

### Some Famous English Majors

Ann Mulcahy—former Xerox CEO  
Chevy Chase—comedian, actor, writer  
Mario Cuomo—former governor of New York  
Michael Eisner—former Walt Disney CEO  
Emma Watson—actress and activist  
Kathryn Fuller—CEO of the World Wildlife Fund  
Toni Morrison—Nobel laureate in literature  
Cathy Guisewite—cartoonist  
Matt Damon—actor  
Stephen King—novelist  
Paul Newman—actor, food entrepreneur  
Joan Rivers—comedienne  
Diane Sawyer—broadcast journalist  
Paul Simon—singer-songwriter  
Steven Spielberg—filmmaker  
Brandon Tartikoff—television executive  
Clarence Thomas—U.S. Supreme Court Justice  
Harold Varmus—Nobel laureate in medicine  
Barbara Walters—broadcast journalist  
Jon Hamm—actor  
Sting—singer-songwriter  
Bob Woodward—journalist, writer (*All The President's Men*)  
Alan Alda—actor, writer, director  
Russell Baker—journalist  
Dave Barry—humorist, actor  
Can we add you to the list?

### Some Internet Resources

- The Write Jobs: [www.writejobs.com](http://www.writejobs.com)
- Occupational Outlook HB for Editors and Writers: [www.bls.gov/ooh/media-and-communication/writers-and-authors.htm](http://www.bls.gov/ooh/media-and-communication/writers-and-authors.htm)
- Careers in English: [www.insidejobs.com/blog/100-careers-for-english-majors-they-do-exist-really](http://www.insidejobs.com/blog/100-careers-for-english-majors-they-do-exist-really)

***Most importantly, if you have questions, consult one of the faculty in the program or your advisor. He or she will be happy to advise you on majoring or minoring in English.***

Cover drawing: (c) 2016 Gene Kannenberg, Jr.  
[comicsmachine.tumblr.com](http://comicsmachine.tumblr.com). Dr. Kannenberg has a PhD in English!

# The Eternal Question:



# What Can I Do With An English Degree?

Russell Sage College  
English Program

[www.sage.edu/english](http://www.sage.edu/english)  
518.244.2237

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## The English Major

**Learning** to write well, analyze texts, and engage in intelligent dialogue are important skills no matter what your career choice might be. Nevertheless, if you are considering a major in English, it would be a good idea to minor in an area which might make you even more marketable. The English major at The Sage Colleges will prepare you for a wide variety of careers.

The two obvious career choices for most English majors are teaching or writing. It is difficult to make a good living doing either in the twenty-first century, but it is possible—millions do it.

If **creative writing** is your forte, you might consider eventually pursuing an MFA or Master of Fine Arts degree; these programs usually have concentrations in creative writing and will prepare you for a professional career as a creative writer.

If **teaching** is your future, investigate the various avenues available to you: elementary school, secondary school, college. You do not need teaching certification to teach college, but you will need an advanced degree (usually a PhD).

In order to teach **elementary or middle school**, you will need to dual major in English and Childhood Education; this program will prepare you to teach K-6 or K-8 and will also prepare you to take the state examination required for a teaching certificate. Several states have reciprocal agreements (if you are certified in one state, the other will accept it). In order to teach secondary school in New York State, you must have a Master's degree; a major in English with a Master of Arts in Teaching English degree is a good plan. Graduate study in English—an MA and then a PhD—will set you for a life of in-depth study of literature and language with an eye toward teaching at the college level.

But there are many other possible careers for those majoring in English. The world needs good writers; the world needs good readers; but, most importantly, the world needs good thinkers, and the major in English trains you to be an excellent critical thinker who can engage in innovation and problem solving.

Many **Fortune 500 companies** are now sending their employees back to school to learn to write. One executive reports, "We don't need to teach our employees to compute. We need to teach them to write, to read, to think." The ability to express yourself well in print is a gift, and especially in the information age, writing well is an important asset. Highlight it on your resume.

## Other Options

**Law School:** Lawyers need to write and read well; they need to be able to digest large volumes of information quickly and efficiently, and they need to be able to write convincing arguments and have the ability to conduct thoughtful research. Sometime during your junior or senior year, you will have to take the Law School Admissions Test (LSAT). See Professor Pamela Katz, Pre-Law Advisor.

**Medical School:** More Humanities majors are enrolled in medical school every year than Biology majors. Sometime during junior or senior year, you will have to take the Medical School Admissions Test (MCAT). See Dr. Mary Rea, Pre-Med Advisor.

**Publishing:** This is where your minor will come in handy. For example, if you minor in Marketing or Advertising, the marketing departments at publishers will be eager to talk with you. If you minor in Chemistry, publishers of chemistry textbooks and chemical literature would be good spots to look. If you minor in business, publishers will need you for their business operations. Internships are key here. See Dr. David Salomon for internship opportunities.

**College Teaching:** Talk with your advisor about planning and goals. Sometime during junior or senior, you will have to take the Graduate Record Examination (GRE).

**Translators/ESL Teachers:** Organizations such as the Peace Corps, the United Nations, and the Red Cross are always on the lookout for potential employees who can teach English or who can work as translators in foreign countries. The more exotic your second language, the more in-demand you will be (consider studying Arabic, Mandarin or Russian).

**Some other fields:** Management, Sales, Editing, Copywriting, Personnel Officer, Advertising Executive, Technical Writing

## The English Minor

A minor in English at Russell Sage College is 18 credits and is a nice addition to any college major. Majoring in the hard sciences and minoring in English will help to sharpen your writing skills. And many great writers never majored in English: Walker Percy (a medical doctor and author of *The Moviegoer*) is just one example. Russell Sage offers a strong English minor; talk with your advisor or any professor in English for more information.