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Career

I'm an English Major - Now What? How English Majors Can Find Happiness, Success, and a Real Job

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“Physics majors become physicists; psychology majors become psychologists; and even history majors become historians. What do English majors become?” the author asks. Nearly every university in the United States has an English major program, but the students aren’t taught what kind of jobs they will be qualified for, or how to get them. This book is a comprehensive guide to many possible jobs, written by an English major who has held them all.

Lemire breaks down the employment sectors that are most popular with English graduates. He devotes several helpful chapters to teaching K-12 and college, but for readers who answer the question, “You’re majoring in English; you must want to be a teacher?” with a resounding “No,” he details a multitude of other career options.

The author has worked as a newspaper editor, reporter, book editor, magazine editor, English teacher, corporate communications specialist, and freelance writer. His writing has appeared in *The Writer* and *The Door*. Here, his advice is delivered with humor and frankness, like a good academic advisor—only with a work history more varied than that of most college professors. He discusses jobs like news reporting, book publishing, magazine publishing, freelance writing and editing, and occupations in the world of business. He lists the positive and negative aspects of each job from the perspective of one who’s been there, and gives examples of the type of people who would thrive in each position.

“A magazine can afford a writer more space and latitude to be concerned with ideas, trends, and analysis,” he writes in the chapter on magazine writing. He also explains exactly what each job entails, and defines titles like Acquisitions Editor and Teaching Fellow with respect to their job duties and role in their organization. Most importantly, Lemire tells readers how to break into each field, listing websites to visit and tips for developing contacts and building a successful portfolio.

Each chapter is dedicated to a particular field and includes an interview or two with an English major who has found success in that sector, often in a unique way. After the chapter on teaching, for example, he presents an interview with a Wisconsin native who taught in Japan for twelve years. These interviews complement Lemire’s text, giving encouragement as well as further insight into each career. He also includes appendices on resume writing and tips for readers who are still in college, including taking courses in proofreading, copyediting, technical writing, and advertising.

With a solid background and witty advice and anecdotes (“I’ll never forget the year I started freelancing, because I’ve never been skinnier in my life”), Lemire reminds readers to remain focused and confident, and to keep their sense of humor while job hunting.