Careers with an English B.A.

English Studies are excellent preparation for any pursuit that requires breadth of mind, creative thinking and well-developed communication skills.

Professional schools, such as medical, business, and law, often encourage undergraduates to major in English as they complete their pre-professional courses. The B.A. in English can provide an excellent foundation for many advanced-degree programs.

The skills and abilities one learns as an English major can be more generally applied to any career requiring expertise in the use of language as a means of communication.

Employers Rank Top 5 Candidate Skills/Qualities

1. Verbal Communication Skills (oral and written)
2. Strong Work Ethic
3. Teamwork Skills
4. Analytical Skills
5. Initiative

Source: Job Outlook 2011, National Association of Colleges and Employers

"English majors might be surprised that their talents can be both so noticeable and so needed in the workplace. ‘How bad can it be?’ they ask. The situation is quite poor, and many employers continue to insist in interviews and articles that many of their administrative problems would be eased if they could find management staff with solid writing and speaking competencies" (DeGalan & Lambert, xiii).

Communication

Influencing and persuading
Assessing needs of an audience
Presenting alternative viewpoints
Interpreting and clarifying ideas
Making oral presentations
Shaping general ideas into specific points and programs
Writing concisely
Editing

Research

Designing/directing projects
Organizing ideas/information
Developing hypotheses
Solving problems
Using information resources
Comparing interpretations

Critical Thinking and Analysis

Summarizing ideas
Comparing information
Using theoretical approaches
Developing critical evaluations
Thinking independently
Synthesizing ideas/themes
Applying close reading and interpretation

Some Career Planning and Job Search Websites for English Majors

http://www.careerservices.wayne.edu/: Wayne State University's Career Planning and Placement Services website offers information on student employment, summer internships, campus job postings, collegiate job fairs, and résumé and curriculum vitae building. The site includes a virtual job search link and career magazine links.

http://www.pdx.edu/careers/what-can-i-do-degree-english/: Portland State University has a useful career website with booklists, professional associations, links to internet sites with job search information for English majors, and a list of recent employers who have requested English majors to fill open positions.

http://www.bls.gov/oco: This is the online version of the 2011/2013 Occupational Outlook Handbook published by the U.S. Department of Labor. The OOH describes what workers do on the job, working conditions, the training and education needed, earnings, and expected job prospects in a wide range of occupations. Visitors to the site can use an alphabetical index to access information on specific occupations.

http://www.makingthedifference.org is a comprehensive public service site for students and recent graduates interested in federal jobs and internships. This site features three Pathways Programs “to provide talented individuals who are in school or who have recently received a degree with greater access to federal jobs and internships, as well as meaningful training, mentoring and career development opportunities.”

http://www.michworks.org: Michigan Talent Bank is the State of Michigan’s free job posting and job search site for employers and job-seekers. Job-seekers can search the more than 38,000 new job openings monthly and post their résumés so more than 55,000 prospective employers can find them. Job postings include descriptions of the positions, expected qualifications and experience, and beginning salaries.

http://www.stc.org: Sponsored by the Society for Technical Communication (SCT), this online newsletter gives information on careers in technical and professional writing and includes a jobs database.

http://www.authorlink.com/classifieds/XcClassPro.asp: Authorlink's classified ads section lists market tips and postings for both job seekers and employers. This site is specifically geared toward writing and editing jobs, including translators, ghost writers, and publishing support personnel.

http://www.collegejournal.com: This site, sponsored by The Wall Street Journal, gives job search strategies for liberal arts majors and lists the skills most in demand for today's market (communication and leadership skills are ranked at the top of the list). New grads are given advice on ways to tailor their résumés to meet the needs of prospective employers.

http://www.collegegrad.com: This is a site geared toward entry-level jobs for new college graduates. It includes cover letter, resume, and interviewing tips, an area to post résumés, a job posting site for employers, and links about company and salary research strategies.

http://www.jobhuntersbible.com: The Job Hunters Bible site is a supplement to the best-selling book What Color is Your Parachute. This comprehensive site offers links to infield contacts, companies, salary expectations, job search engines, along with résumé and job hunting advice.

http://www.indeed.com: This is a simple résumé posting and job search site that allows you to search by key word and geographic area.

http://www.careers.org: This is another general career planning, job search and job posting site, but you can narrow your search by region and career field.