

# Words in Masonry

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One of the problems that most often plagues Masonry is poor ritual. By this, I mean not just getting the words wrong but knowing what you are saying. Making the ritual drab and uninspiring fails to teach the candidate and inspire the brethren. Ritual is often mediocre, but it does not have to be; anyone can do ritual well, provided he makes a little effort to memorize and understand the words. The first step of learning any ritual is memorizing what is needed to say. Words missing, added, pronounced incorrectly, and scrambled are often overlooked because brethren are afraid to admit that they do not know the verbiage. Brethren do not be afraid to admit limits; everyone will not get every single word right every time.

In the Entered Apprentice Degree, there are:

2,099 words in the Catechism

1,536 words to open and close

3,038 words to do the floor work and

3,307 words to do the Lecture

A total of 9,980 words to initiate a candidate and to prepare him for the 2nd Degree.

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In the Fellowcraft Degree, there are:

1,722 words in the Catechism

1,659 words to open and close

2,338 words to do the floor work

1,470 words to do the Senior Deacon's Lecture and

519 words to do the Middle Chamber Lecture

That is a total of 7,708 words for a candidate to become a Fellowcraft and to prepare him for the 3rd Degree.

In the Master Mason Degree, there are:

2,353 words in the Catechism

2,032 words to open and close

388 words to Dispense and resume Labor

5,665 words to do the floor work and

3,825 words to do the Lecture

A total of 14,263 words to hold a Master Mason Degree.

That makes a total of 31,951 words to make a Master Mason. That does not include the other stuff behind the scenes, like set up, snacks, meals, etc. This process seems like a lot to know and do. And it is.

Do not let it discourage you. Anyone can accomplish and improve on the memorization of all these words. The execution of this process is by small-scale memorization of

sentences. Then putting those sentences together to create larger-scale memorization of paragraphs. As you memorize the words, ask questions about what they mean. Do not just know the words. Know what the meaning of the symbolism is referencing. Again, ask questions.

A symbol stands for a concept (general or particular) or object, usually meant to represent another object abstractly. Symbolism works well on intuition by triggering feelings allowing the individual to comprehend at first glance. In other words, a man, through ritual, can affect his consciousness, ultimately letting symbols affect his senses and activate his intuition. In Freemasonry, that is precisely the purpose of the ritual. Its richly moral rituals have a profound and lasting impact on the individual brother. By altering one's level of consciousness, a good man can make himself better through a gradual process of internal change. This realization is the true magic and the essential aspect of the Masonic ritual.

This understanding may allude to an alternative meaning of the two famous Brazen pillars. If that is all we do is memorize the ritual and do not learn the meanings and teachings of its symbols, we will become an empty and hollow vessel and not the safe repository of Freemasonry.

## Bibliography

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