

Why I Chose to Major in English

I didn't want my university education to be the equivalent of doing a crossword puzzle— memorizing just enough facts to fill in the correct answer. The English major is for seekers. It's for those who want to read and write not because it leads to an exact career, but because literature is an avenue to explore deeper questions about the world.

This is how I went into the English major. I wanted to be a writer first and a journalist second. I knew if I didn't read and discuss literature, I would be missing out on a safari through the greatest thinkers and word acrobats in history.

You've got to be down for some fear and trembling when you graduate. It's scary and unknown. But you will leave the major with the ability to write, which is a practical skill applicable to many careers and business situations. Be willing to write for anything and everything. Think of it as the musician's equivalent of playing in a dive bar for a few years.

The career mentor program at SPU was one of the most helpful experiences in defining a professional direction as an English major. Thanks to a job shadow set up by the program, I landed an internship with the Marty Riemer radio show on 103.7. This was the first step of my career path into journalism. My writing has taken me on incredible adventures so far, including interviewing Kevin Bacon after his manager attempted to cancel the interview and being the first journalist to break the news of a rabid bat outbreak in Washington, D.C.

Quite simply, become an English major if you love to read and write. You'll read Bleak House and shuffle around campus looking existentially troubled, write home to your parents in iambic pentameter, and deconstruct Twin Peaks episodes. You'll love it. The English major is for the artists who can't paint, but, as Billy Collins said, occasionally have a little something going in the typewriter. Pursue your passion. The world will make room for you.

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