To work or not to work
5 jobs you can get with an English degree

Besides spending most of your time reading, writing or discussing great written works throughout history, there are plenty of reasons to major in English during your undergraduate years. From developing critical analysis to sharpening your communication skills, an English degree can provide a solid foundation for a career.

But what comes after the diploma? If you're looking for ideas, consider any of these five jobs that can put that degree to use, as well as lead to valuable opportunities down the road.

1. Adult literacy and GED teachers instruct adults and youth who are out of school in basic skills, such as reading, writing and speaking English. They also help students earn their General Education Development or high school diploma.

Why an English degree is valuable: Communication skills. Teachers must collaborate with other teachers and program administrators. In addition, they talk to students about their progress and goals. Also, cultural sensitivity is a skill many English majors pick up from studying and reading about cultures around the world and at home, and it is an important quality in this role. Adult literacy and GED teachers must be able to work with students from a variety of cultural, educational and economic backgrounds. They must be understanding and respectful of their students’ backgrounds and be familiar with their concerns.

2. Editors plan, coordinate and revise material for publication in books, newspapers, magazines or websites. They review story ideas and decide what material will appeal most to readers. They also review and edit drafts of books and articles, offer comments to improve the product and suggest titles and headlines.

Why an English degree is valuable: Language skills. Editors must ensure that all written content has correct grammar, punctuation and syntax. As a result, strong language skills are essential for an editor.

Also, writing skills are a must. Editors should enjoy writing and must be excellent writers overall. They must have good knowledge of grammar and punctuation rules and be able to express ideas clearly and logically.

3. Paralegals and legal assistants do a variety of tasks to support lawyers, including maintaining and organizing files, conducting legal research and drafting documents.

Why an English degree is valuable: Speaking and writing skills. Paralegals must be able to document and present their research and related information to their supervising attorney.

4. Reporters, correspondents and broadcast news analysts inform the public about news and events happening internationally, nationally and locally. They report the news for newspapers, magazines, websites, television and radio.

Why an English degree is valuable: Communication skills. Journalists need to be able to report the news both verbally and in writing. Strong writing skills are particularly important for journalists in all kinds of media.

5. Technical writers produce instruction manuals and other supporting documents to communicate complex and technical information more easily. They also develop, gather and disseminate technical information among customers, designers and manufacturers.

Why an English degree is valuable: Communication skills. Technical writers must be able to take complex, technical information and translate it for colleagues and consumers who have nontechnical backgrounds. Imagination is also an important skill. Technical writers must be able to think about a procedure or product in the way that a person without technical experience would think about it. Finally, writing skills are necessary. Technical communicators must have excellent writing skills to be able to explain technical information clearly.