



Department of English

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Links to Web sites: [Catalogs](#) [Department of English](#) (department maintained)
[Graduate Studies, M.A. in English Studies and Communication \(TESOL\)](#)

Majors offered: [English, B.A.](#), [M.A.L.S.](#), [M.A. in English Studies and Communication](#), [TESOL certificate](#) Majors in [English](#), [English Education](#), [Creative Writing](#), and [Professional Writing](#) offered.

Valpo English Majors know that strong training in language and literature gives them the background to do almost anything. English majors can be found in business, law, the classroom, and numerous other settings; we create publications, write novels and make decisions about the course of the English language. As an English major, you'll be in step with language, its functions, and its potential.

What Is Distinctive About Valpo's Program?

Alumni: Many Valpo English alumni have enjoyed distinguished careers as journalists and novelists. Among them are Jacki Lyden (VU '75), host and senior correspondent for National Public Radio and author of *The Queen of Sheba*; and René Steinke (VU '86), author of *The Fires*, 1999, and *Holy Skirts*, 2005 - a finalist for the National Book Award.

Faculty: Valpo's English faculty members prize excellent teaching but are also involved in research in their fields. Members of the Department have published several books and numerous scholarly essays and have presented many papers at important professional conferences. This is one of the most prolific departments in the University in terms of published research.

What Can You Do with an English Major?

Degree, Skills or Experience Needed for Beginning a Job in This Field: English majors who have worked successfully in both the profit and non-profit sectors of

the economy report that through their study of language and literature they have developed abilities to do the following:

1) efficiently learn new knowledge; 2) analyze, re-organize and interpret ideas for different levels and kinds of readers and listeners; 3) present arguments logically, succinctly, and clearly; 4) write well-documented and persuasive proposals and reports; 5) use researched material with relevance and originality; 6) summarize complex issues with accuracy and clarity; 7) edit and re-write technical material.

These skills naturally develop from English majors' special enthusiasm for and insight into the creative processes exhibited in literature and related arts. They eagerly take additional courses in the arts, history, languages, philosophy, psychology, politics, sociology and theology, because they take a keen interest in human affairs and see literature as central to understanding them.

English majors interested in teaching English at the secondary level begin fieldwork during their sophomore year. Additional field experience is gained during the junior year in the student's teaching methods courses. Finally, students engage in a semester-long student-teaching experience in the senior year.

Kinds of Work Available to Graduates in this Major: In the profit and non-profit sectors, English majors currently fill such positions as advertising supervisor, attorney, bank examiner, building management officer, buyer, claims adjuster, coach, customer service supervisor, doctor, editor, fiction writer, human resources supervisor, methods analyst, pastor, poet, playwright, principal, public relations director, production manager, reporter, sales manager, school superintendent, screenwriter, systems analyst, teacher, teleprocessing analyst. These and similar positions assume the addition of managerial, financial, and technical skills that may require additional academic preparation in one or more areas.

Potential Hiring Institutions: Government agencies, non-profit foundations, businesses in the following fields: advertising, the arts, banking, chemical, drug, communications, construction, electronics, entertainment, insurance, law, publishing, schools and universities, self-employment as writer, editor, web developer, or designer.

What Beyond-the-Classroom Opportunities Does Valpo Offer You in English?

Extracurricular Activities: English students can participate in such groups as the English Honor Society, Sigma Tau Delta (International English Honor Society), and the National Council of Teachers of English as well as working with The Torch (Valpo's student newspaper), The Lighter (Valpo's student literary magazine), and The Beacon (Valpo's yearbook).

Wordfest: The Department of English organizes Wordfest, a year-long series of readings by well-known poets, novelists, and playwrights. In the spring, Wordfest sponsors a writing contest and awards cash prizes for best student poetry, fiction, and non-fiction. Included are the distinguished Academy of American Poets Prize and the Anna Zink Springsteen Award.

Research: All English and writing majors enroll in a research seminar during their senior year. In addition, many of our students pursue independent study projects in research or creative writing. We encourage students who are interested in

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post-graduate study to pursue honors work during the senior year. This involves a year-long research and writing project. Valpo student Sage Miodov chose "Sermons from the Jungle: Manifestations of Religion in Vietnam War Fiction" as her research project; Benjamin Gaulke wrote "Do You Remember Nothing?"; T.S. Eliot's Allusions to Shakespeare in His Early Poetry.

Off-Campus Opportunities

Field Trips: Courses in drama and theatre regularly take advantage of Valpo's proximity to the Chicago area and its rich offerings in dramatic production.

Study Abroad: Students are encouraged to take advantage of any of Valpo's 14 study-abroad programs. The Cambridge, England program is especially recommended. While there, students have exciting opportunities to visit places where the writers they have studied lived and wrote. Students can also take advantage of programs in New York, Chicago, and Washington, D.C.

Chicago Arts Program:

The [Chicago Arts Program](#) is a 15-week semester of immersion in the Chicago artworld. The Program is designed for college students with a strong interest in the language, visual, performing, media and commercial arts, as well as arts education and community outreach.

Students live and study in Chicago, and work at a part-time [internship](#). Participants attend events in a variety of artistic media, meet and interview guest artists and arts professionals, and write about and discuss practical and theoretical issues. [Click here for more information.](#)