



GUIDE TO MAJORS AT YESHIVA UNIVERSITY: ENGLISH (SCW)

One of the most common misunderstandings of new undergraduates is the belief that the best choice for your major is the one that most directly corresponds to your future career. In reality, however, the relationship between your career and major is usually more complex than this way of thinking suggests. It is important to understand that you can pursue almost any career regardless of which major you choose, and many students wind up pursuing careers that are not what they anticipated when they entered college.

While there are some exceptions, most entry-level positions simply require general transferable skills—those that can be learned in one setting and applied in another. Relevant experience through internships and activities is generally more important to employers than a major, and employers often search for individuals whose overall attitude and general intellectual abilities will lead to long-term success. It is best to choose an area that you find interesting and where you have the ability to do well.

Although majoring in English does equip students with a wide array of readily transferable skills, there is good reason why people trained to read and produce literature are in high demand for executive or high-ranking positions in professions as disparate as business and law: the breadth of your education, the quality of your reasoning, the effectiveness of your prose, and the flexibility of your imagination will inevitably make you the better candidate for any position of interest.

What is the English Major?

The purpose of the English major is to introduce students to a range of works in their historical, cultural and literary contexts and to practice reading and writing critically and imaginatively. As English majors, students are asked to consider how language shapes meaning and to imagine the lives and experiences of individuals from diverse cultures and perspectives. The learning goals include being able to analyze a variety of texts and genres, critically evaluate competing critical/theoretical arguments pertaining to given work(s), communicate their critical thinking about literature and other media to diverse audiences both orally and in writing, and take ownership over their learning experiences both in their course work and beyond.

The English Major at Stern College for Women offers students an opportunity to choose between three tracks: English Literature, English Creative Writing, and Media Studies (or Communications), with tracks in journalism, public relations or advertising. For those on the Communications track, in addition to media-related courses, students must also complete an internship of at least 100 hours for one credit in the media industry to be approved by the English department.

What can I do with a Major in English?

Regardless of whether one chooses to pursue a track in English Literature, English Creative Writing, or Communications/Media Studies, English is an ideal major for anyone interested in a career that demands strong communications skills, creativity, and critical acumen. English majors can enter careers in law, advertising, education, publishing, journalism, broadcasting, film, entertainment,

medicine, social work, teaching, library science, non-profit organizations, public relations, and business. Some potential career titles include:

Academia/Education

- English as a Second Language Instructor
- English Professor (Ph.D. required)
- English Teacher, elementary and secondary schools
- Tour Guide/Docent
- Undergraduate Tutor
- Writing Center Instructor
- Writing or Language Coach

Business/Industry

- Analyst
- Claims Examiner
- Corporate Trainer
- Direct Mail Specialist
- Financial Writer
- Human Resources Executive
- Insurance Underwriter
- Management Trainee
- Marketing Coordinator
- Paralegal
- Sales Manager

Communications/Broadcasting

- Account Executive
- Actor/Actress
- Advertising Copywriter
- Corporate Communications Specialist
- Film Director (M.F.A. required)
- Film Researcher
- Interpreter/Translator

- Literary Agent
- Marketing Communications Specialist
- Media Planner
- Social Media Specialist
- Media Research Analyst
- Press Agent
- Public Relations Specialist
- Publicist
- Speech Writer
- Technical Writer
- Television Reporter
- Web Editor

Writing/Publishing

- Book Publishing Professional
- Copy Editor
- Continuity Writer
- Film Reviewer
- Freelance Writer
- Grants Writer
- Internet Writer/Blogger
- Journalist
- Magazine Editor
- Novelist
- Playwright

Other Professions (graduate study required)

- Curator for Special Collections
- Lawyer
- Librarian (above entry level)
- Literary Archivist
- Physician

Skills and Abilities

An English major helps students develop skills in textual analysis and interpretation, research, intellectual inquiry and debate. It trains individuals to appreciate and analyze language as they explore and create different modes and genres of writing. Students in this major engage in sustained research and in the application of literary theory, and they participate in lively, thoughtful class discussions that develop confidence and sophistication in communication. Some of the skills developed in this major include:

Critical Thinking & Analysis

- Analyzing and summarizing ideas
- Comparing information
- Developing critical evaluations
- Evaluating / prioritizing an argument
- Thinking independently

Reading

- Different literary genres and expectations about them
- The politics of literary form
- Relationships among literary forms across and through time
- Varied methods of reading

Research

- Developing hypotheses
- Organizing ideas and information
- Finding and utilizing resources
- Creating interpretations

Speaking

- Describing, influencing, and persuading
- Presenting alternative viewpoints
- Making oral presentations

Writing

- Abstracting information
- Interpreting data
- Editing and revising
- Versatility of style
- Writing succinctly, creatively, and persuasively