Careers for English majors: Getting started and getting specific

Good sources for key words to find the job that fits you

http://www.lhup.edu/colleges/liberal_arts_education/english/ Here, you’ll find the English department’s homepage and a link to this document.

http://community.lhup.edu/careerservices/internetresources/index.htm This section of the LHU Career Services website offers a wonderful set of links to sites that can help you with career planning. There are ten different sub-categories, which include career sites by majors and sites for summer and seasonal employment. This is a great place to start if you’re not sure about the type of career you’re most interested in. For internships, go to the link called “Internet Resources.”

http://englishcomplit.unc.edu/english/undergrad/careers At this site, UNC-Chapel Hill offers an alphabetical listing of hundreds of job titles you might not think of on your own. Scroll down to find keywords for your job search.

http://careers.rutgers.edu/page.cfm?page_id=376&section_id=8&major_id=32 Rutgers University offers a shorter list—but also lists types of employers who hire English majors.

http://career-advice.monster.com/salary-benefits/salary-information/best-paying-jobs-english-majors/article.aspx Unabashedly commercial, this article provides a list of high-paying jobs and links to look for them.

General job and career exploration sites


http://www.onetonline.org/ This is O*Net Online, an occupational search and explore tool that can help you determine the sort of job you might find congenial.

http://www.mynextmove.org/ My Next Move is another occupational exploration site that offers a variety of options for discovering the type of job that could allow you to use your favorite skills and talents.
This is the American Job Center’s OneStop career exploration site. Again, it offers a variety of options for career exploration in terms of job types, job trends, and salaries, as well as a range of geographic features and advice on the job application process.

This is salary.com’s student page, which offers a career test, dream job descriptions, every sort of job information you might want to know, and other resources specifically useful for students.

**Internships**

Working as an intern while you’re in college can provide you with relevant work experience before you graduate. In order to compete in a tight job market, you’ll want to have a record of professional experience before you begin your job search.

LHU’s own Career Center is the best first step as you begin to plan an internship or job search. The services offered here range from step-by-step on-line explanations and models of how to proceed, to a library of resources to help in every aspect of your job or internship search, as well as resources to help you choose a career (don’t overlook the FOCUS test, which you can take at your own pace to learn about careers that might fit your inclinations and aptitudes), take practice standardized exams for admission to graduate programs, and compose a resume. There are also listings of the many workshops offered, forms you may need to set up a credentials file, job listings, internship listings (under “Internet Resources,” and many other resources intended to help you, both while you’re a student and after you graduate. For internships, look under Internet Resources.

This site provides links to internships listed with LHU’s Career Services, as well as to those listed with a national network of internships for college students.

Additional information about internships may be found here.

**Career options**

**Staying in School: Finding a Job at a College or University**
One possible career route for English majors is to work at a college or university after graduation. There are many jobs for which good writing skills (more rare than you might think), the ability to think critically and creatively, and knowledge of the academic environment are excellent qualifications.

Why work in a college or university setting? Often, there are jobs that will allow you to work in ways that most business settings don't offer. If you enjoy working with students, the atmosphere and opportunities offered by educational institutions (lectures, art, film, music, performances and often, free courses for employees), plus the chance to pursue a particular interest, you might want to work on a college or university campus. This job search has much in common with other job searches, but there are some search strategies that are specific to this type of job search.

The links immediately below allow you to access information about different professions and careers, as well as specific job listings. Every one of these suggested sites (other than the ones for college human resources departments) will give you ways to access all types of jobs, not just those offered in colleges or universities. They're a good place to start any professional job search if you're an English major.

**Finding a job at a specific college or university**

A direct route to finding these jobs would be to look at specific colleges or universities in your location of choice. To do this, you would first get a list of such institutions, then go to the website of each one and find their employment opportunities (often, but not always, under Human Services, Careers at, or Employment Opportunities).

For quick access to lists of colleges and universities, try

http://www.50states.com/college/penn.htm This will give you a list of Pennsylvania colleges and universities. Going to the general site (take out the /penn) will allow you to choose any state.

http://www.univsource.com/pa.htm This one includes community colleges.

http://www.utexas.edu/world/univ/state/ The University of Texas at Austin maintains this state-by-state alphabetical listing of colleges and universities.

www.higheredjobs.com Select the administrative jobs section. In here, there are job listings for many campus jobs for which a bachelor's degree is the academic credential required.

**Teaching**

http://www.teachforamerica.org/ Teach for America is a program for those who pursue an English degree but then become interested in teaching.
Pennsylvania websites for job-seeking teachers:

http://www.pareap.net/ This link leads to the National School Applications Network.

http://edna.ed.state.pa.us/ This site provides the names, addresses, and administrator names for school districts across the state.

http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/job_vacancies/8633/home This site provides the Pennsylvania Department of Education job vacancies listings.

http://www.lhup.edu/teachered/students/careers_in_education.htm This site links to sites that address teaching overseas, teaching in the 50 states, and teaching in impoverished Southern states.

http://community.lhup.edu/careerservices/internetresources/bymajor/teaching.htm There is an exhaustive list of links to all kinds of agencies and resources related to teaching and teachers on this LHU Career Services page. These listings include adventure and outdoor teaching, teaching in impoverished areas, teaching overseas, and many other opportunities for special assignments, as well as resources for finding more standard teaching positions.

Finding a job in government

For explanations and listings of federal jobs, go to https://www.usajobs.gov/ and take a look at the sections for students and recent graduates, as well as the listings for special hiring events.

You will find several other sites claiming to offer federal jobs, but you'll notice that these all have the .net suffix. The one above, with its .gov, is the official site. The others are likely to be employment agencies, but may still have something to offer if you're cautious. No government agency is going to charge you anything to apply, use their resources, talk to someone, or see their ads!

For employment opportunities in Pennsylvania state government, go to http://www.employment.pa.gov/portal/server.pt/community/home/4635 Again, note the .gov suffix and don't be fooled by employment agencies masquerading as government portals.

http://community.lhup.edu/careerservices/internetresources/bytopic/government.htm#fed For government internships, there are federal and state sites listed here.

Finding a job with a non-profit agency

Non-profit (generally, charitable or educational) organizations can be wonderful places to work, especially if you feel strongly about a cause or have a strong interest
in a particular area. Since the reality for most of us is that we must earn a living while putting our beliefs into practice, you should be sure the listings in the following sites are for paid positions before you reply. Typing jobs + non-profit into a search engine will provide you with additional websites; as always, read carefully and research even more carefully as you locate potential employers.

http://philanthropy.com/section/Jobs/224/ This is website for The Chronicle for Philanthropy, a respected journal for non-profit professionals. In addition to serving as compendium of open positions, this site offers information on expected pay for top people in a variety of positions. Keep in mind that while beginners don't make as much as seasoned professionals, knowing a realistic upper end for a particular field can help you answer realistically if you're asked the dreaded interview question, What are your salary requirements?

http://www.nonprofitjobscoop.org/ This site is divided up regionally to allow job-seekers and posters to search geographically. It also provides links to other non-profit job clearinghouses. As with any site, read ads carefully and research potential employers before replying to an ad.

http://nonprofit.careerbuilder.com/np.ic/Pennsylvania/ If you have a special interest in working for a non-profit organization, this portion of the Career Builders site offers those listings in an organized way.

Sources for general employment opportunities: The corporate world

The days of having to go to a state job bank office and work with a counselor in order to see the listings are long gone. With an internet connection, you can search almost every state's job bank at any hour of the day or night, most of the time without registering. (You will, however, need to register if you wish to submit an application to any of the jobs you see, but each site provides information as to how to do that.)

Reliable web resources for job hunters, government-sponsored

These are sites that are useful to any job hunter, regardless of field or desired position. You can, by choosing your key words carefully, find jobs that are offered by colleges and universities, but you can also look for any other type of job that might interest you by using these sites.

http://www.careerinfonet.org/ This Career One-Stop site provides all kinds of job search info, from a library, to career forecasts, to links to job banks in the U.S. and around the world.

http://www.jobbankinfo.org/ This is related to the above site and provides direct links to state job banks. Follow the links to the Pennsylvania portal if you'd like to work in Pennsylvania. (Click on Find jobs, then Browse job sites when you get to your state of choice.)
http://maps.servicelocator.org/portal/sl_map.asp?state=42 This is a direct link to the Pennsylvania site, which provides access to a number of different resources, including job listings. By carefully choosing your key words, you can access all kinds of jobs that might be of interest.

To find jobs that specify good English or writing skills and that might be located on a college or university campus, try this combination of keywords:

college, university + English, writing (Be warned that this combination will also show you jobs that require a college education or the ability to speak English; such is the nature of keyword searches.) Simply entering writer instead of writing will get you a very different selection of jobs.

Using any of the key words you find at the job sites for English majors might also be helpful, as would putting in the names of departments whose missions might interest you. For example, the key word set directly above yielded these jobs: admissions counselor, director of Greek life, residence life director, and administrative assistant, among many others.

If you have another special area of interest, be sure to try out various ways of expressing it. Every change, addition, or omission of key words will result in changes in the list of jobs you are offered. Using different search engines with the identical sets of key words will often yield different results as well.

Using the newspaper classifieds, nationwide

This route is for those who know where they'd like to be working.

Go to your search engine of choice (Google was used for all searches in this article) and type in the name of the nearest city likely to publish a newspaper, plus newspaper. For example:

Williamsport + newspapers. The larger the city, the more newspaper names you will find.

Once you go to a newspaper website, choose classifieds, then employment, to look at the job ads.

Using a newspaper-related jobsite

http://www.careerbuilder.com/Default.aspx?cbRecursionCnt=2&cbsid=39989f67af9d43da8a41e1014415045f-260749197-X0-2 This full address will take you to jobs
advertised in Pennsylvania, listed city by city, with numbers of each type of job in each place clearly listed.

For an easier entrance to the system, simply type in www.careerbuilders.com and enter the city or state of choice. You can then enter keywords to get to the types of jobs that suit you. This site also offers free articles on successful job hunts, aptitude and preference tests, resume and interview tips, and general information of use to a job hunter.

Of course, any of the big jobsites might serve your needs. The site above has special ties to Gannett-group newspapers and will often come up when you visit the classified section of a member newspaper. As such, it can quickly become the site you go to when you want to check newspaper classifieds.

To use your time most efficiently, always check the Sunday classifieds because that's the traditional day for new listings. You may find that checking one or two other days in addition to Sunday will maximize your chances of seeing new ads while minimizing the time spent looking.

Other potential resources

www.chronicle.com is a jobsite used by professors, but there are always a number of non-teaching positions listed under organizations other than colleges (found under “Job Center.” Some of these jobs will involve the strong writing and analytical skills you have gained as an English major.

http://www.job-hunt.org/jobs/pennsylvania.shtml This site lists many, many Pennsylvania job hunt resources, most of them quite reliable. There are lists of colleges and schools, county websites, major employers, and special-interest organizations, but you must be careful to evaluate whose website you've found. Most of you know about Craig's list, which appears as a source for jobs on this page. If you do search in that site, there is the potential for finding interesting and non-standard jobs but before you respond to an ad, do a search for that company or the individual listing the job to be sure the offer is legitimate and that there aren't reports of unethical practices. Putting in the name plus scam is a quick way to find complaints, the most common of which are non-payment and broken promises.

www.mediabistro.com provides leads to media-based jobs and also offers some freelance possibilities. Some positions require degrees in journalism, but others simply specify strong writing skills.

How to work while you’re job hunting: temporary employment agencies

Many people looking for jobs will take one that pays minimum wage in order to have something to do and a way to earn some money during the job hunt. There is another,
more flexible option, however, for those who live in or near even a minor population center.

There are many advantages to working through a temporary employment agency. When you work through a temporary agency, you can request days and half-days off, a request likely to be denied by an employer at a minimum-wage job, especially to a new employee. You’ll generally be paid at the end of the working week, rather than once monthly. Most important, though, is that you can gain valuable work experience and try out a variety of workplace environments to see whether you like them while earning money and maintaining your freedom to interview for your dream job.

It’s often possible to specify the types of assignments you’re willing and not willing to accept, so consider whether you’re willing to work in a factory or spend eight hours a day filing papers in an unheated warehouse. Also consider how far you’re willing (or able) to travel for a job. Registering with as many of these agencies as you can is the best way to be sure you’ll be working often and at convenient locations—and you’ll soon figure out who offers the best assignments and working conditions. Calls for new assignments often come in early in the morning of the day you’ll be needed, so you need to be flexible, although many assignments are for more than a day at a time.

Showing up with a resume that highlights your most marketable skills (including software and equipment you can use) is a good idea, as is being prepared to take a keyboarding test and tests for any other skills you claim. As always, dress professionally, even when you know you’ll be doing nothing but taking tests during that first visit to the agency. Once you begin receiving assignments, always behave as if this were the most important job you ever landed and work as you would in any professional environment. Creating a positive impression on the employer gets you better assignments from the agency and could land you a permanent position.

While you may not make much more than minimum wage at some of your assignments, the employer is paying quite a lot more than that to the agency for your services and is likely to treat you well. If one of those employers offers you a permanent position, you’ll know that you are very much wanted in that position, since there is a hefty fee that the employer will owe to the temporary agency for taking you away. You can make valuable contacts while you’re working and get to know people who work in a variety of professions in a variety of workplace environments.

You can look up Employment Agencies, Temporary in your local yellow page listings or find long lists online by typing in “temporary employment agencies.” About.com offers a page of links that might also be helpful: http://jobsearch.about.com/cs/tempjobs/a/ tempjobs.htm

For personal assistance
Don't forget that you have access to LHU's Career Services office and the professional career counselors there. Their website offers you an array of links to all kinds of jobs:
temporary, seasonal, on-campus, off-campus, national, and international. There are links to job sites, invitations to get your resume critiqued and to start a credentials file, as well as links to many other useful sites.

If you have some time before graduation, don't neglect the internships portion of this website. An internship may give you the experience you need to land a job requiring experience and will certainly make you a stand-out applicant.

The Career Center can also help you after graduation, especially if you set up a credentials file with them. A credentials file allows the office, upon your request, to mail out letters of recommendation, unofficial copies of transcripts, and your resume, in any combination you request. Having such a file can ensure that when you need to act in a hurry to apply for a job, you won't be desperately seeking referees who may be out of town without internet service. The office can also help you select which letters go out for which jobs. You will need to visit the office to begin this process, but you can also get started by asking for letters from professors, employers, and others who have worked with you and can tell potential employers how wonderful you are.

While the Career Services website offers a wonderful range of advice and how-to instruction, there is no substitute for talking to a careers counselor who has no motive other than to help you find a job that suits you.

Keep in mind, too, that many of your professors have worked in other types of job settings and would be happy to share their insights with you, and that any member of the English Department Majors Careers Committee will be especially happy to guide you to the resources you need.

Links updated
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