

## Geography of the Cemetery Calculating Lifespans

Record the birth and death dates for 10 men and 10 women (over the age of 18 years).  
Calculate the years that this person lived.      Average the life spans.

MEN

WOMEN

Birth	Death	Age	Birth	Death	Age

What is the average age for men? \_\_\_\_\_ What is the average age for women? \_\_\_\_\_

Which group lived longer? \_\_\_\_\_ Do you think this is true today? \_\_\_\_\_

List the causes of death if given:

Are there any common causes of death in this group of people?

## Lifespans of Children

Now find the graves of 10 children (under the age of 18 years).  
Record their birth and death dates and ages at death. Average their lifespans.

Birth	Death	Age

What is the average age for children's lifespans? \_\_\_\_\_

List the causes of death if given:

What else could explain the deaths of such young people?

What is the saddest **epitaph** you found on a child's tombstone?

What symbols do you find on children's graves?

What does this part of the cemetery say about the culture of the community?

## **Epitaphs** **(Sayings on a tombstone in memory of the deceased)**

Record the epitaph that was the most common?

Record epitaph was the saddest?

Record an epitaph that made no sense to you?

Record an epitaph that tells something personal about the person?

What occupations of the women were given besides Mother?

What occupations of the men were given besides Father?

Who had more occupations listed? Men or women?

What does this say about the culture of the community?

## **Size and Shapes**

What is the most unusual shape of tombstone? \_\_\_\_\_  
Draw it in the space below.

What color of stone seems to make up the most tombstones?

Do new tombstones differ from old ones in size and shape? \_\_\_\_\_

Can you tell the new part of the cemetery from the older part? \_\_\_\_\_ What gives you clues?

## **Symbols**

What 10 different symbols do you find as you view the tombstones?

Which symbols do you find that indicate a religious background?

Which religious symbol is the most common?

What does this say about the culture of the community?

## **Private or Public Spaces?**

How are cemeteries private spaces?

How are cemeteries public spaces?

## Common Symbols in Cemeteries

**anchor**- -Grave of a seafarer and/or a symbol of hope

**angel**--represents God's messenger, a Christian symbol

**bamboo**- - Longevity

**broken column**- -Mourning

**butterfly**- - Resurrection

**clasped hands**--symbolize marriage

**clover**--represents the Trinity (Father, Son, Holy Ghost)

**cross**--symbol of Christianity

Celtic- Immortality

Greek or Latin- Christianity

Maltese- Bravery

**crown**--represents royalty, eternal life and honor

**dove**--represents Holy Spirit

**dragon**- eternity or royalty

**effigy**- remembering the dead person with an image

**flowers**- love, beauty, brevity of life

**grapes and grape leaves**--symbolize the blood of Christ

**heart**- Love

**hourglass**—Inevitability of death

**ivy**--symbolizes fidelity and immortality

**lamb**--represents God as the Good Shepherd or innocence

**lamp**—knowledge of God

**lily**--symbolizes purity, innocence, beauty, marriage and Christ's resurrection

**lion or Foo dog**- for Chinese people one of the four animals of power, energy, and bravery

**peony**- Honor, love, or affection

**pheasant**- beauty and good fortune

**praying hands**- piety

**mansion or castle**--from the Bible, "my Father's House has many mansions"

**nature images, including leaves and trees**- love of nature

**oak leaves/acorns**--symbolize courage, strength, eternity, and virtue

**open book**--symbolizes the Bible

**peony**- Honor, love, or affection

**pheasant**- beauty and good fortune

**pointing fingers**--represent the hand of God

**praying hands**- piety

**rose**--symbolizes love, beauty and perfection or it can represent Christ

**roses on a cross**--symbolize the death of Christ

**sunburst**--symbolizes the dawn of life

**scythe**—life cut short

**sheaves of wheat**- abundant life or final harvest

**skull with or without crossbones**- finality of death

**star of David**- symbol of Judaism

**tree trunks with broken branches**- life cut short by death

**urn**- death and mourning

**violets**- humility

**wheat**-- represents the body of Christ

**willow**--symbolizes sorrow and grief



Do you have any family or friends buried in this cemetery? \_\_\_\_\_  
If you do, describe your feelings when you visit these graves.

As you look at the tombstones, how many women do you find that have their family (probably maiden) name on their tombstone? For example: Gale Olp Ekiss (Olp is her family name. Ekiss is her husband's last name.)

I looked at \_\_\_\_\_ women's tombstones.

\_\_\_\_\_ had the women's family name included on the tombstone along with her married name

What does this say about the culture of the community?

Why would included the women's family name on the tombstone be important?

## A Short History of Names

Approximately 3000 BC dithemic (2 element) names began such as:

Edith=aed (rich) and guth (war)

Alfred= aelf (elf) and raed (counsel)

Biblical names became popular about 1200 AD. By the 1400's, over 80% of the people had names from the *Bible*. By the 1600s, names such as Hope, Charity, and Patience were popular since they reflected virtues.

European names sometimes came from:

Locality: Mills (near the mill) Woods (near the woods)

Relationship: Ericsson (son of Eric) Hopkins (kin of Hop)

Occupation: Taylor (tailor) Miller (works at a mill)

Description: Beard (lots of facial hair) Wilde (unruly) Stout (heavy)

Social Standing: Knight Pope Queen King