

# What Can an English Major Bring to the Workforce?

<sup>1</sup> "English majors might be surprised that their talents can be both so noticeable and so needed in the workplace. "How bad can it be?" they ask. The situation is quite poor, and many employers continue to insist in interviews and articles that many of their administrative problems would be eased if they could find management staff with solid writing and speaking competencies" (DeGalan & Lambert, xiii).

<sup>2</sup> The **skills** and **abilities** one learns as an English major can be more generally applied to any career requiring expertise in the use of language as a means of communication.

## **Communication**

- Influencing and persuading
- Assessing needs of an audience
- Presenting alternative viewpoints
- Clarifying ideas
- Making oral presentations
- Shaping general ideas into specific points and programs

## **Research**

- Designing/directing projects
- Organizing ideas/information
- Developing hypotheses
- Solving problems
- Using information resources
- Comparing interpretations

## **Critical Thinking and Analysis**

- Summarizing ideas
- Comparing information
- Using theoretical approaches
- Developing critical evaluations
- Thinking independently
- Synthesizing ideas/themes
- Applying close reading and interpretation

## **Writing**

- Abstracting information
- Interpreting data
- Editing
- Writing concisely
- Writing creatively
- Drafting documents

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<sup>1</sup> DeGalan, Julie and Stephen Lambert. *Great Jobs for English Majors*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2000.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.salisbury.edu/careerservices/Students/Choosing%20Majors%20Page/English.htm>

### <sup>3</sup>Related Career Titles for English Majors

*Account Executive	*Editor, Film/Video	*Literary Agent
*Actor/Actress	*Editor, Magazine	*Loan Officer
*Administrative Assistant	*Editor, News	*Lobbyist
*Administrator	*Editor, Newspaper	*Magazine Writer
*Advertising Copywriter	*Editor, Publications	*Management Trainee
*Analyst	*Editor, Publications	*Manuscript Reader
*Artist	*Editor, Writer	*Market Research
*Analyst	*Editorial Assistant	*Marketing Specialist
*Attorney	*Education & Training	*Marketing Writer
*Author - Fiction Non-Fiction	*Educational Program Specialist	*Mass Media
*Assistant Scientific Writer	*Entertainment Agent	*Media Planner
*Bank Officer	*Fashion Merchandiser	*Medical Records
*Biographer	*Foreign Correspondent	*Narrator
*Book Critic	*Freelance Writer/Consultant	*Novelist
*Business Manager	*Fundraiser	*Paralegal
*Circulation Assistant	*Greeting Card Writer	*Paralegal Assistant
*City Manager	*Hearing Officer	*Personnel Manager
*College Professor	*Hotel & Motel Manager	*Playwright
*Columnist/Commentator	*Human Resource Specialist	*Poet
*Comedy Writer	*Human Service Practitioner	*Politician
*Communications Manager	*Humorist/Comedian	*Probation and Parole Officer
*Congressional Aide	*Information Abstractor	*Product Manager
*Copywriter	*Insurance Agent	*Program Manager
*Corrective Therapist	*Interior Designer	*Proofreader
*Creative Writer	*Interpreter & Translator	*Property Manager
*Critic, Art/Book	*Investment Counselor/Manager	*Public Administrator
*Crossword Puzzle	*Journalist	*Public Relations Specialist
*Curator	*Labor Relations Specialist	*Public Speaker
*Customer Service	*Lawyer	*Publicity Assistant
*Desktop Publisher	*Legal Assistant	*Publisher
*Director	*Librarian	*Publishing Assistant
*Radio-TV Commentator	*Sales Representative	*Special Events Coordinator
*Radio-TV Newscaster	*Sales/Service Manager	*Speech Writer
*Reading Consultant	*Script Reader	*Sports Writer
*Reporter	*Singer/Voice	*Stockbroker
*Research Assistant	*Teacher	*Talent Agent
*Researcher/Pollster	*Social Welfare Examiner	*Teacher (all levels)
*Retail Sales	*Social Worker	*ESL Teacher
*Technical Consultant	*Translator	*Writer
*Technical Writer	*Underwriter	*Documentation Specialist
*Training Specialist	*Video Scriptwriter/Producer	

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.uncwil.edu/stuaff/career/Majors/english.htm>

## **4Types of Employers**

### **Private and Non-profit Organizations**

Advertising Agencies	Investment Firms
Banks/Financial Institutions	Market Research Companies
Book Publishers	Media (Radio, TV)
Community Arts Centers	Museums
Community Service Organizations	Newspapers/Magazines
Consumer Organizations	Public Relations Firms
Educational Institutions	Research Organizations
Foundations	Retail Stores
Healthcare Facilities	Telecommunications Firms
Hospitality Organizations	Theaters
Insurance Companies	

### **Government Agencies**

Civil Rights Commission	Motor Vehicle Dept.
Consumer Affairs Office	National Institutes of Health
Cultural Affairs	Peace Corp/Vista
Department of Education	Political Organizations
Division of Youth & Family Services	Small Business Admin.
Legislative Affairs	Travel and Tourism Dept.

## **5Some Career Planning and Job Search Websites for English Majors**

<http://www.stuaffrs.wayne.edu/>: Wayne State University's Career Planning and Placement Services website offers information on student employment, summer internships, campus job postings, collegiate job fairs, and resume and curriculum vitae building. The site includes a virtual job search link and career magazine links.

<http://www.hanover.edu/english/jobideas.html>: Hanover College's *Jobs for English Majors* provides interesting information on practical jobs for English majors that don't involve teaching. This site has career planning and job search tips as well as links to other career sites.

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<sup>4</sup> Created by the Rutgers University, New Brunswick Career Services Staff.

<sup>5</sup> Compiled by Wayne State University, Department of English Undergraduate Advising Office.

<http://www.career.pdx.edu/majorenglish.htm>: Portland State University also has a useful career website with booklists, professional associations, and links to internet sites with job search information for English majors.

<http://www.authorlink.com/classifieds/XcClassPro.asp>: Authorlink's classified ads section lists market tips and postings for both job seekers and employers. This site is specifically geared toward writing and editing jobs, including translators, ghost writers, and publishing support personnel.

<http://www.stc.org>: Sponsored by the Society for Technical Communication (SCT), this online newsletter gives information on careers in technical and professional writing and includes a jobs database.

<http://www.jobhuntersbible.com>: The Job Hunters Bible site is a supplement to the best-selling book *What Color is Your Parachute*. This comprehensive site offers links to infield contacts, companies, salary expectations, job search engines, along with resume and job hunting advice.

<http://www.collegegrad.com>: This is a site geared toward entry-level jobs for new college graduates. It includes cover letter, resume, and interviewing tips, an area to post resumes, a job posting site for employers, and links about company and salary research strategies.

<http://www.careernet.com>: This site allows you to search for jobs by city and state and also provides a place to post and manage resumes.

<http://www.careers.org>: This is a more general career planning, job search and job posting site, but you can narrow your search by region and career field.

<http://www.jobweb.com>: The Jobweb site features an online career fair, guidelines for composing resumes, articles geared toward recent graduates, and an employers database.

<http://www.collegejournal.com>: This site, sponsored by The Wall Street Journal, gives job search strategies for liberal arts majors and lists the skills most in demand for today's market (communication and leadership skills are ranked at the top of the list). New grads are given advice on ways to tailor their resumes to meet the needs of prospective employers.

<http://www.bls.gov/oco>: This is basically an online version of the 2006/2007 *Occupational Outlook Handbook* published by the U.S. Department of Labor. Revised every two years, the *Handbook* describes what workers do on the job, working conditions, the training and education needed, earnings, and expected job prospects in a wide range of occupations. Visitors to the site can use an alphabetical index to access information on specific occupations.