

What can I do with a degree in... **ENGLISH?**

What is **ENGLISH?**

In today's "high-text" careers, those who get ahead have mastered critical thinking and clear communication. They have creativity, passion, and vision. At WCU, when you study English, you will be joining one of the most vibrant programs at the university, where our students and faculty engage in the life of the mind and yet are committed to putting ideas into action.

The Department of English offers exciting courses that will help you see the connection between academics and a successful and meaningful life beyond the classroom.

What are the **DEGREE OPTIONS?**

You will graduate with a **B.A. in English** (please see the Education Major Map for information regarding the B.S. Ed in English option.) Students in English choose a concentration, which appears on the official transcript, and a required minor or a second major. A minor or second major is a great way to expand your knowledge base and build career-ready skills.

What are the **CONCENTRATIONS?**

- **Literature:** Literature majors receive an extensive background in English and American literature, and are offered numerous upper-division courses concentrating on African-American writings, Post-Colonial authors, gender and literature, Appalachian and Southern literature, poetry, novels, short stories, and modern drama. Majors also become familiar with several critical approaches to literary texts, understanding and employing literary theory to illuminate works across and outside the canon.



- **Motion Pictures Studies:** Motion picture studies combine the verbal and written skills of an English degree with media literacy. Film screenings, visiting filmmakers, interdisciplinary opportunities, a low student-faculty ratio, classes with film scholars, and an opportunity to take screenwriting and production courses provide a stimulating and enriching educational environment.

- **Professional Writing:** Like all English majors, students concentrating in professional writing are sharp critical and creative thinkers. As a professional writing student, you'll hone your writing skills and learn to adapt to the changing demands of various fields.

- **English Studies Pedagogy:** In addition to serving as the customary choice for students pursuing our dual degree program for licensed teachers, the English concentration in English Studies Pedagogy also is available as a free standing concentration that provides students with great options if they wish to take a non-licensure path towards a teaching-related career. Students in this concentration may also complete the requirements for the TESOL minor in the context of the major.

What is the **ADMISSION PROCESS?**

Students declare an English major with the Advising Center, located in Killian Annex. Please make an appointment with your advisor.

What **JOBS ARE AVAILABLE?**

Our graduates pursue a variety of careers including creative and technical writers, film and screen writers, editors and publishers, researchers and educators, advertising and marketing professionals, non-profit coordinators and managers, librarians, linguistic professionals, and more. NOTE: Some professions may require an advanced degree.

Who employs **ENGLISH** graduates?

Our graduates work in a variety of industrial sectors including non-profits; school systems; publishing companies; higher education institutions; magazine, newspaper, and broadcast companies; advertising firms; law firms, software development companies, and more.

MAJOR MAP

How to use this map: Review the four categories and suggestions of activities and when you should consider engaging in them. Remember, these are just suggestions! There is a fillable space for you to add in any other ideas you have to set yourself up for success in life after college.

1st YEAR

2nd YEAR

EXCEL IN ACADEMICS

The courses you take your first year will depend on your concentration and when you declare your major. However, many students focus on liberal studies requirements and introductory English classes. Check out the [8-semester plan for your concentration](#) and make an appointment with your advisor.

Courses your second year will likely continue with your liberal studies, with a special focus on required English courses. Check out the [8-semester plan for your concentration](#) and make an appointment with your advisor.

GET HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE

Check out [WCU's DegreePlus program](#) and choose which events in any of the four categories you want to attend. Categories include: Professionalism, Teamwork, Leadership, or Cultural Responsiveness.

See what on-campus employment opportunities are available by logging in to JobCat via your MyWCU.

If you are thinking about attending graduate school, start engaging in hands-on experiences required in graduate school admissions like on-campus employment or early internships.

Engage deeper with [DegreePlus](#); choose an additional competency to complete

BE PART OF THE COMMUNITY

Connect with the [Center for Service Learning](#) and ask about the [Lily Award](#), a program aimed to encourage students to be connected with their community.

Develop deeper relationships with the organizations for which you volunteer. Ask for special projects or responsibilities that you can highlight on a resume.

Consider [study abroad programs relating to English](#). Talk with a study abroad advisor about targeted experience for your concentration.

PREPARE FOR LIFE AFTER COLLEGE

Further explore your career options or career interests using the [Center for Career and Professional Development's](#) online resources, [Focus 2](#), and [Onet Online](#).

Connect with a career counselor early on to explore opportunities and experiences you can do while in college to further develop your professional resume.

Check out [CCPD's list of career-building activities](#) and participate in an activity this year, such as attending Career Fair Plus.

Start a spreadsheet of graduate schools you wish to apply to in a few years with their admission requirements so that you are aware of the expectations.

Looking for a minor or second major? Consider these options:

Biology
Business Administration & Law
Communication
Education
History

Integrated Health Sciences
International Studies
Management
Marketing
Philosophy

Psychology
Sociology
TESOL

3rd YEAR

Third-year courses focus heavily on English classes within your concentration as well as on your chosen second major/ minor. Check out the [8-semester plan for your concentration](#) and make an appointment with your advisor.

Consider internship experiences that will give you practical and hands-on experience to put on a resume. Get involved with Sigma Tau Delta, the English Honors Society (by invitation only) Get involved with The Nomad's [Interdisciplinary Innovations Conference](#) or participate in [NCUR](#) or the [Undergraduate Expo](#).

Write for the [Western Carolinian, the Gadfly or the Nomad](#), WCU's student-run publications. Work in the [Writing and Learning Commons](#) as a course tutor, Writing Fellow, Academic Skills Consultant, etc.

Continue to build relationships and volunteer with area organizations in your field.

Connect with alumni in your field through [LinkedIn](#)

Visit the CCPD to hone your professional resume and cover letter. Apply for internships. Utilize the [Writing and Learning Commons](#) for MCAT, GRE, and other professional exam preparation sessions. Take the MCAT, GRE, etc. Use [Big Interview](#) to learn more about professional interviews.

Schedule a visit to tour professional schools of your choice, if applicable.

4th YEAR

Courses in your final year will focus on finishing English requirements, as well as requirements for your second major/ minor and other elective requirements. Check out the [8-semester plan for your concentration](#) and make an appointment with your advisor, complete your degree audit, and [apply for graduation!](#)

Investigate requirements for full-time jobs. Assess what skills or experiences you're lacking and invest time in seeking additional opportunities such as certification programs, classes, or professional development workshops during your last year to fill that gap. Connect with your faculty advisor or career counselor.

Network with employers and non-profits at the annual Career Fair Plus event, held each October and February.

Participate in the Humanities Symposium through your Senior Seminar course.

Apply to graduate schools, if applicable.

Look for and apply for jobs between 4 and 6 months before graduation.

Polish your resume, cover letter, and interview skills by using the [CCPD](#).

Internships are still the number-one educational experience employers look for in a recent college graduate resume. (Chronicle of Higher Education's study on 59,000 employers)

DID YOU KNOW?

MORE INFORMATION

INTERNSHIP Information

At Western Carolina University there are numerous internship opportunities for students. In some cases internships are established through a faculty member in the student's major. Oftentimes students find part-time jobs in an area related to their field of study. When this happens, students should discuss with their academic advisor the possibility of receiving college credit. Generally, three hours of general elective credit can be earned for a minimum of 200 hours of experience.

SKILLS LEARNED in the classroom

The core competencies will center on developing skills, knowledge, and attitudes such as:

- independent thinking
- critical thinking
- problem solving
- written and oral communication
- curiosity and creativity
- technical writing and editing skills

KNOWLEDGE Base

Student pursuing this program will develop skills in the following areas, all of which will make them competitive for whatever professional pathway they choose to follow:

- Locating, evaluating, analyzing, and synthesizing information from multiple kinds of sources
- Articulating content knowledge in visual literacy, language, literature, rhetoric, and writing
- Executing effective writing skills across a variety of

tasks, media, audiences, and contexts

- Showing awareness and understanding of unfamiliar communities, ideas, cultures, and values
- Exhibiting readiness for careers and/or advanced studies by embodying high standards of professional activity, discourse, and behavior

Professional RESOURCES

- Association of Writers: www.awpwriter.org
- North Carolina Writers Network: www.ncwriters.org
- Carolinas Writers Conference: www.carolinaswritersconference.org
- Conference on College Composition and Communication: cccc.ncte.org
- Council on Undergraduate Research: www.cur.org/what/events/students/ncur
- Modern Language Association: www.mla.org
- National Council of Teachers of English: www2.ncte.org
- Philological Association of the Carolinas: pacarolinas.org
- Sigma Tau Delta, International English Honors Society: english.org
- TESOL International Association: www.tesol.org

QUESTIONS?

For questions, please call the English program at 828-227-7264 or visit english.wcu.edu.

To schedule an appointment with a career counselor, contact the Center for Career and Professional Development, 828-227-7133 or careerservices@wcu.edu.

