

ENGLISH

What can I do with this major?

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

WRITING/EDITING

Creative Writing
Novels: Fiction and Nonfiction
Poetry
Plays
Screenplays
Scripts
Greeting Cards
Lyrics/Jingle Writing
Journalism
Writing/Reporting
Editing
Critique
Freelance Writing

Newspapers
Magazines
Broadcast media companies including television, radio, and the movie industry
Trade, professional, or consumer publications
Internet sites
Large corporations
Government agencies including:
Department of Homeland Security
Department of Defense
Department of State
Veterans Affairs
National Archives and Records Administration
Universities and university presses
Technical industries
Self-employed/Freelance

Select elective coursework in a particular area of interest.
Write for campus publications such as college newspapers, magazines, or departmental or program newsletters.
Volunteer to assist or tutor students in a writing center.
Become familiar with the proposal writing and submission process involved in freelance writing.
Gain as much experience as possible through volunteer positions, internships, or part-time jobs.
Demonstrate patience and persistence in starting a career in creative writing.

TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION

Technical Writing and Editing
Science and Medical Writing
Grant and Proposal Writing
Software and Hardware Documentation
Information Technology Writing
Human-Computer Interface Design
Corporate Communications and Training
Mechanical Communication

Management, scientific, and technical consulting companies
Technical industries
Retailers including electronics
Engineering firms
Healthcare industry
Computer systems design companies
Software publishers
Self-employed/Freelance

Earn a bachelor's degree with a focus in English, communication, or journalism. Complete coursework in technical communications.
Minor or take classes in science and/or computer science to learn about technical areas and trends.
Gain experience in a specialized field such as engineering, medicine, science, web design, or computer software.
Develop strong grammar and language skills, including a second-language.
Obtain volunteer or internship experience as a research assistant in a technical information department.

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

PUBLISHING

Editing
Advertising
Sales
Circulation
Production
Publicity
Marketing
Promotion
Administration

Trade publishing
Special interest magazines
Trade magazines
Association magazines
Sunday newspaper supplements
Educational publishing
Religious books and magazines
Professional and scholarly publishing
University presses
Independent publishers
Alternative media publishers including:
 E-books
 Audiobooks

Obtain an internship in the publishing industry.
Participate in a summer publishing institute.
Develop word processing, editing, and desktop publishing skills; build additional technical skills if working in an online environment.
Gain experience by writing for student publications such as the newspaper, creative writing magazines, the yearbook, etc.
Conduct an informational interview with or shadow a professional in the publishing industry.
Look for positions with local dailies and alternative weeklies in the community.
Volunteer to write or edit publications with local nonprofit organizations to gain experience.
Develop extensive grammar and language skills.
Be prepared to relocate to cities with a publishing presence. A large majority of opportunities exist in New York City.
Research the publishing industry to learn more about career ladders.

EDUCATION

Teaching
Administration
Higher Education Administration:
 Admissions
 Financial Aid
 Academic Advising and Support Services
 Development
 Alumni Affairs
 International Education and Study Abroad
 Student Affairs, e.g. Residence Life, Student Activities, Orientation, Leadership, Greek Life, Multicultural Affairs
Information/Library Science
Non-classroom Teaching
English as a Second Language (ESL)
Research
Tutoring

Public and private K-12 schools
Colleges and universities
Language institutes, local and abroad
Libraries
Museums
Private learning centers
Test preparation organizations
Nonprofit organizations involved with literacy

Obtain appropriate state certification for public school teaching. Gain certifications to teach multiple subjects or age groups for increased job opportunities.
Earn a master's or doctorate degree for post-secondary teaching. Maintain a high grade point average and secure strong faculty recommendations for graduate school.
Plan to attend graduate school in college student personnel or information science for those fields.
Seek volunteer experiences working with children through Big Brother/Sister programs, tutoring, summer camps, YMCA's, etc.
Participate in activities such as debate or literary clubs, campus publications, or student government.
Get involved in roles of leadership such as resident advisor, peer mentor, student advisor, etc.

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

ADVERTISING

Creative Services
Copy Writing
Art Direction
Web Page Design
Account Management
Media
Account Planning
Production

Advertising agencies
In-house agencies of large companies

Demonstrate talent, persistence, assertiveness, and enthusiasm.
Be prepared to start in an entry-level position.
Obtain strong statistics background for market research positions.
Create a portfolio of writing showing originality and imagination for creative positions.
Gain knowledge of various media, contemporary tastes, and trends.
Obtain experience with campus newspaper, TV, or radio.
Participate in sales and promotions for student organizations or private businesses.
Complete an internship in a market research firm or advertising agency.
Supplement curriculum with courses in advertising, communications, business, art, or graphic design.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Account Coordination
Writing/Editing
Media Relations
Social Media
Account Management
Fundraising
Research

Public relations firms
Advertising agencies
In-house public relations departments
Trade associations
Colleges and universities
Nonprofit organizations
Government agencies

Obtain internship or other relevant work experience to break into this field. Be prepared to start at the bottom and work towards higher levels.
Develop strong research skills, public speaking ability, enthusiasm, and interpersonal skills.
Supplement curriculum with business courses.
Become an effective team member by working on group projects for campus organizations.
Volunteer to write publications for nonprofit or student organizations.

BUSINESS

Management
Customer Service
Sales and Marketing
Human Resources
Insurance
Claims
Underwriting

Business organizations including banks, real estate agencies, insurance firms, and large and small corporations
Retailers including department, grocery, drug, specialty, variety, and book stores

Obtain a business minor.
Gain relevant experience through part-time jobs, internships, or volunteer work.
Secure leadership roles in campus organizations and student professional associations.
Seek experience as a financial officer or treasurer of a campus organization.
Develop strong analytical and computer skills.

AREAS

LAW

Law Assistance
Prosecution
Defense
Contractual
Corporate
Nonprofit or Public Interest
Government
Mediation
Lobbying

EMPLOYERS

Law firms
Government agencies
State and local government
Corporations
Public interest organizations
Private practice
Colleges and universities

STRATEGIES

Participate in a debate or forensic team to hone communication skills.
Develop strong research skills and attention to detail.
Take courses in and gain experience with mediation and conflict resolution.
Get involved with pre-law organizations.
Obtain a summer or part-time job in a law firm.
Plan to shadow an attorney to learn more about the field and various specialties.
Complete special training requirements for paralegal positions.
Attend law school and earn a JD to become an attorney. Maintain an excellent GPA and secure strong faculty recommendations to gain law school admittance. Plan to take the LSAT.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- A bachelor's degree in English is very broad and is sufficient for entry level positions in business and industry, as well as in areas such as entertainment, radio and television commentary, and museum work. Because English can lead to many different career paths, it is important to identify an area of interest and be planful about gaining the right skills, experience, and credentials to enter that field.
- A major in English is also good preparation for continued graduate or professional training in areas such as English, law, political science/government, public administration, communications, religious studies (e.g. seminary).
- Be proactive, determined, assertive, and confident in order to secure freelance writing opportunities. Writers typically experience many rejections for each piece that is accepted for publication. Save samples of written work to be used for a portfolio. Cultivate other career opportunities in order to supplement a freelance writing income.
- Obtain additional areas of expertise such as journalism, broadcasting, technical writing, or politics for specialized positions.
- Conduct informational interviews or shadow professionals in careers of interest to learn more about their jobs.
- Join relevant professional associations. Attend their conferences and read their journals.