

Q: What Do I Say To People Who Tell Me I Won't Get A Good Job With An English Major?

A: Tell them they are wrong.

Before we discuss some jobs English majors can get, let's discuss why people have this misconception in the first place. In surveys of this issue, what seems clear is that English majors that get jobs are often not counted as English majors that get jobs! Huh?

Unlike a lot of other fields (science, business, etc.), English majors often get jobs (often jobs that are both financially and personally rewarding) in areas that don't seem (but are) directly related to English studies, so the success of English majors is hidden in the statistics. When an English major gets a good job in the communications department of a business, for instance, that seems more like a business job. In fact, depending on the particular research one references, perhaps as many as half of English majors "go into business" (though they are often doing work that is very related to their major: writing, reading, interpreting, evaluating, researching, etc.) Many others work for organizations or government agencies, which the statistics often don't record as English major jobs.

In fact, the English major is an extremely flexible major. The reading, writing, and researching skills English majors develop are useful for all sorts of jobs: in business, in non-profits, at cultural institutions, in government, or any other major areas of work. Of course, some jobs are traditional areas for English majors, such as teaching, publishing/journalism, etc. In addition, English is recognized as a good major for pre-law students.

Except for technical and hard science jobs, or jobs that require very specific discipline specialization, English majors are prepared for a wide variety of careers. In fact, English majors often work with those in the technical and science fields to make what they do understandable to the general public.

Of course, some people still have the cliché image of English majors only being suited to reading Chaucer from a scroll in a dusty library and think English majors are outdated. **They are wrong.** In our globally-connected, internet-saturated world, those who can read and write effectively are valuable. Google indexes 30 trillion unique web pages. Businesses, government agencies, and organizations of every kind need people who can read, understand, and interpret this explosion of information. And these same groups need people to *write* those pages. Those people, very often, are English majors.

The following info sheets might be of interest as well:

Why Employers Hire English Majors

Jobs for English Majors

How to Make the Most of Your College Years as an English Major