that you die sometime in the distant future:

WRITE your own obituary or epitaph.

DISCUSS Should special respect be shown to graveyards and memorials

When a person dies in Britain the body is either cremated, or buried in the ground or more rarely at sea. For Christians and Buddhists all of these are acceptable ways of disposing of the body. However because of their beliefs Hindus and Sikhs must be cremated; Jews and Muslims must be buried.

DISCUSS whether you would prefer to be buried or cremated and what your reasons are.

Life after death

People with no religious beliefs sometimes say that the idea of life after death is simply a wishful dream that death is not the end of life. Some have suggested that such an idea is something invented by priests and others in authority to make people behave. Those people with a religious faith do not believe that death is the end of life.

Hindus, Buddhists and Sikhs all believe that a being returns to life on earth after death and eventually escapes the process to become part of God, or to reach a state of nothingness and freedom. The aim of life is to escape the cycle of rebirth and be at peace. This is **reincarnation**. Jews, Christians and Muslims all teach that each of us has an eternal soul and that each soul survives death and keep its own separate identity. They also believe in a Day of Judgment. For some this is soon after death. Others feel that souls 'sleep' until a final day when all will be judged.

DISCUSS Should legislation be introduced to allow doctors free access to organs suitable for transplant unless the dead person has registered saying that he or she did not want to be an organ donor. (At the moment there is a shortage of organs and they can only be removed with the consent of the dead person's family.)