Path 4: Business Administration and Management

Majoring in English has been fun. Hard work, sure, but lots of fun as well: fascinating courses, interesting books, poetry, and literature to read and discuss, and the company of like-minded people who also enjoy the many forms of expression in English. You've loved all the reading and will probably spend the rest of your life as an avid reader, but how does that qualify you for a job? No one is going to pay you just to read.

Is your love of reading of any use to an employer? Absolutely! The ability to read and the enjoyment of reading are highly valued in business administration and management careers. Whether it's the mountainous volumes of memoranda, letters, magazines, or professional reading that come across a desk each day or books and articles that help one to see the big picture or learn a new management technique, all of this reading and the ability to accomplish it will come in very handy to you in management/administration. You'll be more knowledgeable, you'll have a higher level of general information, and you'll be able to refer colleagues and subordinates to information of interest to their particular concerns. Your awareness of and grasp of your reading material makes you a valuable resource, especially to others who might read less.

Writing was also very important to your degree. Short papers, long papers, documented research papers, freewriting, and journals became regular items in your bag of tricks. Unlike some students in other majors, writing became so practiced for you that these assignments were enjoyable challenges rather than onerous tasks. You became quite adept at writing under pressures of time and space limitations. You learned to condense or expand depending on what was needed or allowed. You might have even had the opportunity to con-
tribute to a literary journal or college newspaper or help a professor with research for a scholarly article. You learned how practice and critical feedback improved your writing, and you experimented with different writing styles. You know writing is an important skill and valued by the world of work, but how exactly will you put your writing experience to work for you?

There is perhaps no single more valued gift in the world of employment than the ability to write well and easily. The amount of correspondence alone is staggering, and business writing requires an excellent vocabulary, clarity of expression, and some special stylistic techniques of directness, collaboration, and persuasion. And business writing is not lacking in opportunities for creativity, either. New business ventures, advertising proposals, international ventures, and new products all present opportunities to do something different. Not-for-profit organizations need to produce a never-ending stream of materials to help people understand and appreciate what they do and then be willing to support them. Business is constantly changing and responding to the marketplace, and business writing reflects that.

You probably found it useful in your major to know how to use word-processing software: moving texts, cutting and pasting, changing formats, and using the dictionary, thesaurus, and search-and-replace options to improve your writing presentation. Maybe you got to try your hand at some desktop publishing software as well and gained some familiarity with this popular technology. In fact, you probably saved much of your college writing output and now have a nice portfolio of work assembled and ready to print. But you don't want to be a secretary; won't your word processing and desktop publishing skills be seen as just clerical?

A quick review of available job openings for management level, college graduate positions in business administration and management, both profit and not-for-profit, display overwhelmingly the need for at least word processing competency and a variety of word processing software familiarity. Beyond this, many employers are interested in candidates having some desktop publishing skills, knowledge of graphics packages, and awareness of spreadsheet software. In the reality of the workplace, there is an overt link between the practicing business writer and communicator and the computer. Here's an excellent example of this requirement in an advertisement found on Action Without Borders (idealist.org), a specialized job posting site for the not-for-profit sector. This is the qualifications section of a want ad seeking a program assistant for a museum:

**Requirements.** B.A., preferably in humanities. Proficiency in QuarkXPress and Adobe Photoshop, basic knowledge of HTML coding, excellent verbal and written skills, ability to work independently and to manage both short- and long-term projects, genuine interest in and some knowledge of art.

Notice the focus on the technical demands; the degree is listed first, then the technical needs that, in their specificity, overshadow the more general requirements.

Try to expand your computer skills while still in school in the areas suggested and, if you have graduated, see about some continuing education courses in desktop publishing or spreadsheet analysis software. Don't let this kind of easily acquired technological skill come between you and a job that lets you use many of your English major skills.

Here's another advertisement, for a project analyst for a financial services company:

**Project Analyst.** Responsibilities: data management, event budgets, cost analysis, RFP (request for proposal) development, reporting, and maintaining program calendars. Skills: very good computer skills, including Microsoft Outlook, Word, Excel and PowerPoint; great organizational skills; keen attention to detail and follow-up; self-motivated; and possess strong communication and writing skills. Bachelor's degree required.

Certainly a B.A. in English would be acceptable, but that is hardly enough to be competitive. Familiarity with budgeting, organizing data, and report writing is also required. This is an excellent example of the kinds of demands an employer believes it can make on a college graduate today. The degree by itself is simply not enough for this organization.

Maybe your interest is in business, not in teaching, but you had some great teachers who taught you to listen, to express yourself in a complete and reasoned way, and to understand that being critical is not being negative, but rather evaluative. This evaluative skill will be particularly useful in business, where much work is done in groups and individuals come to the table with
differing perspectives. There may be someone who will look at a proposal from a quantitave perspective. Another may bring the history of the organization to bear on a situation. Yet another may have a public relations or marketing approach. You may look at the logic, the tone, and the bigger picture of the concept and bring a valuable and completely different perspective to the situation.

Your teachers taught you about styles, periods, and the nuances of particular writers. You learned from them the value and power of specific choices in vocabulary. From hour upon hour in the classroom you came to appreciate the well-developed lecture or thoughtful presentation and understand the mechanics of public presentation skills. You will frequently find yourself called upon in meetings, both with and without advance notice, to speak on certain subjects, sometimes at length. The modeling you received from your classroom presentations is sure to influence your own presentation style. You'll understand how to speak to the audience and what audience members are interested in hearing. You will have learned to modulate your voice and include everyone with eye contact. You'll have a sense of when visual aids would be a compelling addition to a presentation.

Do writing and reading and word processing skills open any doors for you? Absolutely! If there is one constant refrain from the world of organized business, large and small, it is "We need people who can think and speak and write—we'll teach them everything else they need." English majors, take a look at administration and management careers.

**Definition of the Career Path**

Because an English degree program focuses on educating the student about the traditions of the English language and its contemporary reflection in modern literature, poetry, theater, video, art, and film, it's common for an English major to have an immensely successful college career, graduate with honors, and yet feel ill-equipped to find a good job. We've indicated that although some wonderful skills and training have been received, it's necessary for the job seeker to learn to extract those skills from the context of an education in English and transform them in a way an employer will find attractive.

This means taking a skill out of the academic context, for example, writing research papers on topics in English literature. For the business employer who isn't in need of English-literature research writing, that particular skill may be difficult to fully appreciate. Some employers would do the necessary generalization and understand its value, but it's more effective and certain if you do it. So instead of indicating on your résumé that you know how to write and research papers on subjects in English literature, you might better indicate that you are comfortable with research methods and resources. You can assemble pertinent data on a subject using a variety of reference materials and transform that data into a piece of valuable information. Now, the employer thinks, "Yes, that is something I can use." It's easy to do!

The best way to begin to understand how valuable your English degree might be to the world of administration and management is to review some current job postings. Look at Internet job listings and Sunday papers with want ads. It doesn't matter if they are out of date; you're reviewing them to learn how employers request people with your kind of talent. These job postings will educate you in a couple of different ways. What phrases do they use, and what kinds of skills do they expect? Where do your talents match up with what's requested, and where do you fall short? Some will directly ask for English skills; others will speak of writing and verbal presentation ability. As you read the job descriptions, you will begin to become familiar with menus of duties and responsibilities you might be performing. Another bonus of this exercise is that you will discover job titles. Even when we have a good idea about what we want to do with our lives and the employment environment we want to find ourselves in, we often don't know what they call what we want to do. This exercise helps you to learn about and build your own personal library of job titles to explore. And if you need further information on any particular job, you can research it in the O*NET Dictionary of Occupational Titles (http://online.onetcenter.org).

Your college career office or library may have some additional job posting newsletters with listings of entry-level jobs for liberal arts graduates in a number of fields directly and indirectly related to English. Check those out as well.

Following is an excellent example of a position for which English majors would be well qualified but that they might not be aware of or might not expect to refer to skills they possess.

**Program Manager.** Plans and administers work on large projects having a significant business or global impact on the organization. Develops detailed project plans and analyses, researches and identifies key barriers/problems, monitors and tracks progress. Entry-level professional contributor, requires B.A./B.S. and zero to two years of experience, excellent communication skills, familiarity with databases and GIS.
This kind of job could exist in both the commercial and not-for-profit sectors and within each of them in numerous kinds of organizations: medical, sales, agriculture, or banking, just to name a few.

We've established that the English major is well-grounded in analytical skills and should have solid writing and communication skills. So you fit the bill for the example position on that score. Your research experience would have allowed you training in the kind of tracking and reporting of data that is being requested in this advertisement. The subject matter may be different, but the procedures and evaluative process are identical. It's just a new vocabulary.

Certainly the advertisement is not requesting anything outside the range of the average English major, except perhaps some software familiarity. As we have mentioned, computer skills have been stressed throughout all the English-major career paths cited, so if time remains in your degree, use that time to acquire as many computer skills as you can in desktop publishing, spreadsheet programs, word processing, and databases. It will stand you in good stead in the employment market.

Here's another example, again with some computer skills required and a specific interest in publishing.

**Communications Project Manager.** Large corporation with multiple internal communications departments and a wide variety of projects. Something new every day: event planning, strategizing with internal clients, executing communications projects, some writing. Must be a born multitasker with a lot of patience and confidence for dealing with all corporate levels and personalities. Bachelor's degree and strong writing abilities, knowledge of Word and Excel, experience with project management software a plus.

This ad may seem typical of what you would expect for an English major seeking entry-level employment. It focuses on communications (even in the job title), and it involves writing. But publishing is not the only place for such a communications project management job. The clone of the job could exist in the sciences, medical, financial, or management research fields and in U.S. government positions as well. The material you would be working with would be different in each area, but the tasks and processes would be similar.

Management trainee ads for any number of employers often simply ask for a four-year graduate because they are looking for a broad range of skills and will do most of the specialized training in company and product awareness on the job. They prefer college graduates for their education, intelligence, and exposure to a broad range of subject fields. They especially appreciate English majors for their emphasis on communication skills. Jobs as diverse as production assistant for a TV station, sales account manager in industry, research associate, political campaign manager, assistant director for personnel services, and a host of equally interesting and varied positions seek an English or other appropriate four-year degree. Each requires good written and verbal communication skills, analytical ability, perhaps some research experience, and almost always computer literacy and often familiarity with particular software.

So you will certainly be using the skills you practiced in acquiring your degree and some new ones besides. The context won't be literature, but it almost certainly will be prose, and you will play a major role in ensuring that writing is clear, direct, correct, and has some style as well. Letters, memoranda, policies, procedures, and short and long business reports are the currency of the workplace. The quality of this writing is a direct reflection on the organization sponsoring it. Consequently, individuals who can write, edit, and present these materials are valued for those skills.

Here's a fund-raising position with an emphasis on issues and skills and not on the particular degree:

**Development Officer.** Assist development director by drafting fund-raising appeals and brochures, researching prospective donors, and visiting donors. Must be respectful of confidential conversations. Possess excellent communications skills and computer skills including word processing/spreadsheet. Requires B.A./B.S., fund-raising experience helpful.

Think about the different talents you are developing in your English major and try to picture yourself using them in some employment context. Which do you enjoy the most and which the least? Which must be part of a job and which will you not miss? The study of English as a major is comprehensive enough to ready you for a variety of worthwhile occupations in which you can justifiably say you are using your degree to the fullest.

In your job as a manager or administrator, you'll eventually begin to have people under your leadership, and you will be involved in staff supervision, perhaps some budgetary control, and evaluation of your staff. From time to time there'll be hiring decisions as well. These are all important skills in any
job, and all require leaving a "paper trail": a formal letter offering someone a position, a sick leave or vacation time policy, a proposal for reorganizing a department or division, or introducing a new product to an existing product line.

Even if you feel assured from reading this book that an employer needs your skills, you might recognize that your education in English seldom focused on the world of employment. You had opportunities to listen to poets and novelists read their work. You might have had a journalist visit your class. But did you ever have a visit from a manager/administrator who wanted to share with you how he or she uses his or her degree in English? Probably not. You legitimately feel somewhat ill-informed about the world of business. What do various organizations do? What are the functions of different departments and the roles of the people who staff those departments? As you go about your job search, you'll want to fill in the gaps in your knowledge about business by doing some basic research about organizations and specific firms. With your educational background, this will not be a problem for you!

Company literature can be a goldmine of information about organizational structure. Internet sites, brochures, and pamphlets describe departments, show organizational charts, and may contain photographs of individuals at work. Some organizations break down along functional lines: accounting, personnel, finance, and marketing. Others use their products as the division: boilers, generators, transformers, or cables.

If, for example, you are looking at a management trainee position for a fruit juice manufacturer, you could check out the food processing industry on the Internet or at your library or college career center. Learn about the basic operation of the industry, possible departments, staffing, and raw materials sourcing. Next seek out information about the particular company that you are applying to.

Organizations such as Veryfine, Snapple, or Ocean Spray describe their products and their manufacturing process. Some firms publish human resources brochures that profile selected workers and their jobs. These descriptions can give you an even better sense of what this organization does and who works there.

As you begin to realize how widely attractive the English major is to many kinds of employers, you'll soon build up quite a knowledge base about certain fields. You can then focus your research more on specific organizations and less on the sector they are part of. Becoming so aware of the world of employment is part of any job search, but for the English major, there are many more doors available to open and, consequently, more to learn.

Perhaps you chose English as a degree simply because you love to read and think. These corporate jobs sound interesting to you, and it may be comforting to realize that so much of American business would value your skills. But some of these jobs may sound more active, more extroverted than fits your personality. They suggest lots of interpersonal communication, high degrees of interaction, and potentially some conflict or dissonance. You worry that perhaps, although you have the skills, the environment will be wrong. Are there corporate jobs for people who like to just read and think?

The answer to this reasonable question is a complicated one. First, there are jobs in business, industry, and nonprofits that involve significant amounts of reading and thinking. That work may be solitary and introverted as the reader wrestles with concepts or ideas. Ultimately, however, the results of such work must be presented publicly, either to a supervisor, a committee, or a team. That presentation may be verbal, written, or a combination of techniques.

The kinds of jobs that are this autonomous and self-directed are almost always fairly senior positions in terms of rank and salary. It would be unusual in an entry-level position to just send the new employee off to read or think with no understanding of the organization and its mission, goals, or history.

With such senior responsibility (and commensurate salary) come additional duties beyond one's primary task of reading and thinking. The organization has the right to use the skills of this thinker/reader for the general good. It would demand that this good thinking be brought to bear on decision making and goal setting. So while such positions do exist, they exist at senior levels for experienced staff who often have other equally important ancillary duties that put them on the line again and again.

**Working Conditions**

Corporate working conditions and norms of behavior may also inspire some hesitation. You may sense that business and industry and even some larger, more organized not-for-profit organizations have more rules about conduct, appearance, manners, and hierarchy than you have been used to or would enjoy. After all, part of your decision to major in English might have been a rejection of some of the same work orientation or profit motive that led some of your peers to major in business or computer science. Now you're also considering the world of commerce and justifiably wondering, will I fit in?
Rest assured that the world of work is as diverse as the population in general. It is filled with people of differing interests, political persuasions, lifestyles, values, and talents. There is certainly room for you. Your skills are valued and needed, and most organizations realize that along with your talent and education comes a particular philosophy and lifestyle.

But that is not to suggest that some changes will not have to be made. After all, a corporation is a public entity represented by its employees. How they look, act, and communicate affects the business and, ultimately, their livelihood. Publicly traded companies with shareholders may feel this responsibility to a greater degree than does a private company or family-held business. Nevertheless, a business's success rises and falls on its ability to maintain good relations with its publics.

Businesses today have become much more sophisticated about their staff and their needs. Some offer flexible time scheduling with varying arrival and departure times for different workers. Some will allow two people to share a job, each person taking on a specific set of duties. This kind of benefit has been helpful for parents who are interested in staying home more with young children. Some larger organizations offer on-site child-care or elder-care—a real recognition of home and scheduling problems. An increasing number of firms are offering benefits to gay couples and recognizing same-sex couples in invitations to social functions. Firms often offer counseling and referral services for a variety of problems and do so discreetly and without the stigma these problems earned employees in corporations of the past.

Many firms now offer memberships in health or fitness clubs or have those kinds of facilities on-site as part of their benefits program. Of course, this emphasis on exercise and diet has beneficial effects on productivity and reduced absenteeism. Even more than that, it builds self-esteem; people become prouder of how they look and feel and return that pride in their work. It increases camaraderie and cuts across all hierarchical lines as different kinds of workers meet in the gym and weight room.

Many organizations offer trips to the ballet, theater, sports events, and museum openings for employees and their families at greatly reduced prices. You are sure to find many like-minded individuals at work and have many opportunities to share your enthusiasms and interests in work-sponsored activities.

It might be easy to believe that because a nonprofit organization is involved in doing good in the world, many of the conditions so entrenched in a corporation would not exist in the not-for-profit. Although some nonprofit organizations do have relaxed norms, a great many others know that to gain the private and public dollars needed to run these organizations and inspire public trust, they need to present in every way the same picture of organization, sophistication, and determination as a corporation.

Another reasonable concern is the issue of competitiveness. Are corporate climates as competitive as they are portrayed to be? Certainly as an English major you competed for grades and to better your own past performance, but you were also in a sense competing with a class standard set by all members. Business is no different. While most competitive initiative is outwardly directed toward other firms, there are certainly performance norms established over time by the general level of expertise in the firm. Because you are hired in large part with these norms in mind, and your résumé and experience were evaluated on criteria already established for success in the organization, you will probably do fine. What is important is that you stay "tuned in" as an employee to performance standards and do your best to maintain your contributions.

You will participate in periodic evaluations with your direct supervisor to review your accomplishments and set appropriate goals for yourself for the next evaluation period. These evaluations will be the proper setting to discuss your understanding and appreciation of your job, your desire for additional training, or your ideas for job modification.

Training and Qualifications

Our review of some sample advertisements has made it clear that along with your fine English education, some computer familiarity would be well advised. It is impossible to anticipate all the potential demands of the marketplace, but certainly word processing, some spreadsheet software, some personal computer hardware familiarity, and desktop publishing techniques would be attractive additions to your résumé. If you have some of the skills on this list, you would at least be able to negotiate to learn the rest on the job. Without any of these skills, an employer has no way of judging whether you are computer literate or whether you will turn out to be difficult to train. If you have at least some computer experience, there is less risk in spending training dollars on your computer education as an employee.

If your curriculum allows, a general introduction to business course would also be helpful, especially if it touches on accounting principles, management, and operations. This information would help you to understand your employer's situation, improve your communication at interviews, and speed
up your research activities when investigating certain industries or specific companies. Some schools offer an introduction to not-for-profit organizations, which would be of help to anyone interested in that employment sector.

Any kind of business internship would also assure an employer of your interest in applying your English skills in the public arena. You might look at internships in communications, research, office administration, development, membership services, event coordination, program planning, or in rotating assignments where you have the opportunity to spend some time in all the departments of an organization. You'll come away from such an experience with a strong sense of what you could do for a firm and how an organization functions.

**Earnings**

This is a broad employment category, and starting salaries are a function of both the general salaries in the industry you are looking at (salaries in industry will be higher than in service firms) and your particular set of skills. The more specific skills (computer, math, research, and others) you bring in addition to your degree, the higher your initial salary range. According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (jobweb.com), entry-level salaries range from $31,200 to $36,491.

**Career Outlook**

The kinds of positions we have been discussing are sometimes referred to as generalist positions. They are not technical jobs, and the educational background required is rather broad. Additionally, with these generalist positions there are no firmly established criteria for entry-level positions. Much depends on the employer being approached and the particular combination of skills, talent, and personality of the applicant and how that combination fits. The hiring outlook has much to do with the general trend of the economy and the size and location of the hiring organization, as well. These types of positions often follow trends. If, for example, an industry and the employers within that sector are not doing well, the funds employers have to spend on hiring new employees will probably first go toward technical expertise to improve efficiency and product quality and then to financial management staff to ensure fiscal control and solvency. The newly degreed general administrator with "soft" or untried skills is not an attractive commodity at such times.

When personnel staffing funds are more freely available, it is easier to find and win these positions. A corollary of this is that these positions are also more likely to be early casualties during a downturn in the economy through layoffs, reductions in force, enforced leaves of absence, or outright dismissals. To prevent this situation, you are encouraged to use your employed time to acquire more specific skills that would significantly alter your résumé.

A good example of this would be how you self-manage for growth in an entry-level position as a human resources associate for a large company. Perhaps you have been hired as an assistant benefits administrator, briefing new employees on benefit program choices and assisting in managing the smooth flow of paperwork and forms surrounding the filing and paying of claims. You could do this job in an exemplary manner for three years and yet still only be qualified for an identical job somewhere else.

Or you could request cross-training in OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) guidelines for workers, participate in professional development programs to learn more about pay classification guidelines, volunteer to work on the team producing a new benefits brochure and pick up copywriting and graphics experience, and participate in every training opportunity provided. Ask your boss if you can sit in on contract negotiations when benefits packages are up for renewal. Soon you will discover you have built a substantial body of expertise in your field. No longer are you a generalist with only your degree to recommend you; now you are qualified as a payroll specialist, benefits officer, employee trainer, or even director of personnel for a smaller organization.

**Strategy for Finding the Jobs**

As an English major seeking employment in the areas of business administration and management, you need to do three things to be successful. First, you need to become skillful at transforming descriptions of your academic skills and successes into skills and attributes that the workplace will find valuable. Second, you must know who the employers are. Third, you must reflect what you have learned on your résumé, in your cover letter, and in your interview comments.

**Help Businesses Appreciate Your Skills**

Candidates need to be able to document each of their strengths with anecdotes and examples that will have meaning to an employer who is far removed from the world of college academics. So if one of your particularly strong skills is project planning, you will want to express that to the employer as a
usable skill. Perhaps you acquired project planning skills in terms of research paper writing or end-of-semester presentations. This won’t make much of an impact on an employer. But if you suggest to the employer that you have project planning skills that can help in opening new branches or making client presentations or preparing for a sales conference, that will have more impact. You can then talk about attention to detail, assembling all relevant materials, coordinating with involved staff, and producing the necessary ancillary materials. You have taken your skills out of one context and placed them in another.

**Know Something About the Organizations You Are Contacting**

The second ingredient for success follows naturally from the first. To convincingly express the importance of your skills to a business employer, you will need to know something about the organization’s product, personnel, and operations. It has always been a watchword of the job search process to know something about the employer you are contacting for work. This is especially important for the generalist coming from an English major to work in business or administration. It’s up to you, not the employer, to express where in the organization you can be most effective and what kinds of contributions you can make. You cannot do that effectively without understanding your potential employer’s operation.

Obtain company literature from the firm’s home page or from your college career office. In addition to annual reports, you’ll find product line information, human resources literature, and statements of philosophy of business and mission. Look at more general sources, including current periodicals, to gain a sense of current strengths and challenges to the industry. As an English major, you know the value of specialized vocabularies from reading Shakespeare or Dickens. Entering the world of business and administration requires the same kind of diligent application to feel at home.

**Reflect Newfound Knowledge on Your Résumé, Cover Letter, and in Interviews**

It is especially important for the English major’s résumé to say to a business audience, “I’m trained to contribute to your organization.” You can do this in the way you describe your objective and history. Use the tips we’ve described here to set yourself apart from other liberal arts students who haven’t figured out that their résumé should focus on their audience rather than on themselves. Your cover letter needs to confirm your understanding of the business world, and you must be ready to discuss the relevance of your degree and experience during the job interview.

**Possible Employers**

It is no exaggeration to say that the accomplished English graduate holds a degree that is an accepted passport across the borders of every industry. Employers know and value the educational background of an individual who has studied English in college. Moreover, they appreciate the contribution that such an individual can make to their organization.

Let’s take the world of work and divide it up into some general categories. We’ll profile each of these sectors for you and provide both general and specific resources to help you explore on your own. You’ll be looking for employers that are doing things you’re interested in and who hire people in the job title categories you’ve identified.

**Not-for-Profit Organizations**

All too often, the words employment, job, and career fail to call up images that include the large and diversified group of employers in the not-for-profit sector. Many of these simply cannot afford to spend for advertising what their counterparts do in the for-profit zone. Often, because these organizations benefit by and are supported by targeted markets, such advertising would not be a wise expenditure. Nevertheless, it would behoove the job seeker to investigate this rich and varied group of employers.

Not-for-profit employers can be segmented into the following broad categories:

- Arts, culture, and humanities
- Education
- Environment
- Animal related
- Health care
- Mental health and crisis intervention
- Voluntary health associations and medical disciplines
- Medical research
- Crime and legal related
- Employment
- Food, agriculture, and nutrition
- Housing and shelter
- Public safety, disaster preparedness, and relief
- Recreation and sports
- Youth development
- Human services
- International, foreign affairs, and national security
- Civil rights, social action, and advocacy
- Community improvement and capacity building
- Philanthropy, voluntarism, and grant making
- Science and technology
- Social science
- Public and societal benefit
- Religion related
- Mutual and membership benefit

An incredible range of concerns have precipitated the formation of innumerable not-for-profit organizations. Just a few of these issues are animal rights, government funding for the arts, child advocacy, consumer advocacy, education, energy use and the environment, government oversight, homelessness, hunger, legal aid, influence of the media, peace and disarmament, people with disabilities, social action, social work, sustainable agriculture, and women's issues.

Where You Might Fit In. A common characteristic of small not-for-profit organizations is that one employee may wear many hats. This means that when an organization hires a worker for one job, it seeks someone who can fill other roles as well. So an administrator may be called on at various times to serve as a trainer or an editor or a telemarketer. The English major is versatile, and not-for-profit employers will find that especially attractive.

For the English major or graduate seeking employment, these nonprofit organizations offer as many opportunities as the commercial sector. Not-for-profits have a similar organizational structure, including positions relating to the following administrative functions: human resources, office management, field staff direction, accounting, public relations, government relations, legislative relations, marketing, membership services, management information systems, development, outreach, and volunteer management.

Help in Locating These Employers. A personnel professional in the not-for-profit sector recommends that job seekers investigate policy changes, grant-making trends, and local initiatives to stand the best chance of finding job openings. One place to begin is at jobsinanonprofits.com. The company that sponsors the site is a well-known software and services supplier to nonprofits. Another good site is published by the Chronicle of Philanthropy and is called PhilanthropyCareers (http://philanthropy.com/jobs). Both sites allow you to search by location, keyword, and job title.

Some other organizations that can provide information include the Foundation Center (http://fdncenter.org), National Training and Information Center (ntic-us.org), Environmental Support Center (envsc.org), and Society for Nonprofit Organizations (snpo.org).

Institutions of Higher Education
Institutions of higher education can be reasonably included in any not-for-profit listing, but they deserve their own category for several reasons. First, they encompass a vast range of employment levels from gardeners to professors. Second, they value skill and care in written and spoken English because it is a reflection of the institution. And finally, they are often both institutions of learning and complete communities that produce an enormous range of activities, programs, and literature, providing unusual scope in terms of job titles and activities.

Where You Might Fit In. Junior and community colleges, vocational/technical colleges, and four-year colleges and universities are all institutions of higher education, and they offer many entry-level jobs that require at least a bachelor's degree. These jobs are found in the student services, development, and business units of schools. Consider this range of departments: admissions and records, career planning and placement, commuter student programs, counseling, financial aid, international student programs, judicial programs, minority student services, orientation programs, residential life programs, student activities and organizations, student union, business, development, and alumni relations.

The size of the institution will affect the number of positions available in these units; you can expect that larger colleges and universities will hire many staff members to meet the needs of their students, faculty, and staff.

Help in Locating These Employers. Each of these categories of academic institution is easily located, and a number of resources provide classifications by school size, type, academic majors offered, size of student population, and geographic locale. As a result, they are relatively easy to identify for your job search. Some of the standard reference sources through which you may
locate academic employers include job listings in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (chronicle.com), *Peterson's Undergraduate Guide: Four Year Colleges 2006*, and *Peterson's Graduate Guide Set 2005* (petersons.com), which lists schools offering graduate programs.

**Professional Organizations**

As you may have noticed in reading this book, there is an association or professional organization to support every possible human endeavor. Reading through a directory of associations can be fascinating, educational, alarming, and amusing as you encounter groups of people organized around other people (James Dean Memory Club), products (North Atlantic Seafood Association), activities (Foreign Car Haters Club of America), political persuasions (Monarchist Alliance), and job categories (Academy of Dispensing Audiologists) that meet the needs and interests of nearly any type of worker. There are more than thirty-five thousand professional associations and societies. Nearly every association of this type has a not-for-profit structure, but because there are so many professional associations, they deserve separate attention.

**Where You Might Fit In.** The activities of most of these organizations revolve around year-round direct mail correspondence with their members punctuated by regularly scheduled conferences or annual meetings. Many organizations also publish directories, journals, and newsletters. Consequently, there are significant employment opportunities in preparing written materials: regularly scheduled letters and mailings to members, newsletters and newspapers, informational packets and membership services brochures to potential members, meeting packets, and educational materials.

Additionally, these organizations hear from nonmembers seeking information and answers to questions about the organization, its members, and its aims. Home pages, pamphlets, and brochures are often made available to answer these questions. Some even have targeted career information available for their industry.

In reading through the entries shown for each organization in a reference such as the *Directory of Associations, National Organizations of the U.S.*, or *Regional, State, and Local Organizations*, look for the number of staff members employed there. Entries will indicate publications and services as well. Also be sure to read about the purpose of the group to see whether it is something you are interested in. Many people who work for professional organizations are expected to feel strongly about what the organization is trying to accomplish.

**Help in Locating These Employers.** If you haven't visited a career library or the career section of a public library, be sure to do so, and look for the titles listed previously or *National Trade and Professional Associations of the United States*. All of these resources list organizations that need workers with the skills you have to offer. They have a geographic index to allow you to locate potential employers in any state you are hoping to live in.

**Federal Government**

The federal government, even with budget cutbacks, is still the largest employer in the country, hiring about 2 percent of the nation's civilian workforce. Federal government jobs can be found in every state and in large metropolitan areas. Future budget cutbacks will affect the number of entry-level government positions available, and competition for those jobs will be keen, but there continues to be a need for federal employees.

Most federal government agencies hire graduates who are considered generalists. Some of the agencies include the Air Force; U.S. Army Information Systems Engineering Command; U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command; Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms; Bureau of Labor Statistics; Employment and Training Administration; Employment Standards Administration; Equal Employment Opportunity Commission; Federal Aviation Administration; Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation; Federal Highway Administration; General Services Administration; U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services; Department of Labor; Library of Congress; Maritime Administration; Surface Deployment and Distribution Command; Mine Safety and Health Administration; National Science Foundation; Occupational Safety and Health Administration; Office of Inspector General; Office of Personnel Management; Health and Human Services; Railroad Retirement Board; Department of State; U.S. Marshals Service; U.S. Postal Service; and Department of Veterans Affairs.

**Where You Might Fit In.** Each of these government units has an organizational structure that provides job opportunities ranging from generalist to specialist. The Library of Congress, for example, hires people with Ph.D.s in biology for biological science analyst positions and people with B.A.s in the liberal arts as research assistants; the General Services Administration looks for English majors to work as contract specialists and seeks law-degree holders to work as attorneys.

Many of these federal government agencies have their own administrative staff responsible for various functions including personnel, procurement, and reporting. Some resources to help familiarize you with the operations of

**Help in Locating These Employers.** A good place to start looking for actual job listings is on the U.S. government’s website, usajobs.opm.gov. This site explains the federal employment process and lets you look at current job openings, get general information on federal agencies, and submit an online application.

If you select the option “Search Jobs” and then enter the keywords “entry-level professional,” you can begin exploring the possibilities. Or select options relating to job type, geographic area, and date of job listing. Submit your search criteria, then select any of the entries and a detailed job description will be provided, including information on whom to contact for more information and how to apply for the specific position.

**State and Local Government**

State and local governments offer a variety of administrative positions in departments that include corrections, court systems, education, fire protection, health, highway and street construction, housing and community development, hospitals, libraries, natural resources, parks and recreation, police, sanitation, transportation, utilities, and welfare and human services.

**Where You Might Fit In.** As with the federal government, there is a range of agencies and job titles that you should consider. Many specialists are hired, but generalists such as the English major will fit in comfortably in many places. The book *Government Job Finder: Where the Jobs Are in Local, State, and Federal Government* details the many possibilities.

**Help in Locating These Employers.** Use your favorite search engine and enter “State of (put state name here).” You will find references to state departments; look for Employment, Personnel, or Human Resources, then look for job listings, opportunities, and so on. You will also find application procedures and contact names, and some sites will allow you to apply online.

**For-Profit Businesses**

If you have or are getting a degree in English and you are thinking about working in a for-profit setting, the possibilities for employment occur in every area of human endeavor. You may not have considered some of these industries: agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining, construction, manufacturing, transportation, public utilities, wholesale trade, retail trade, finance, insurance, real estate, and business and personal services.

You may find it difficult to imagine all the possible categories of employment available to you, so here’s an easy exercise. Pick up your local yellow pages telephone directory. Advertisers are listed under general headings: contractors, desktop publishing services, hospitals, mortgage services, paper manufacturers, resorts, transportation, and video production services. A walk through the phone book is a reminder of all the employment possibilities around us that are duplicated in nearly every locality.

**Where You Might Fit In.** For-profit employers spend most of their energy in connecting their product or service with a potential market. The essence of that connection is communication. Of course, this may involve written and verbal communication as well as the media. But even more than public communications, there is a demand for individual talent to focus and define an organization’s mission, to clarify goals, to set agendas, and to enunciate strategies to reach those goals.

A never-ending stream of both public external and private internal communications is the hallmark of the for-profit employer. The employer has a message, a product, or a service that must be communicated clearly to an audience if the business is to survive. The business has the opportunity to improve the quality and delivery of that product, whatever it may be. The English major who can write and speak clearly, who can analyze and solve problems, who can do research and transform data into meaningful information, and who can persuade people to take action is vitally important to organizations in this sector of the economy.

Because these organizations must continually respond to the marketplace, the English major can expect to be stretched, to grow, to be challenged, and to play a major role in the ever-changing definition of the competitive organization.

**Help in Locating These Employers.** If you’re looking locally or regionally and are including small and midsize organizations in your search, begin with your paper telephone book or an online telephone directory. Search the Web for a local chamber of commerce—most sites include member directories, the state Department of Business and Industry, and the regional Small Business Administration.

For more comprehensive searches and to include major employers, you’ll want to consult some of the larger directories published for just such a pur-
pose. These include *Ward's Business Directory of U.S. Private and Public Companies*, *Lexis Nexis Corporate Affiliations* (your library may have an electronic version of this), *Business Rankings Annual*, and *Hoover's Handbook of American Business*.

**Possible Job Titles**

Whether an organization is a for-profit or a not-for-profit entity, you will see similar job titles, because there are basic functions necessary to run both types of organizations. Watch for advertisements for jobs such as:

- Account representative
- Communications assistant
- Field staff director
- Marketing manager
- Office manager
- Personnel officer
- Production assistant
- Program manager
- Project director
- Public relations assistant
- Research assistant

Some job titles that may be seen more frequently in the nonprofit sector include:

- Counselor
- Director of volunteers
- Event manager
- Membership coordinator
- Outreach worker

Don't be frightened off by the title of counselor. Many nonprofit organizations are seeking people with a willingness to learn these skills in addition to people who may already possess them. Sometimes, however, a counseling job really doesn't involve counseling in the strict sense of the word.

There are some jobs, like office manager or administrative assistant, that many people associate with secretarial work. In fact, there are many highly paid people in these types of jobs who do very little secretarial work, for example, managers of large medical facilities or law firms. You may want to look more closely at the job descriptions for this type of work the next time you review job postings.

In higher education, often-seen job titles unique to the functions of a college or university that are associated with student affairs divisions include:

- Admissions representative
- Career adviser
- Program coordinator
- Administrative aide
- Financial aid representative
- International student coordinator
- Minority student programmer
- Orientation coordinator
- Residential life adviser
- Student activities coordinator
- Student union administrator
- Special programs coordinator

The business division of a college or university would include job titles such as:

- Development associate
- Financial aid officer
- Grants administrator
- Technical assistant
- Trainer

Any government unit, whether at the federal, state, city, or local level, is involved in such a wide range of activities that it would be difficult to enumerate all of the possible job titles. The following list is provided as a teaser:

- Outdoor recreation planner
- Public-health program specialist
- Technical writer
- Appraiser
- Communications specialist
- Financial examiner
- Industrial specialist
- Traffic manager
Computer specialist
Personnel manager
Contract representative
Import specialist
Archivist
Geographer
Social scientist
Park ranger

If you would like to gain a deeper understanding of the range of possible job titles, start by reviewing the *Occupational Outlook Quarterly*. Use the industry index in the *O*NET Dictionary of Occupational Titles to expand your list of interesting job titles in the various industries. Before long, you'll have a much deeper understanding of the range of possible job titles that you are interested in and qualified to apply for.

**Professional Associations for Business and Administration**

A variety of associations are listed here. We have tried to include at least one for each of the types of employers described.

**Alliance for Nonprofit Management**
1899 L Street NW, 6th Floor
Washington, DC 20036
allianceonline.org

*Members/Purpose:* Devoted to improving the management and governance capacity of nonprofits—to assist nonprofits in fulfilling their mission

*Journals/Publications:* *Pulse!* bimonthly e-mail newsletter, *Enhance* newsletter

*Job Listings:* Online career bank

**American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees**
1625 L St. NW
Washington, DC 20036
afscme.org

*Members/Purpose:* AFL-CIO public service employees union

*Journals/Publications:* *AFSCME Leader,* public newsletter, women's newsletter

*Job Listings:* Employment opportunities listed online

**National Association of Government Employees**
159 Burgin Plkwy.
Quincy, MA 02169
nage.org

*Members/Purpose:* National union of civilian federal government employees with locals and members in military agencies, the Internal Revenue Service, Postal Service, Veterans Administration, General Services Administration, Federal Aviation Administration, and other federal agencies, as well as state and local agencies

**National Business Association**
5151 Beldine Rd., Suite 1150
Dallas, TX 75254
nationalbusiness.org

*Members/Purpose:* Assists the self-employed and small business community in achieving their professional goals

*Training:* Sponsors seminars

*Journal/Publication:* *Biz Corner* weekly e-newsletter

**Society for Non-Profit Organizations**
5820 Canton Center Rd., Suite 165
Canton, MI 48187
snpo.org

*Members/Purpose:* Executive directors, staff, board members, volunteers, and other professionals who serve nonprofit organizations; promotes excellence in leadership, management, and governance practices

*Training:* Sponsors seminars and workshops on nonprofit management and leadership; offers online Learning Institute

*Journal/Publication:* *Nonprofit World* magazine

*Job Listings:* Links to online job listings

**U.S. Chamber of Commerce**
1615 H St. NW
Washington, DC 20062-2000
uschamber.com
GREAT JOBS FOR English Majors

Julie DeGalan & Stephen Lambert