

English Alumni Survey: Life After Brown

What can be done with a degree in English? In September 2007, the English Department decided to undertake a project to gather information about the paths our concentration graduates have taken and to discover how the years studying English at Brown have influenced their lives.

We asked English concentration alumni from the classes of '99 to '07: Where are you now? Where did your degree in English lead? How has the study of literature informed your life after Brown? We were curious about the diversity of career paths our English alumni have experienced.

We received more than 100 responses. The answers were surprising, compelling, and sometimes poignant, and they are a testament to the value of pursuing a liberal arts education at Brown. We want to share them, anonymous and mostly unedited, with the Brown community. Here are the responses.

Law

I write in response to your question about the influence of my undergraduate education in English literature on my personal and professional life. (By the way, I think this project is a great idea.) I graduated in 2002 with a double concentration in Literatures in English and Political Science. Like many English majors, no doubt, I wrestled with the idea of going on to a Ph.D. and pursuing an academic career (and I still toy with the idea). However, after a year in Buenos Aires, Argentina, working on a legal reform project and another year in San Francisco working in the immigration law field, I enrolled in law school (also like many former English majors). I graduated from law school in May 2007 and am now a law clerk to a federal judge in Manhattan.

As many students undoubtedly know, a background in English is excellent training for law school and a legal career. The study of literature through close reading, detailed textual analysis, is invaluable when one is later faced with parsing a complicated statute or challenging the assumptions latent in an argument. Having familiarity with closely analyzing diction, word choice, and tense, for example, greatly assists one in the close textual analysis that is required in the law. In addition, the familiarity with literary theory that all Brown English concentrators will likely have is useful in approaching policy questions and issues of power in the law through a critical lens. Many of the same theories, such as post-structuralism, new historicism, and feminist criticism, which dominate literary theory, today are also vibrant in legal theory. An awareness of how language reflects and structures power provides law students with a critical and often insightful approach to many issues in the law.

In addition, a background in English has helped me remain an active, inquisitive reader in other parts of my life. I often revisit novels and poetry that I encountered in college in the evenings (particularly when the monotony of reading cases begins to wear me down). Just this weekend I attended the *New Yorker* festival and listened to Jonathan Safran Foer and Ian McEwan discuss the craft of writing and the state of fiction today. A concentration in English Literature virtually ensures that one will be perpetually interested in and draw lessons from literature and the humanities in general. Thank you for soliciting my input! – AL, '02

Academic/Education

I graduated in May '06, and I am currently working on a Master's in Professional Writing at the University of Oklahoma (May '08 graduation date). I'm a graduate assistant in OU's Dept. of Journalism and Mass Communications currently finalizing a study on the inconsistencies of communication channels used by underrepresented minorities. We were able to focus our research primarily on the dissemination of health information from the government to the Native American tribes of Oklahoma via online resources. (The explanation is lengthy!) Hopefully we will be presenting our findings and recommendations at national and international conferences in the upcoming year; it's been an exciting endeavor.

On the side, I am also employed by the student newspaper as a columnist and sports reporter. I finished out my NCAA track eligibility here last year during my first year of the Master's program, if that's relevant, as well. Great to hear from the department. I've been back to visit a few times and have always made it a point to walk by, even if just to take a look. – JR, '06

Arts & Entertainment

I graduated in '02 with a creative writing honors thesis and went on to work as the features reporter for the Brooklyn *Daily Eagle*, which was just about as fun a job as anyone could ask for. Running around Brooklyn chasing stories all day, seeing my name in print every morning at the newsstand—it was fantastic. After that, I applied to graduate school and was accepted into the screenwriting program at the USC School of Cinema-Television. I moved to Venice Beach with my then-boyfriend (now fiancé, also a Brownie, English '00) and jumped into the film business. Three years later, I have my MFA and am lit manager at a small boutique management company in Santa Monica. I recently finished my first film, a feature documentary called *I LOVE HIP HOP IN MOROCCO*, which is playing on the festival circuit right now. By day, I work as a trailer editor for Fox Searchlight and various other clients; by night I work on scripts, films, music videos, etc. All this is fun stuff that I hope will gradually become my full-time occupation. It's been a long journey but I owe much to my experiences at Brown! – JN, '02

Business/Corporate/IT

My English studies at Brown helped me become a better communicator and deepened my love of the written word. The ability to communicate persuasively and succinctly has helped me in everything I've done since graduating in 1999. As an undergrad, I taught myself web design and parlayed that into my first job--technology consulting at IBM. Working with complicated technology in that role heightened the importance of clearly communicating with clients. I later went to business school at MIT, where the ability to express myself in vigorous classroom debates was very useful. I'm currently an executive at a major financial services company and I rely on my Brown training to compose business briefs and to articulate the rationale for new business ventures.

I would study English again in a heartbeat. I keep Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" and Shakespeare's "Sonnet 29" at my office and refer to them regularly. Though I make my career in business, my first love will always be literature. – JC, '99

Law

I currently work as a research attorney for the Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court in Los Angeles. My English literature degree has helped me immensely in my legal writing but also in shaping my legal career. My passion for the written word has led me to strive to improve the quality of education for kids in our inner cities by working as an education attorney advocating for better services and resources for youth in public schools. In my present position, I coordinate the court's education program, linking foster and delinquent children with educational attorneys and resources as well as advising the presiding judge on how to improve the juvenile delinquency and dependency systems. – SO, '00

Publishing/PR/Journalism

What a fun project! On more than one occasion during college, when I told people I was majoring in English, they'd reply, "Oh, so you're interested in working in food service?" So I'm glad to have the opportunity to set the record straight!

For several years after college, I worked as a research assistant in an HIV clinic. This seems unrelated to an English degree, but in fact, being a careful reader and a clear, persuasive writer was incredibly important. I had to keep abreast of the relevant literature, which often required parsing "doctor-speak" and translating it into everyday language for patients. I wrote pamphlets and other patient literature. I also wrote papers for medical journals.

After that stint, I began working as a freelance journalist, which is, four years later, still what I'm doing. I am the luckiest person in the world. I get to learn about something new every day, I get to go out and meet all kinds of people with all kinds of fascinating lives, and then I get to write stories about it! I'm also currently earning my MFA in creative nonfiction. Journalism in all its forms is obviously related to an English degree. I've done all kinds of journalism, including straightforward "inverted pyramid" news reporting, features, profiles, book reviews; but it's narrative journalism that's my real passion. Narrative and long-form journalism, in particular, is incredibly satisfying in a "literary" way: attention to language, symbolism, character development. I also believe strongly that being a good writer requires being a good reader, and my foundation at Brown has been essential to my development as a well-read--and carefully-read--writer. – BS, '01

Medicine & Social Services

Interesting question. I graduated in 1999 with my BA in English. While at Brown, I debated whether to major in English or Psychology. I was certainly more passionate about English, literature, and writing during my time in college, but felt as though career-wise, I would tend more towards psychology. I went to my advisor, Calvin Goldscheider, a professor in the Sociology and Judaic Studies departments. He advised me to concentrate in what I wanted to, and to sort out my career stuff afterwards. This was some of the best advice I've been given. I hedged my bets a bit, taking several psychology courses and orienting volunteer work around social service/psychology (I volunteered at Samaritans, a crisis hotline, my senior year, which was a terrific experience).

Well, eight years after graduating from Brown with a degree in English, I got my Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology. I am on my way towards a career as a clinician and hopefully part-time

researcher/policy leader. I would argue that my degree in English helped me more than even psychology would have -- I learned how to write, and write quickly and efficiently. I learned how to speak articulately in front of groups (something influenced strongly by having mostly small, discussion-oriented classes). And I gained a better sense of the breadth and depth of human experience. All of these facets of my English education were invaluable to me in graduate school, and I hope, beyond. – DL, '99

Business/Corporate/IT

I graduated in '03 and I spent several years working part time in offices, doing freelance web design and devoting most of my time to writing fiction. I'm currently peddling a novel and some stories, with the long-term goal of making a living as a writer through some combination of publishing and teaching. Nowadays, to pay the bills I work in the investor relations department of a very large hedge fund. You can tell anxious parents I make fine money and landed the job because Brown's English department helped make me an effective and articulate communicator... though I will eventually move to a more stereotypical English major career. Hope all is well in Brown-land. -- JM, '03

Law

I graduated from Brown in 2000. Right after college I worked at a policy organization in New York City, first as an assistant to the president and development director and later as a policy analyst. As a policy analyst I worked with a great deal of lawyers on voting rights legislation at the federal and state levels, and I decided to go to law school as a result. I went west to Stanford Law School in 2003 and graduated from Stanford in May 2006. While at Stanford I worked at a civil rights organization and a legal services organization and did clinical work on Supreme Court litigation and workers' rights. Last year I clerked for a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, the federal appellate court of the western states. This year I am clerking again for a federal judge, this time for a judge on the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California. My wife--also a Brown English major--and I live in San Francisco and hope to stay in the Bay Area.

I've had many jobs and internships since graduating from Brown with a degree in English, but none of them involved literature. All of them, however, required a great deal of writing, from grant proposals, draft speeches, and model legislation to legal memos and judicial opinions. Good writers--those who can write coherently, and communicate complex ideas in a straightforward, easily accessible manner--are always in high demand. I consider myself a fairly good writer, and much of that I credit to my study of literature and frequent writing about literature as a student. More than anything, I think good readers tend to make good writers, and my time at Brown involved lots of enjoyable reading. – JT, '00

Arts & Entertainment

Right now I have two part-time jobs and a dance career. I am working as the head of the dance department for a teaching artist organization in the Bronx. I am in charge of professional development for dance educators that work with our program; I also observe and "coach" teachers in a desired area of growth. My other job is teaching Freshman Seminar, Ancient History, and Arts and Activism at a small public high school in the Bronx. I write creatively in my free time and

rehearse and perform modern dance in New York. Since graduating from Brown I have received an M.F.A. in Dance Performance from Ohio State University. This is my second year working, living, dancing in New York and I love it.

The question posed about what to DO with an English degree is a curious one... Life is reading and writing. Life is about interpreting the world around us, making observations, thinking critically, and acting creatively. My passion for reading and writing informs everything that I do. I have taught dance history at the college level and I have written a thesis about two choreographers who use dance as a catalyst for social change. I teach the youth and adults that I work with from the sure-footed stance that reading and writing are important and integral to our existence in this ever-evolving world, and I keep learning . . . With gratitude and humility, AC, '01

Academic/Education

My undergraduate degree in English has proven very relevant to life after graduation: in May 2007, I earned my Ph.D. in English from Yale. As I embarked on my own research and (especially) as I taught introductory English classes and seminars, I thought back often on the inspirational examples set by my professors at Brown. My concentration in English has guided my work outside academe, as well. In my current job as a writer and consultant for a charitable foundation, I certainly draw on the research and writing skills I developed at Brown. – RB, '00

Business/Corporate/IT

What a wonderful idea! I remember being so frustrated as an English major at Brown, when people asked "so what are you going to do with that?" and/or assumed I was going into teaching (a great profession, but not what I was interested in.)

I think I have a pretty good and helpful story to share. I started as a newspaper reporter at the *Providence Journal*, left, had no idea what I wanted to do next, ended up getting into PR/communications at a great biotechnology company....and I took just two (very easy) science classes at Brown. I never once heard of/thought of/was exposed to the idea of going into public relations at Brown. I only happened upon it as an excellent career choice for English majors/writers after the fact. – EE, '01

Publishing/PR/Journalism

I think this is a very worthy project and am happy to participate. My degree in English led me to a career in book publishing. A few weeks after I graduated from Brown in 1999, I began working as an editorial assistant at Scribner, the literary imprint of Simon & Schuster. My experience doing very close critical readings at Brown was instrumental in helping me edit works of both fiction and nonfiction in my four years at Scribner, and it continues to be instrumental as I've switched from the book buying (publishing house) side of the equation to the book selling (literary agent) side. As a literary agent, I help authors conceptualize their books and I edit their book proposals. A good proposal contains the same essential ingredients as a well-constructed English paper: a compelling argument that is articulated clearly and logically. I also represent fiction, and so those close fiction reading skills continue to be useful as well. -- RS, '99

Law

This sounds like a great idea. I chose English after taking a wonderful Intro to Shakespeare class my freshman spring semester (taught by visiting faculty, but she was great). I had been feeling a little lost academically (and maybe socially too) at school and this was the first class where I felt really excited to go to class and to participate. I had read Shakespeare in high school, but this class really opened my eyes to the beauty of Shakespeare's plays, and it was a great way to jump start my Shakespeare library!

I ended up double-majoring in history and English and then applied to law school--graduating from Columbia Law in '02. I worked at a large multinational firm in NY for three years before relocating with my husband to San Diego, where I work at a smaller ("lifestyle") firm out here.

What I loved about the English department was the wealth of knowledge that the professors had, how accessible they were (even having dinners and movie nights at their houses for their students), and the great books they introduced me to. In terms of career, being an English and history major also helped me become a more critical reader, to learn to write persuasively and succinctly, and also to skim (a very important skill in lawyers' lives). When there is a whole book assigned for the next class in two days + taking three such classes in a semester = reading 700 pages in two days, and you cherish your sleep as much as I do, you learn to read very fast.

Great books also become friends for the rest of your life. Some old favorites have helped me through many rough times during law school and beyond. – KH, '99

Business/Corporate/IT

After a few years working in case management and development for local social service non-profits, I fell into an entry-level job as a foundation assistant at a philanthropic management company. My company works with several private foundations, providing financial, administrative, grant review and consulting services to our clients on an as-needed and contractual basis. I've moved up in the ranks fairly quickly, and I've progressed to a junior program associate position. Basically, I serve as the point of contact for non-profits looking to apply to my client foundations for funding. I process the proposals, set up interviews and site visits, conduct due diligence measures, and review and rank proposals based on the strength of the non-profit organization and the fit with my client's mission. These observations are usually compiled into short, succinct summaries for the trustees of my clients to read and take into consideration while making their grantmaking decisions. It is still strange to be working on the other side of the fence, and by that I mean working with the folks that are giving money away rather than the ones that are asking for money, but I feel that I am doing good in my little niche of the world. I like to think I'm having an impact on a much broader range of agencies working toward social equity and positive change than I would from a single agency's development office. I still write creatively and read voraciously, and I use my time on the commuter rail to devour my local library's fiction section. I am still working my way through my undergrad book list from one of my Brown professors. I'd like to think that my time on College Hill helped me combine my intellectual abilities, critical skills, and social conscience into a rewarding career.

-- YS, '01

Other

I graduated from Brown University in 2006 with a degree in Literatures and Cultures in English. I remember going to the English Department at the onset of my final semester and requesting to change my area of focus from the generic "American Literature" to "Book History," my true literary interest. Jane Donnelly asked me, "You know this won't appear anywhere on your diploma, that it will only change anything in your head?" I said, "That's where it matters."

My English degree continues to reflect my internal passion for literature, but so far I've spent my career on my external passion for helping people. I organize Rhode Island's grassroots coalition of patients, caregivers, and healthcare providers advocating for the advancement of discourse, research, and policy related to medical marijuana. Right now I do everything from leading patient meetings, to writing monthly newsletters, to keeping the budget, to updating Rlpatients.org. I still read books at night though! – JS, '06

Academic/Education

I graduated with a double concentration in English and medieval studies. The year after I graduated I worked at Brown's Career Services office, while my fiancé finished his last year of an architecture M.A. at RISD. Then we got married and I went to Cambridge, England, to do a one-year M.Phil. in Medieval English Literature at Selwyn College, on a Craig-Cambridge grant from Brown. That year, I applied to several American Ph.D. programs and got into Yale among a few others. In Sept. 2005, I started the 5-year English Ph.D. program here at Yale, and the next year was accepted for the Medieval Studies M.Phil. program where in combination with two years of English (MA) coursework I do a year of interdisciplinary medieval coursework, with the extra funding. SO: I am a third year now, finishing up courses next semester, and then starting Fall 2008 I will be teaching, handing in my prospectus and beginning to write my dissertation. Then just three years to go until I am on the job market and being professorial!

I've stayed in touch a bit with Geoffrey Russom and Beth Bryan and see them at conferences every now and then. I've also kept in touch with Amy Vines, my TA sophomore year, and am so proud of her great job in Greensboro. Next March, I'm looking forward to visiting Brown for a medieval studies conference that rotates between Yale, UConn, and Brown. Also you might like to know that I took the best two chapters of my senior honors thesis and presented them as a paper at a conference in Wales, and that's being published in a collected essays volume due out 2008. So all those late nights (not partying) senior year were worth it! Also, the editor of that volume asked me to write a related article for a Boydell and Brewer Companion to Julian of Norwich, also due out in 2008. So tell those seniors not to underestimate their thesis, and milk it for all it's worth!

Hope that's helpful. I would be curious to hear all the results you get in too. When I come for the 5-year reunion I will stop in and say hi! – LM, '03

Arts & Entertainment

I'm currently working as a writer and Olympic Researcher for NBC. For the past few years I've been sent around the world to cover various world championships and World Cup events to learn athletes' background stories across a number of Olympic sports. In 2008, I'll be covering my third

Olympics as I move closer to my goal of being an accomplished and recognized sports writer. I write frequently for NBCSports.com and NBCOlympics.com and have written a number of freelance pieces for a national basketball magazine. I'm also an Emmy Award-winner, which I won for my role in NBC's coverage of the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens (this is one of my favorite things to brag about).

In addition to keeping me focused on the craft of writing, I think that studying English at Brown helped expose me to a number of different literary styles that influenced many of the choices I've made in my writing along the way. Hope that this helps with your project. – MS, '00

Medicine & Social Services

After graduating from Brown undergrad with a B.A. in English and American Literature, I went to Brown Medical School to get an M.D. Even though I am not involved in the field of literature directly any longer, much of my work in medicine hinges around the skills I developed in getting my B.A. Specifically, I have found that most of my research and many of my projects extend beyond the science of medicine to the socio-political, if not philosophical, aspects of the practice of medicine in the U.S. and abroad. I have written papers on the end of life experience in Hispanic populations, I recently wrote six encyclopedia entries on the history of medicine (including "The Social Construction of Disease" and "Cervical Cancer as an Epidemic Disease"), and I am now heavily involved in developing and implementing a original curriculum for Harvard Residents to prepare for work in rural primary care in Chiapas, Mexico. For me, medicine is a tool I gained, but getting a B.A. at Brown, with much of the work completed at a JYA program in Oxford, taught me how to use it. – DP, '99

Law

I graduated in 2005 with degrees in English and international relations. After graduation, I received a Samuel T. Arnold Fellowship from Brown, funding a year-long independent research project in India. There, I conducted oral histories with survivors of the communal riots that followed India's independence and division in 1947. I am currently in my second year at Harvard Law School, and I intend to practice corporate law upon graduation. My English degree has informed every step I have taken since Brown, and my editing, analyzing, deconstructing and, most importantly, writing, skills have proved supremely useful. – PB, '05

Academic/Education

I graduated from Brown with a paralegal job at the Department of Justice in the Voting Section of the Civil Rights Division. I thought that I might be interested in going to law school, and paralegaling seemed a good way to learn more about the legal profession. After trying this out for a year, though, and seeing what lawyers' lives are *really* like, I decided to set these dreams aside and do something else. I then became the Northeast regional director of a young non-profit called National Student Partnerships. I worked with college students in different college campuses, supporting them in connecting the underprivileged to social services, English language classes, etc.

After a year of frenzied traveling, I started a job at an education non-profit called the Council for Basic Education, also in Washington, D.C. I worked in math and science teacher professional development, which included international comparative projects on how teachers in different

countries teach math and science. (I also have a strong enough background in mathematics to follow lesson plans and teaching strategies in the primary and secondary levels.)

Then, alas, I decided to go to graduate school. I am now in a Ph.D. program in American culture (like American civilization at Brown) at the University of Michigan. Since then, it's basically been school, school, and more school! Overall, though, there are many options out there for English majors. I've found that I've sometimes had to be creative in marketing my strengths. Having experience in different interests and extracurriculars helps, too. Thanks for this trip down memory lane. I hope everything in Providence is going well. – JH, '00

Medicine & Social Services

I graduated in 2000, moved back to NYC where I grew up, and started a job at Chelsea Piers in the Public Relations department. Having grown up in the West Village, rowed on the men's crew team and majored in English -- Chelsea Piers, a place where I could be athletic, use my writing skills and was close to home, sounded ideal. I spent six years working at Chelsea Piers in various capacities, eventually running all the public relations and the marketing efforts for the health club. Towards the end of my stint there, I applied to a handful of graduate programs in psychology. Having never taken a psychology course, I ended up in a Master's in mental health counseling program at Yeshiva University where I have subsequently gone on to begin my Psy.D., a doctorate in clinical psychology. I have continued to work at Chelsea Piers, now in the capacity of personal trainer, which, surprisingly enough, is ideal training ground for my future pursuits as a clinician!

As to how my English concentration worked its way through the trajectory that I've taken . . . I focused on queer theory and theatre, taking several classes from David Savran and a handful in the MCM department. During those four years I was introduced and began to struggle with concepts: postmodernism, poststructuralism, masculinity/gender, sexuality--from a theoretical, intellectual and academic, critical, perspective. I could have been majoring in the history of graffiti; however, this was what got me going, this is what I found fascinating. I should note that not only did I have the opportunity to explore all of these issues in the classroom, I got to live them on the crew team as we collectively and individually got to explore these aforementioned constructs--homosexuality, heterosexuality, masculinity, femininity . . . identity. My education became something that was alive --the work I did in the classroom had direct implications on the water in a boat, and the work I did on the water in a boat had direct implications for how I approached, viewed, and was viewed in the classroom.

Now, I'm about to begin the second semester of my Doctoral program, I've been working with gay men who are crystal methamphetamine users in a group therapy for the past year and a half, and I plan on focusing my dissertation on gay men and shame (how these two things collide in one identity, the role HIV plays, how the past 30 years of social and medical history have effected the body politic, and how gay men navigate and explode or are encumbered by these constructs). The fingerprints of my Brown education are all over the work that I am doing today and are instrumental in who I am, how I think, and the way I think about what it is that I am passionate about. -- DB, '00

Publishing/PR/Journalism

I'm happy to share with you the short history of my career track, if you can even call it that. These days, it feels like improvisation week to week. And so, here goes:

In the two and a half years since graduating from Brown as an English major, I have worked in communications, with a focus on the environment. Upon graduating, I led the media efforts of an environmental consultancy in Maine. I then worked as a communications consultant to the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) in New York, before taking a job on the public relations staff with *The New Yorker*. I have also worked as a freelance journalist: I contributed articles to *On Earth*, NRDC's quarterly magazine, worked as a researcher and ghostwriter for a *New York Times* columnist, and have a feature article forthcoming in a national design magazine. All in all, I've stuck with words and still have as much homework as ever. But is it rewarding? Absolutely. – BC, '05.5

Academic/Education

Since I graduated in May of '06 I've been teaching high school English in traditional academic settings as well as much less traditional wilderness settings. All the close, critical reading and analysis I did at Brown are very applicable to the high school classroom. I've also been working with urban at-risk youth, which doesn't directly utilize my English degree, but the communication skills I learned at Brown (both written and verbal) have been extremely valuable. – KR, '06

Law

After graduating from Brown, I took a job as a legislative aide to a State House Representative in Alaska (my home state). The job involved a lot of writing, both objective (writing letters directly to constituents and to government agencies, inquiring about problems faced by constituents) and persuasive (sponsor statements for bills, and communications to other legislators to persuade them to vote for a bill). I felt comfortable with these tasks because of all the writing I did in my time at Brown. The analytical and careful reading skills I learned as an English major helped me enormously in the part of my job that involved analyzing legislation and looking for areas of concern. Often a single word in a bill would need to be changed to avoid unintended consequences. I was also often called upon to write amendments to pending legislation, and attention to detail in the wording of these amendments was key.

Following two years of working a legislative aide, I applied to law school. I'm currently in my second year of law school at the University of Michigan. Again, the skills I learned as an English major have proved invaluable in analyzing cases and opinions. I've also found that legal writing has come relatively easily because of my college writing experience. One of the skills required for writing good legal briefs is the ability to tell a concise, compelling story to communicate your client's position. I think that being an English major enhanced my ability to do this. I hope that's helpful. – EM, '04

Academic/Education

I graduated from Brown in May 2007 with an A.B. in English (with honors) and an A.B. in human biology. I am now teaching English as a Second Language to undergraduates at Bilkent University in Ankara, Turkey, while enrolled in graduate biology courses on the side. – MW, '07

Other

I wish I had time to write more, but I just wanted to let you know what I'm doing right now. I was 2005.5 from Brown with Art History and English as my double major (focus in poetry). I am currently an Apprentice at the High Mountain Institute for their Rocky Mountain Semester. This is a semester-long program for high school juniors that involves traditional classes as well as expeditions for 5 weeks in the backcountry. I'm a teaching assistant in the English class and lead the expeditions as well. The website is hminet.org and all the information is on the RMS page. I hope this helps someone who is looking for work after graduating and likes teaching and camping! – SW, '05.5

Publishing/PR/Journalism

Since graduating in 2005, I've been working in media and journalism in San Francisco and New York, interning, freelancing, and writing as much as I can. I've worked as an editorial intern at *San Francisco* magazine, an editorial assistant to the books editor at *The Village Voice*, and presently as a freelance fact-checker in the research department of *House & Garden* magazine. I stay busy as a nonfiction book reviewer for *Publishers Weekly* and as a sometimes correspondent for a community newspaper in Queens. I learned early on that the publishing industry doesn't have a lot to do with the great literature I studied at Brown, but it has everything to do with the skills I picked up picking apart texts and composing essays. Whether working in books, magazines, or newspapers, the English degree is a great help just being comfortable writing and editing in many different styles, writing to a specific voice or identity brand, analyzing arguments, etc.

I miss Brown and the pure intellectual environment of college a great deal, but the skills I gained as an English concentrator are serving me very well so far. I'm strongly considering returning to school in the next year—perhaps to get a law degree, but more likely to go to journalism school. To do what I'm not sure—maybe magazines, maybe new media, maybe to report on human rights abroad.

I hope this is the kind of thing you guys are looking for! If you'd like me to expand on anything in particular, I'm more than happy to. All my best to you and the English Department! I'll be sure to drop in to say hello the next time I'm in Providence. – MM, '05

Academic/Education

I was hired in the winter of my senior year at Brown as a first grade assistant teacher for the Horace Mann School in Riverdale, New York. I am now completing my second year of that program, and as it is a 2-year program I will be looking for a new job in the spring. I am hoping to change course and am considering moving to fields such as publishing, marketing, copyediting, and journalism, amongst others. I have also been working for a literary magazine called *Smyles & Fish* part-time. I think my English degree, although not as directly applicable as an education degree, did help in getting hired to Horace Mann with no teaching experience at all, has certainly aided me in my work with *Smyles & Fish*, and will also aid in my future job search. If you need any other information, please let me know! – BC, '06

Arts & Entertainment

My schpiel: Since graduating from Brown only four months ago I have moved to Brooklyn and started working at a Brooklyn contemporary art gallery, showing the work of emerging and mid-career artists. – SH, '07

Business/Corporate/IT

Since graduating in 2005 I have done a number of things. Because I had a great deal of experience in teaching, I worked as a teacher in a private school in Washington, D.C., for my first year out. It was great to still be in academia (third grade level!) and to have the academic calendar, which meant lots of vacations! I had time to read, write, be involved in volunteer activities, and work on my personal projects. Although I majored in English, I knew that I eventually wanted to go to business school to get my M.B.A. For that reason, I took Econ courses and also Engin 9 and 90 during my time at Brown. Instead of staying with teaching for a second year, I worked at Boston Properties in commercial real estate. There I was able to learn a great deal about the corporate world and also use my writing skills! (VERY necessary in every job!) I am currently at Brandeis International Business School seeking an M.B.A. Although the math is hard, I find that my reading and writing skills are putting me ahead of many students who have those technical skills. If all goes well, I will be graduating in May of 2009 with an M.B.A. in international business! – TN, '05

Medicine & Social Services

First of all, I would like to emphatically declare that one can do/be anything/anyone with a major in English and American lit!!! Although it may seem useless (e.g., no one interviewing you for a job will ask you to act any of Shakespeare's characters), it in fact opens many doors. I happened to tailor my major to African American literature from the Harlem Renaissance forward. The bottom line for me is that reading literature is reading stories, and EVERY human being has a story. When one learns to read for depth, nuance, and connections to the influences of other writers, one gains a respect for each person on the planet. One learns how to build bridges where no bricks can be found and see connections where they are not readily apparent.

I am choosing to become a therapist, to listen to every one of my clients as if she were a fresh tome with binding waiting to be broken. A graduate in English and American lit could easily move into international relations or politics, teaching, non-profit work, astronautery, etc. Of course, almost every graduate of Brown will choose to go to graduate school, and this is where we specialize. But the bottom line is that with a degree in English lit, I can start a conversation with anyone because I have an appreciation for the story. To be able to start a conversation and to look for the heart of their story is to build a connection, and human connections will allow one opportunities beyond the wildest of dreams.

Sorry if that was a bit lengthy; pick whatever parts you like and discard the rest. . . . I am still (after 11 years) delighted that I was a literature major! – ED, '00

Other

I came to Brown knowing I would be an English major. It was only after I had been at college for a while that I started to have my doubts. What could I do with an English degree? Would it lead anywhere, or would it be just a piece of paper hanging on the wall, broadcasting to the world that this young man had wasted a great deal of money? My father asked the same questions. In fact, he had been asking them ever since I veered away from a youthful interest in science and devoted my high school electives to literature and history. To appease him, I signed up for a second major in international relations. As my time at Brown went on, I became engrossed by American politics and

realized that I had found my calling. Again I had the pangs of self-doubt: especially in politics, what could I do with an English degree?

I was initially drawn to the expository writing track of the English program because it offered me the chance to write a thesis with deep personal meaning. As I worried about the path I had chosen, I kept telling myself: Wait for that thesis--like any great undertaking, it will show you why you chose to do it in the first place. In a manner of speaking, it did. My thesis was a multi-format exploration of the impact of politics on my life. I wrote about my political awakening during the monumental miscarriage of justice that was the 2000 election. I wrote and rewrote a diary of observations of politics on a day-to-day basis, from the class- and nationality-based interactions of tourists in Europe to the struggle of a woman who immigrated from the Dominican Republic, worked to bring her children over, and then, unwilling to tolerate injustice in her new land of opportunity, unseated a corrupt incumbent to become a state representative. I will be the first to admit that my thesis was a mess. (Actually, my advisor was the first to admit that.) But it taught me a great lesson: Everything in life is a story, and to know the ways of literature and poetry and exposition is to know how to tell the best stories--the ones that entice, the ones that inspire, the ones that teach.

I took that lesson with me when I graduated and went to work on the 2006 U.S. Senate campaign in Rhode Island. We started the race far down in the polls and low on manpower and enthusiasm. As a young organizer making phone calls and knocking on doors for 11 hours a day, my job was to present the candidate to voters and engage them in the campaign. In other words, I had to tell a voter a story that spoke to him on a level so deep that he wanted to write himself into it. We built a powerful narrative in the campaign, the story of the smallest state changing the direction of the whole nation. And on Election Day, we found we had written the best possible ending. These days I'm a fundraiser at a grassroots advocacy group in Washington, and the skills I learned as an English major are still very much with me. It's my job to get people to care, to learn, and to give. I can make it happen because I know how to tell them a story. – AS, '05.5

Academic/Education

The day after graduating from Brown, I drove down to New York to interview for a position in the sales and marketing department at Random House. I got the offer on the spot and stayed with Random House—first as a sales assistant, then as a marketing associate, then as assistant to the publisher—for three years before I burned out on publishing, burned out on New York, and went back to my original plan: graduate school. I contacted my professors and dug up some old letters of recommendation that they had placed file for me at the Career Center, applied, went off to sunny California, and haven't looked back since. I'm now finishing my dissertation, applying for jobs, and hope to be a professor myself within the next year or two.

I tell every prospective grad student the same thing: The decision to go back to graduate school to pursue a Ph.D. in literature should not be taken lightly. It's not simply a matter of missing school and wanting to be back in the classroom again (although that certainly plays a part in the decision!). Grad school is difficult and grueling in ways that the undergraduate major is not. I would say that the most important skill for surviving an English/humanities graduate program is a high level of academic independence: that is, the ability to take the initiative in your course of study, to seek

out professors, sources, and scholarships on your own, and—most importantly—to set your own deadlines. In this sense, a Brown education gives you an incredible advantage, because I think our program really fosters this sense of confidence and self-reliance. – ES, '00

Arts & Entertainment

Thank you for your inquiry. I was a dual major at Brown in English and visual art. I am currently a co-director of an art gallery in Boston called the Judi Rotenberg Gallery. My perspective on pursuing an English degree is that it helps you improve your communications skills. Although my job is specifically oriented around visual art, my job requires an ability to write and speak with clarity and depth. Taking courses in Comp Lit was also useful, as it developed my ability to draw connections between seemingly disparate subjects or concepts. This way of thinking has certainly informed my ability to curate exhibitions. – KD, '00.5

Business/Corporate/IT

I am a financial advisor and manager. My sister, also an English literature major, is an attorney. English literature taught me how to do objective analysis. I think this skill would be helpful in any field. – AL, '04

Law

After graduation I took a job at Time Warner trade publishing, and then at the Civilian Complaint Review Board, where I investigated police misconduct for New York City. Following that, I went to law school at Brooklyn Law School. Currently, I live in Juneau, Alaska, where I am an Assistant Attorney General in the Civil Division of the state Department of Law. I practice mainly public health law. I think many of the analytical and writing skills I honed in my English major have served me well in my legal career so far, particularly the proficiency and comfort I have with writing long "papers" and reading and digesting written material quickly. I became an English major because of my love of reading and writing. Although what I work on now is much more "utilitarian" in some sense, I do believe many of the skills have translated. – EB, '99

Academic/Education

I graduated in 2000. I went on to become a product manager at various technology companies including Interwoven, Macromedia, and Adobe. Starting last fall in 2006, I left the technology sector and am currently pursuing an M.F.A. in Filmmaking at the San Francisco Art Institute. – DY, '00

Publishing/PR/Journalism

About a month after graduating from Brown, I landed a job with a division of the *Washington Post* called the Writers Group. I stuffed envelopes, answered the phones and sorted through George Will's fan mail (and, perhaps even more entertaining, his hate mail). After a year and a half I was promoted to assistant comics editor, a more than generous reward for my diligent envelope-stuffing. I've always been a comic strip fan, so it's a dream job for me. I edit, proofread and develop comic strips, and I read submissions from aspiring cartoonists. I try to figure out why a gag doesn't work, or why a whole strip doesn't work. I examine character development, pacing and word choice. I analyze comic strips in the same way that, as an English major, I analyzed novels, poems and films. If there's one thing an English major learns how to do, it's how to analyze. – KW, '03

Law

I am currently an attorney. After graduation from Brown in '99, I took a job as a paralegal for two years at a small firm in Boston. There, I discovered that I enjoyed the law, and I spent the next three years at Boston College Law School. While at BC, I found their dual degree program in law and education and pursued that, getting an M.Ed. in K-12 Educational Administration along with my J.D. Since graduation, I have been employed as a litigation associate at a large Boston firm. I believe my English concentration helps not only with the writing that I do as part of being an attorney, but also in close reading of cases and briefs. In addition, as part of a service effort at my firm, I tutor eighth graders in persuasive writing through Citizen Schools Eighth Grade Academy.

I am also (finally) embarking on a potential career as a novelist, having completed my first novel and gotten some interest in it. It just took me a while to realize it was something I was serious about wanting to do. As you can see, the degree in English can go anywhere. . . - LP, '99

Arts & Entertainment

I graduated from Brown in May of 2006 with a degree in English as well as American civilization, neither of which necessarily lends itself to a direct or obvious career path, much to my mother's chagrin.

I was very active in student theater production at Brown, and when I graduated I began by looking at entry-level positions and internships in theater administration in New York City. (No, I didn't start the job search prior to graduation, and it all worked out just fine.) I found an internship in the marketing department of a leading off-Broadway non-profit theater company that produces new works by American playwrights. After spending a season in the marketing department, I am now the assistant to the artistic director at the same theater company. I know for a fact that a large part of the reason that I was hired first for the marketing position but more specifically for my current position in the artistic department was because of my English concentration. My ability to analyze works of literature and express myself in both on paper and verbally lined up perfectly with my current job--and it didn't hurt that the degree itself was from Brown University. Working at a theater that produces new plays by American playwrights combines my interests and double concentration in ways that I wasn't even sure were possible. So have no fear, English concentrators, a job for you is out there! - BS, '06

Other

My degree in English lead me first to a Ph.D. program in English (which I left after earning my Masters) and on to a career in book publicity. They are always looking for good writers in publicity positions. I am actually in the middle of a career transition into organizational development and know my writing skills will be put to very great use there. (Anyone who has read a business proposal knows what I mean!) - KA, '99

Academic/Education

I am currently teaching high school English at a boarding school in New Jersey. My Brown concentration in English (with a focus in American literature) has helped me teach all different levels of the curriculum here--everything from a freshman humanities class to a senior creative nonfiction

course. The insight and skills that I gained during my time at Brown have helped me be a good enough reader, writer, and thinker to keep high school students engaged while simultaneously teaching them the mechanics of writing and the techniques of close reading.

I am also pursuing a Masters degree at the Breadloaf School of English through Middlebury during the summer months. My contact with my former professors at Brown not only assisted me in gaining acceptance to the program but conversations during the summer also aided me in connecting my graduate work with some theoretical readings I remembered from Brown. – NA, '05

Publishing/PR/Journalism

I interned at *Coastal Living* magazine right after graduation, then taught high school English in my hometown for a year. I traveled around and lived in Southeast Asia after that, then returned to the U.S. to complete my M.F.A. in creative writing at the Univ. of North Carolina at Wilmington, where I taught English and creative writing for three years, receiving the university's award for top graduate student instructor during my final year. I finished that degree this past May after completing a novel that I'm currently working on revising. I have an essay being published in a new anthology on women and choice that is coming out next week from McAdam Cage Publishers and I am a freelance writer for local magazines and newspapers here in coastal North Carolina. I am getting ready to move to New York for more of a professional challenge in journalism or publishing, and I'm currently looking for a job there. – ET, '02

Business/Corporate/IT

What an interesting project! Here are my thoughts. Eight years after graduating Brown with an A.B. in English with honors in creative writing, I run my own freelance writing, editing, and project management business. And, finally, I earn about six figures—a day I thought might never come!

I received my Master of Fine Arts degree in creative writing in 2003, working full-time during most of the program. From the start, I found my Brown English degree to be invaluable. I started as a receptionist in my first job and was promoted to the head of document production within a year. I then took on a production job at a publishing company, followed by an in-depth editing position at a financial services research company, before I was able to make the leap to freelancing. While working on site, I found that being able to discuss and analyze language, a skill which I honed at Brown, served me well. As a freelancer, I discovered that composing reports or crafting marketing copy depended on the same skills as writing a paper on a piece of literature: brainstorm, collect support, make an outline, write something (hopefully) insightful and articulate. I love being a freelancer. It's allowed me so many opportunities to grow professionally and work with organizations from non-profits to consulting firms in a range of industries. It's also allowed me the flexibility to structure my life around my growing family.

I would advise undergraduate English concentrators to branch out a bit. "Engine 9" was an invaluable course that prepared me to work with corporate and marketing clients, and my science courses allowed me to knowledgeably venture into the lucrative fields of medical and scientific editing/writing. A little knowledge on Web theory and architecture never hurts, either.

Most importantly, concentrating in English meant I spent my life at Brown just as I'd always

dreamed—reading and discussing amazing novels, meeting and connecting with new people, and enjoying the extracurricular parts of college life—not locked into the SciLi on Saturday nights!
– RF, '99

Academic/Education

I'm a professor of creative writing (fiction) at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. Prior to teaching here, I worked as a visiting professor for three years at Marquette University. I am the author of two books of stories, *Refresh, Refresh* (Graywolf, 2007) and *The Language of Elk* (Carnegie Mellon, 2006). My fiction and nonfiction have been performed at Symphony Space, read on National Public Radio, and published in *Esquire*, *Men's Journal*, *Paris Review*, *Best American Short Stories*, *Glimmer Train*, and *Chicago Tribune*, among others. My honors include the Plimpton Prize and the Pushcart Prize. – BP, '01

Arts & Entertainment

My English background (as well as my media art-semiotics background) from Brown has led me in various unexpected directions. I began working in film, but I quickly realized that working in film at the bottom rung of the ladder is similar to working in wood distribution at the bottom rung. Not very creative. Unless I was writing, or went to law school and business school to become a producer, trying to "break" into that business from the bottom up was not appealing. I went on to work for a popular political blog as an assistant editor. It was a mix of digital media and writing/editing, and it was perfect for me. However, most of the time I was catering to a celebrity, which is kind of like babysitting. I'm currently working at a live podcasting platform/social radio network. Online radio. It's great. I write copy for the website, blog about our content, and select shows to help promote and publicize. It has been a great experience.

Studying English at Brown has influenced me in everything I do. It has enabled me to write confidently and almost effortlessly, as well as discuss large ideas, argue, and influence people.

I don't know where I will do next, but I know my English degree will be integral in getting me there. Law school, film school, business school, perhaps becoming a professor or editor or web entrepreneur or author: They are all possibilities with my Brown English training, coupled with my work experience. Thank you Brown professors! You have given me a great gift. – HL, '06

Academic/Education

What a nice project! I'm Class of '05 and happy to have been an English major. I've just started the M.F.A. program in fiction at Columbia and also have been writing freelance book reviews. – CB, '05

Business/Corporate/IT

The shortest answer: A Brown degree in English will never hold you back from opportunities. Since graduation, I've studied law and computer science at the University of Chicago, education at Harvard Graduate School, and worked at finance companies and in the non-profit sector (where I am currently employed). The writing skills I learned at Brown have been a priceless asset in both my professional and personal lives, and my interactions with English professors are some of my most cherished college memories. There have been ups and downs during my career, but I can honestly

say that I've never seen a closed door or a blocked path arising from my choice of undergraduate studies. And at the worst of times, pulling a well-worn book of medieval verse out of an old box has proved to be reliable comfort. –AJ, '00

Medicine & Social Services

In brief:

Med School went well.

Resident in Orthopaedic Surgery at Rush in Chicago.

Vocabulary truncated. Replaced by medical jargon and toilet humor.

I miss being literate.

Hope all's well in RI. – RG, '01

Law

What a great idea! After graduation, I taught language arts to students with learning differences. It was rewarding to help students write their first 5-paragraph essays, to help them understand a Shakespearean sonnet, and to inspire them to read and to better express themselves. Four years after graduating, I enrolled in law school and discovered that an appreciation for language, deconstruction, theory, and a good story were vital to the field. Now, I am a public defender in Seattle, Washington. I love my job and I still find time to write and to keep my pen moving with a writing group here. – RR, '00

Academic/Education

I'm finishing up a Ph.D. in English at UNC Chapel Hill, where my focus is 19th-ce. American literature. I'm minoring in American studies and will defend either in April or November 2008. I'm waiting one more year for the market. My dissertation, "'Country Life within City Reach': Masculine Domesticity in Suburban America, 1819-1871," examines the ways in which early suburbs outside Boston, New York, and Philadelphia were depicted and popularized in print media. I hope to expand critical understandings of domesticity by demonstrating men's interest in the home space during the mid-19th century (sometimes for different reasons than women), and by identifying the suburb specifically as a space that was seen as the ideal place of residence for young mechanics, clerks, and merchants from the city. I just returned from Worcester, MA, where I had a short-term fellowship doing research at the American Antiquarian Society, and I'm back in Chapel Hill now, teaching and writing. I'd be happy to answer questions/email any English concentrators who are thinking about grad school. I went straight through and sort of wish I had waited a few years, even though it has worked out just fine.

. . . I visited about three years ago and was really impressed with the new English building, though I missed the his and hers front doors of the old building when I was there. – MD, '01

Publishing/PR/Journalism

I remember wondering how an English degree would be useful post graduation as well, so I hope this helps: Two years after graduating from Brown, I went to Sarah Lawrence to pursue my M.F.A. in creative nonfiction. I was actually able to use some essay and stories that I wrote for classes at Brown in my application portfolio. Since then, I've been working as a copy editor and writer for Martha Stewart's publications (*Everyday Food* and *Living*). Though an English degree leads to many open doors, I've found it particularly helpful in the publishing field. I wish the best of luck to all future English grads! – NN, '01.5

Law

I graduated from Brown in 2000 and went on to Harvard Law School. From there I became in-house counsel at an environmental group in Boston and then last year moved to NYC to become in-house counsel at the ACLU. So, clearly, my career had more to do with my graduate education. But I think being an English major helped me become a better reader and critical thinker, which has certainly helped in my career. I have maintained my love for literature and reading and am always reading a few magazines and a book. I think an English degree is helpful in analytical thinking and clear writing, which can really be applied to any type of career path. – JS, '00

Arts & Entertainment

I consider my English degree to be invaluable in my current career. I work in the entertainment industry, and all the literature I read during my time at Brown was essential in preparing me for what I do now. I learned a great deal about story and character development and I am able to put it to use every day, be it reading/writing scripts, editing, and even shooting. There is no better way to learn about the human condition and experience than through literature and I will be forever grateful for my education. – JC, '06

Other

brief response: started out as an engineering concentrator on a pre-med route and eventually graduated with a degree in english and one course short of a double concentration in ethnic studies.

have always been interested in diverse things and life after brown has been as such:

worked 2.5 years in NYC as business development manager for a new media company focused on the latin american, spanish and US hispanic market

moved to paris for almost 5 years: studied a year of french and photography, then opened my own business as an agent for fashion photographers

now working in switzerland as a professional argentine tango teacher and returning a bit to my pre-med roots: studying bodywork/therapy techniques, primarily rolfing structural integration and osteopathic visceral manipulation

have to admit it has been a rather long time since i have read something the general public would consider "literature," but the writing skills i use on a daily basis, esp on the business side and in

client relations, as well as in general proposal writing, visa applications, teaching, etc. the most useful class/experience for me was EL195 that i took with rhoda flaxman, followed by the few years i worked as a writing and rhetoric fellow. – MM, '99.5

Academic/Education

My use of the English degree fits the classic stereotype: This fall I took a job teaching high school English. I have always loved literature and first thought about teaching when I was in high school. My time at Brown expanded both my knowledge and my love of English, and teaching continues this trend. I am constantly amazed at the things I learn from my students--the adage "out of the mouth of babes" proves true daily.

I wish I could write more but I'm at school now and have 40 vocabulary quizzes to grade before lunch is over. I did want to write at least something, because truly I loved my time at Brown and really enjoyed the English concentration. . . . Best of luck with the compilation! – DD, '06

Publishing/PR/Journalism

I am so glad you asked! After years of enduring my father's worries and the comments of my parents' friends about where an English degree would (not) take me, I am here to report that it's never once held me back. In fact, I think it's been a great benefit to me.

I left Brown with a dream of moving to New York and breaking into the publishing field. Within a year, I managed to land a job with a division of Penguin Books as a low-level travel editor. I later transitioned into the "new media" department, editing web content and designing our electronic publishing workflow. I loved this role and particularly loved that it led me to travel frequently to our London and Delhi offices. I worked for Penguin for five years and can honestly say that I arrived each morning at work happy to be there and taking a deep breath to smell the newly published books.

After this, I moved to Singapore for a year and taught academic writing at an engineering school. The pay was generous and the living situation there felt lavish compared to New York. While in Singapore, I was able to travel to Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, Hong Kong, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Japan. I am now back in the U.S. and have just moved into a new apartment, unpacking all of the boxes that had been in storage while I was in Asia. Last night, I unpacked the boxes with my old Norton anthologies of English literature from my Brown days and put them on my book shelves. A thought popped into my head that I hope doesn't sound silly. The thought was, "Hello, friends. It's been too long since I saw you." I credit my Brown English degree with taking me around the world and back again. – SW, '99

Business/Corporate/IT

I'm fairly convinced that my lit degree from Brown helped me land my first teaching job. I had very little teaching experience, and almost no formal teacher training, but I had three job offers from elite prep schools when I graduated. I taught high school English for two years and then left teaching for the non-profit sector. I was a youth worker at a community based organization for a year and then became a program director. For the past two years I've been the director of

community partnerships at a "small" not-for-profit organization. I direct two programs, manage a staff of 17, and represent my organization on a number of community task forces and coalitions. Obviously my literature studies were immeasurably useful when I was teaching high school. (Literally: I kept all of my notes, and occasionally gave lectures based on my own lecture notes from EL 31.) My lit degree, or more specifically the writing skills I gained as a result of pursuing a lit degree, has also proven invaluable in my work outside of the classroom. Writing all those papers made me a proficient writer, which means that not only am I able to do my work (much of which consists of writing formal emails or grant reports) but I am also able to help fund and publicize my work. I assist with a lot of the grant writing and publicity at my agency and am more or less the in-house editor.

But studying literature at Brown didn't just give me practical skills. It took my generic love of reading and deepened it into a nuanced passion for writing as a craft. At Brown I was introduced to books and stories and poems that I otherwise never would have encountered. I still have all of the books I read for my undergraduate English classes, and I still delight in being able to pull one off the shelf mid-conversation when something sparks a memory of what I read long ago. For all that my undergraduate self sometimes chafed at constantly having to analyze texts, in doing so I learned how to truly get inside a text, to understand and to savor it. God, it seems so trite to say that my perception of life is so much richer thanks to my studies at Brown, but it's also true. I am deeply glad that I chose a literature degree over something more "practical." – AD, '02

Academic/Education

I spent each summer since graduating in '05 working at a real estate office in Cambridge, MA, and then using my earnings to travel as much as possible during the rest of the year. Last spring, I took three months and drove around the eastern half of the country. Instead of travelling this year, I am at the University of Chicago, pursuing an M.A. in the Program of Humanities, studying art history (my other concentration at Brown). – DT, '05

Medicine & Social Services

As an undergraduate I completed my degree in English as well as pre-medical/bio/neuro classes....mainly because I thought that being a doctor might be a good profession, but pre-med was no fun and I loved literature and literary scholarship. Looking back now, I basically felt intellectual "relief" with literature and muscled through those science classes. While finishing up Brown, I still wasn't sure which avenue to take--was leaning toward a doctorate in English but was advised to test out the waters first. I applied for scholarships and won the Craig-Cambridge fellowship--and so spent a year at Cambridge, receiving a M.Phil. (basically a British Masters with research component--i.e., thesis) in 18th-century British lit.

Long story short, professors Armstrong and Keach were right with the "testing"--I didn't like the loneliness of writing papers & libraries. I thought that the social interaction with patients was a better daily job for me, and so I entered medschool a couple months after Cambridge. I received my M.D. from the Medical College of Virginia and am now an internal medicine intern at Yale.

I would tell underclassmen and potential applicants to Brown that they shouldn't fear majoring in English if they are contemplating medicine. You learn enough biology and science in med school for

a lifetime. It also makes you no less of an applicant...in a way it "spices" you up in a sea of applications. Only 5% of applicants receive admission to med school, so demonstration of sincere enthusiasm for ANY subject can put you ahead. With all that being said, every discipline is miserable if you don't enjoy it. I can only survive 100-hour work weeks because I like talking to patients.
- DT, '02

Other

I hope that the Brown English department is as strong as ever! This sounds like a great project, and I'd love to be able to help. I'm not sure if my story is quite what you are seeking, as I have shifted my focus quite a bit to pursue the sciences. However, I have relied heavily on my writing skills in every one of pursuits... so I suppose my English degree has always been a huge asset!

After graduating, I did a part-time internship at an environmental non-profit, before moving onto a full-time position managing a volunteer program with another environmental non-profit. I stayed in that role for a year and a half, at which point I decided to return to school to finish the requirements to apply to medical school. While studying physics and organic chemistry, I worked in a molecular biology lab and assisted with research projects with a pediatric environmental health group. I recently accepted a job as a project officer with an institute that does research in global health, and I am looking forward to working there for the next two years before attending medical school. I ultimately hope to pursue a medical career (likely in pediatrics), with a focus on international and environmental health issues. - RM, '04.5

Academic/Education

After graduating from Brown, I took a job teaching English in Japan on the JET program. I lived there for two years, then moved to San Francisco to attend the creative writing M.F.A. program at San Francisco State University, where I am now. I'm currently working on a book of fiction, which will be my thesis. Also, I was a general editor for a book called *Surviving Justice: America's Wrongfully Convicted and Exonerated*, which was published by a sub-group of McSweeney's, called Voice of Witness. Finally, I've been doing some temp work for Google in my spare time for the last year or so.

If I might answer the question more directly: All of our knowledge about the world that doesn't come from direct experience, comes from texts (in the general sense, i.e., language). These texts (and for me they are mostly written in English) are the reason we believe that we live in a country called America, that the earth is a planet in the solar system, that we are currently at war with Iraq, etc. If an event is not described in language (text), it doesn't exist except in the minds of those who experienced it. That is, our society can't acknowledge it; it doesn't count as "real." Thus the people who maintain and interpret these texts (English majors, for example) determine the way individuals and societies perceive themselves and the world around them. - MM, '01.5

Arts & Entertainment

The funny thing is that my mom asked the same exact question of me when I graduated from Brown. . . . she didn't speak a word of English and wondered what I would do with my ENGLISH degree.

I am an alumna from the class of 2002, originally 2001. Upon graduating I returned to my native Los Angeles where I went about trying to figure out where exactly I fit into in this world. I tried to go the teaching route—that's what seemed logical for an English degree. I was completely wrong. It took several months for me to find an answer to the question and the amazing thing is that I realized . . . I could do anything. I work in the entertainment industry. I specifically work at an agency. I'm an agent in training. My goal for the last several years is to be promoted as an agent in order to represent writers and directors. It is quite amazing how my studies at Brown helped me in my career. I studied English lit because I loved it. I am extremely lucky to say that I love the film business and dealing with creative people. I use parts of my degrees everyday. Reading screenplays and making them better. Finding the right pieces and putting the puzzle together. Digging deeper is also one of the things that you do as an English major -- What does it mean? Reading between the lines of books taught me to sit and listen and read between the lines of people's questions and comments. It is invaluable to be able to feel people's reactions and to respond with intelligence and thought, not just a reflex.

Being able to communicate my love for writing and for language have been the most powerful tools in what I do. Day to day I realize just how lucky I was to have stuck to my guns and studied something that I loved. I find that most of our writers and directors are equally as crazy about literature as I am. I realize that I can exchange poetry with them, quote Frank O'Hara and continue the conversations that began outside of the Rockefeller Library all those nights ago . . . now with different people.

Overall I have discovered that the thing an English degree gives you is liberty. EVERYONE needs to be able to communicate. Having a voice and opinion is power. If you have that, the rest you figure out. I think English majors often find those careers that are non-traditional, because you can explore outside of the comfort zone. Simultaneously, there are those traditional careers that are possibilities. As I have now said in this note three times, the possibilities are endless. I love my life, which is my career, and I can't imagine doing anything else but working with film makers. – AA, '02

Academic/Education

What a nice idea. I would have loved to know that studying English at Brown would have lead to a career in film. I always thought I was too old to start on the film career track when I was at Brown, and so thus I studied theater, which I loved. Looking back, studying literature and theater was one of the best preparations for the film industry I could have had, considering that film is storytelling, and many scripts in Hollywood these days are influenced from books.

After graduation (December 2002.5), I spent two years as a whitewater rafting guide/waitress trying to figure out what I wanted to do with myself. After discovering an opportunity to assist on a film in March 2004, I moved to Austin, TX, and lived there for three years working part time in the independent industry in various positions. This past year, I was accepted into NYU's Tisch School of the Arts master of fine arts program in filmmaking, on a new campus they opened this year in Singapore. I am currently in my first year of the program and writing you from the set of one of my fellow classmates. Hope that's helpful - please feel free to write back with any questions. It's always good to hear from Brown. – EG, '02.5

Business/Corporate/IT

When I marched up Waterman Street from the First Baptist Church in a Commencement Day deluge in 2003, I had no idea what I wanted to do, now that the tassel hanging to my left off my mortarboard told me and the world that I was a grown-up. All I knew was that I wanted to stay in Providence for a little while longer. So I did. It took two months of nearly constant resume-sending before I got a break (by which time I had mastered Super Mario Brothers on the old Nintendo my roommates and I shared). I was hired as an office assistant in a paper company in Massachusetts. It was like being in a real-life version of *The Office*, minus (most of) the hijinks of the television show. Still, it was a great company to work for. I had wonderful colleagues, was promoted twice in the two years I worked there, and actually ended up spending most of my time there in—wait for it—accounting. (See, the question really should be: “What can’t you do with an English degree from Brown?”)

When I tired of accounting, which didn’t take long, I made an unsuccessful attempt to become a teacher, but due to a confluence of factors—a relationship, a potential teaching job, wanting to be closer to family—I ended up in Philadelphia. And as it turned out, days before I packed up my car to move, I was offered a writing job in development and alumni relations at the University of Pennsylvania. At Penn, I have done everything from writing gift acknowledgements to coordinating several weeks of filming for a video to conceptualizing a new website. Basically, I’m in marketing, and the product I happen to market is a university. It has been a great experience, and I encourage soon-to-be English alumni to explore development (or advancement, as it’s sometimes called), marketing, public relations, and similar fields.

Obviously, my English concentration has served me well in my current job, where writing, proofreading, and critical thinking skills are extremely important. But I think my post-college experience has taught me that I can enter pretty much any career I choose. Why? Because at Brown, an English concentration merely marks the area of your deepest intellectual interest, not the limit of your capabilities. Your Brown education trains you how to think—something no other institution does as well, in my very biased opinion—and encourages you to be well-rounded academically. The post-college job hunt can be daunting, but an English degree from Brown equips you very well for many fields. Even, as it turns out, accounting. – LV, '03

Law

I am currently in my last year of Harvard Law School, where I serve as President of the Harvard Legal Aid Bureau, the oldest student-run public interest law firm in the country, founded in 1913, and the supervisor for the ROAD (Reaching Out About Depression) legal resource team. Through these positions, I spend 60-80 hours each week providing free legal services to disadvantaged individuals and communities. Next year, after graduation, I hope to establish a community clinic for youth and their families in Northlawndale, Chicago, a community where approximately 98% of schoolchildren are low-income.

In many ways, my commitment to civil rights and poverty lawyering was formed by my time in the Brown English Department, where Professor William Keach first revealed to me a burning world of literature, a world aflame with personal human longing and larger human crises—and the radical energies of struggle. For me, studying English at Brown was integrally about understanding one's

relationship, and one's responsibility, to the social injustices in our society; in the words of Raymond Williams, finding "unity" between "the external and internal and continuing pressure," reaching deep inside for the integrity and strength to "reform and reshape." – LH, '01

Academic/Education

I graduated from Brown in '02 with an English and art history concentration, and completed my M.A.T. in elementary education, also at Brown, in '03. This year will be my 5th (!) year as a third grade teacher in the Newton public schools in Massachusetts.

Reading/literature has always been my passion--from childhood through college, and definitely into my life personally as an adult and professionally as a teacher. I bring my love and appreciation for stories and the written word into the classroom daily. In the teaching profession, we talk about how important it is to model the readerly and writerly life to our children: They learn to be better readers and writers by observing, thinking about, and practicing what real readers and writers do in real life. This makes for authentic learning! I share with my students the books I read, my metacognitive processes in making meaning of text: how my mind asks questions, makes mind movies, and finds connections between the text and my life, or the text and another text I've read before. The skills I learned from Brown English courses of reading actively, thinking critically, doing a close reading of a passage, analyzing word choice, and comparing texts certainly influence my teaching. These are skills I want my students to have, as they will serve them well through their lifetime. From the writing perspective, I teach my students to notice the craft that writers use, to love beautiful language, and to take risks and try a new writing style or strategy. This is made possible through my own exposure to and background of many varied texts and genres (to which I can credit my Brown professors!). So whether in my continued personal enjoyment of novels or through my reflective practices of teaching, I find myself using my English degree in more ways than one. It is my hope that I will teach my third grade students how to approach a text for both information and pleasure, to see the written word as a way to understand ourselves and the lives and cultures around us, and to so enamor them with literature so that perhaps many might choose to become English concentrators themselves in the future!

I hope this is along the lines of what you are looking for. It sounds like a great idea, and I know I would have benefitted from hearing about alum experience when I was at Brown. – TC, '02

Publishing/PR/Journalism

After graduation, I went to work for Pearson Education, a college textbook publisher. After working my way up the corporate ladder (including positions as a media producer, sales representative, and marketing manager), I'm now Acquisitions Editor for Developmental Reading and Study Skills at Pearson/Longman.

My job consists of finding new authors, signing them to Longman, working with them through the authoring process, and working with marketing and our sales force to insure that the books succeed. I love to read, and the thought of creating these books with professors all around the country that will help developmental students also learn to love reading motivates me every day. – KE, '01

Law

I graduated in '02 and moved to Japan, where I worked as an English teacher in a very small fishing village on the Pacific Coast of Honshu. Because I was teaching basic English, the skills and appreciations I developed at Brown did little to assist me in the classroom. However, in my large amounts of free time outside the classroom, I consumed every piece of fiction I could get my hands on and continued writing in my journal and composing short stories, two habits I was encouraged to develop by several of my professors at Brown.

After finishing my second year of teaching, a friend and I chose not to extend our time in Japan but chose instead to begin a long journey back to the states going West, without taking an airplane. We began by boating across the Sea of Japan on a Russian freighter and taking the Trans-Siberian Railway from Vladivostok to St. Pete. For the next four months, we saw as much of the world as we could and spent lots of time reading and writing. Since coming back from my travels, I entered law school, and I am now a third-year student at UVa, with plans to work at a firm in D.C. next year. Without question, the analytical skills I developed analyzing books and writing papers at Brown have proven critical to my success as a law student, and I firmly believe they will continue to serve me as a lawyer in the future.

Although some people argue that a college career spent studying English does not provide a skill set applicable in the real world, it is clear to me that those people did not study English themselves. For me, concentrating in English at Brown was one of the best career decisions I have ever made. Aside from honing my skills as a reader and writer, the study of literature exposed me to a wide spectrum of differing thoughts, viewpoints and cultures, and challenged me to ask questions and develop my own conclusions. More than anything else, these skill sets have taught me how to learn --and, as a result, my English concentration will continue to serve me forever, both professionally and otherwise. If I could do it differently, I wouldn't, and I would encourage every first-year student at Brown to end up in the halls of the English Department. – CJ, '02

Arts & Entertainment

I majored in English, took a lot of classes in Japanese lit/history/religion, etc., and did an UTRA with Professor Viswanathan, who recommended the JET Program to me as a way to work in Japan and use my abilities in English. I spent two years in Japan living by myself in a town of 100,000 people where I was one of only five to ten non-Japanese, teaching English in high schools and loving it. I would highly recommend the JET Program to anyone with an interest in teaching, traveling, Japan, or any combination.

After two years in Japan, I came back and worked in event planning for the John Kerry campaign in 2004. Kerry lost. I had to start over to some extent. I moved to New York and got a job at the Japan Society, a cultural non-profit. I worked there for two years but got very disillusioned with the non-profit culture of inefficiency and stagnation, so alongside that job I started working as a research assistant to a screenwriter.

That worked out beautifully. He mentored me and taught me about writing for Hollywood and then connected me to a job as an assistant for producer Brian Grazer when Brian was shooting "American Gangster" in New York. This was my full-time break into Hollywood. From the Grazer job, I got a job

as an assistant at a great production company on the Warner Bros lot.

All of this is anecdotal of course, but I'd say to kids not to obsess too much about what your degree says. If you're a thoughtful, resourceful, energetic person who can learn on the fly, then you can really work in any industry you want. – MA, '02

Publishing/PR/Journalism

While at Brown, I coupled my degree in English with a degree in history of art and architecture, and my career has progressed accordingly as a blend of the two. After graduating from Brown in 2002, I worked as an editor at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, where I wrote and edited material for the departments of development, communications, education and external affairs. While there, I advanced from the position of editorial assistant to that of associate editor. I was there for nearly three years, at which point I left to pursue a Masters degree in art history at the Courtauld Institute of Art in London. Immediately upon graduating, I was appointed as the production editor of *The Burlington Magazine*, which is a London-based academic journal that is widely regarded as the world's leading publication dedicated to the fine and decorative arts. While my training as an art historian has been the primary impetus guiding my career decisions, I can say with certainty that my degree in English has given me an added advantage over my peers. It has furnished me with the added skills needed to pursue a specialized avenue (i.e., art publishing) within the already fairly limited field of art history. – MM, '02

Business/Corporate/IT

I graduated in 2004 with a degree in English from Brown and no life direction. I wanted to change the world but didn't really know how. I also wanted to live in London, as I had spent my junior year abroad in Oxford and loved what I had seen of the Big Smoke.

I didn't know how I was going to make it happen, so I took a public policy internship at a think tank in Washington, D.C., for the summer and applied haplessly to jobs. I landed a year-long internship with the United Nations Environment Programme, which ticked my 'saving the world' box nicely. An added bonus was that it would be based just outside Cambridge, which was as close to London as I was going to get with no marketable skills and little experience. Plus, I would build on the journalism and development/political science work I had done at Brown. So I packed my bags and headed off.

Upon arriving at my internship I found that, to my great surprise, I had acquired marketable skills—research, analysis, writing—which were suddenly invaluable as I was editing the youth environmental magazine, which involved planning the issue contents around a quarterly theme, writing the majority of the features, interviewing, commissioning guest articles, etc. I enjoyed parts of the job, but some parts were difficult, particularly the ridiculously low stipend in a country where everything costs twice as much. I also decided that public sector work was not for me. I wanted the organisation and efficiency, not to mention the big paycheque, of a corporate job. So I put my crusading days behind me (I was always probably a closet conservative anyway) and went to the London School of Economics for an M.Sc. in health policy and financing.

I turned up at LSE not knowing anything about healthcare besides what I had touched upon during my year with UNEP. I plunged into clinical articles, health economics and hospital financing debates

with aplomb, and heard many lectures from really brilliant people. It was a rewarding year but a difficult one as well. I didn't realise how special the personal attention that one receives at a place like Brown really was until I experienced the LSE 'degree-factory' mantra. At Brown I met up with my senior thesis advisor every week, sometimes to talk about the thesis, sometimes just to chat. At LSE I saw my advisor maybe five times the entire year. During that time I did the recruiting rounds and ended up with a job at Monitor Group, an American consulting company that I had come across at Brown, and I started there in September 2006. What I like about my job is that I am able to explore different industries, develop my strategic thinking and business skills, and see my work have a real impact on clients. What I don't like about my job are the hours and the stress. But I can in all honesty say that the things I learned at Brown have helped, not only the 'technical' skills but also the softer people skills that are so important in a busy office. And, incidentally, I was interviewed by a former Brownie, joined with another Brownie, and this year, one of the new joiners is a fellow expository writing/creative nonfiction person! So there you go: Study English at Brown and join a consulting company.

I'm not sure where life will take me next, possibly back into something more public sector-related. We'll see. But I know I'm prepared. And a lot of that is thanks to my beloved alma mater, the English department, and all that I learned there. – CA, '04

Academic/Education

After graduation, I moved to Cairo, Egypt, to work in the Rare Books and Special Collections Library at the American University in Cairo. I was also accepted into the Ph.D. program for Middle Eastern and Islamic studies at NYU, but I deferred in order to continue studying Arabic in Cairo for another year at the French Consulate. I am now back in the U.S. having started graduate school and loving it. – MK, '05

Publishing/PR/Journalism

I've had an interesting path since graduating in 2003. The first year after I graduated I was completely lost as to what I wanted to do. So, I stayed in Providence and got two jobs at the Providence Place mall and another working as a victim of a chemical bomb at RI Hospital for a government-funded investigation they were doing into EMT response to biological warfare. That year I applied to graduate school in acting (I had been a theatre arts and English double concentrator at Brown) and I managed to convince the American Repertory Theatre in Boston to accept me. Their program is actually through the Moscow Art Theatre School in Moscow (even though it's technically at Harvard – apparently someone at a faculty meeting a while ago said, “We don't train butchers, so why should we train actors” – hence no undergraduate or graduate theatre degrees), so I spent three months living in Moscow. I graduated with my M.F.A. in 2005 and decided I needed to take a break from acting and that I would like some modicum of financial stability, so I applied for an internship at Blackwell Publishing. Three months later I was hired full time as an editorial assistant and have been here for a year now, helping to edit and develop anthropology, archaeology, and history textbooks, which I actually really like. I think my work as an undergraduate in the English department has been immensely useful to me, especially in my current job. It's really gratifying to help authors, some of whom have never been published before, realize their projects as published books. I've always loved books (biggest cliché for an English major, but also true for

almost all of us, I hope) and sometimes what the authors I work with need is someone to believe in them and someone to engage with their story outside of their little writing bubble. Being able to engage with their text critically, as well as personally, has been a great asset over the past year. I'd certainly be willing to talk to anyone considering a job in academic publishing. – DI, '03

Business/Corporate/IT

I graduated with my B.A. in English, with honors in creative writing, in 2004. Since then, I have been working in marketing and fund development for a non-profit educational institution. I've successfully combined my writing skills (working on press releases, newsletters, website content, grant proposals, and correspondence) with my love of working with people to get a job done (alumni relations, planning special events, fundraising campaigns). My work is truly valued here and I know this was the right career choice for me. Every day at my job has been different than the day before, I learn something new constantly, and I can't wait to find out what's next.

I feel strongly that the language and analytical skills I learned through studying English literature and cultures, as well as the personal growth and sensitivity I picked up along the way, have been great assets as I set out on this career. – AD, '04

Academic/Education

After I graduated, I spent two years in Ohio working on additional pre-reqs and then my Masters in education at The Ohio State University. Now, I'm at the start of my third year teaching at Princeton High School, a public school in Princeton, NJ. This year, I'm teaching sophomores in English II and freshmen to seniors in media studies, a course in which we look critically at how society shapes the media and how the media shapes our opinions. I'm also the adviser to the school's gay-straight alliance and the school's newspaper, *The Tower*. It's an absurd amount of work, but it's perfect for me. Best of luck with the project! – DL, '03

Arts & Entertainment

I am currently a talent agent at the Gersh Agency in Los Angeles. My English degree is put to use probably every day as I am constantly reading and judging scripts for my clients. Critical reading skills are crucial and the ability to break down a script is the first step towards evaluating whether or not I think it's a good move for my client. Also, quite simply, the ability that I learned as an English major to write a strong argument is incredibly valuable as I go back and forth on email with my clients and casting directors and studios/networks. I'm often told that my good writing skills are rare in the world of talent agents. We're not all blowing smoke like Ari Gold on "Entourage!" I hope this is helpful. – NC, '01

Medicine & Social Services

I spent two years after graduating from Brown in the office of clinical trials at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, where I worked with a group of thoracic oncologists in lung cancer drug development in the clinical setting. As of June of this year, I'm a member of the Mount Sinai School of Medicine's Medical Scientist Training Program, where I'm pursuing a combined M.D.-Ph.D. My study of English at Brown, particularly my focus on the literature of the medical profession during the First World War in Great Britain and the United States, has greatly enriched my life and pursuit

of a career in medicine. Curiously, I find more and more the texts that I came across at Brown influencing my manner of thinking and looking at the problems that I face, be it in a laboratory or with an eye toward a patient I may become interested in on the wards. I could not have been happier with my decision to pursue English at Brown. – ES, '05

Publishing/PR/Journalism

As someone who went through high school being a computer nerd, people were pretty surprised when I ended up with an English degree. But I think an English degree's flexibility really attracted a lot of people, including me. My first job after college was working for a non-profit artists' residency program. Those writing skills (thanks to four years of spinning endless numbers of crackpot theses into literary gold, or if not that, at least something similarly shiny) came in handy getting a job which required corresponding with board members and putting together an annual report. Having such a firm grounding in great art really made me appreciate the work I was doing for artists. Currently, I'm at a non-profit publishing company, doing editorial work, a pretty typical English major job (seems like everyone there is an English major). Again, the great thing about an English degree is the ease with which you can change your mind. If I'm not feeling publishing after a year or two, I can hop over to another field or industry. I'm not trapped (I do web stuff and teaching on the side), and that's important to someone like me who still has no idea how he wants to spend the rest of his working life. Sure, doing finance or CS also leads to awesome work, but I think the path an English major takes is personally more challenging and thus rewarding. – JN, '06

Other

I've been doing a lot of different things since Brown, but the themes are: writing in a variety of styles and for diverse audiences, critical thinking, and "connecting the dots" between sundry points.

I did a brief stint as a park ranger in Yosemite National Park, CA, which was fun, but was more people skills than writing. I then had a great opportunity to travel to Nepal, India, and the UK trekking and touring, and so I took it. Do these things while you're young! My first "professional" job was in high-tech public relations in Silicon Valley, a typical English major route at that time. I quickly became bored with high-tech which was, I guess, lucky as the dot-com world and our clients bombed, leaving me jobless in August 2001. The economy was going downhill due to Sept. 11 and the dot-com collapse, so I went backpacking around Europe by myself and wrote highly acclaimed (by my friends and family at least!) "dispatches" home. This was all right after Sept. 11, that fall and winter. I highly recommend taking some time to write and think post-college, if possible!

I then got a temporary job as a public affairs park ranger at Glacier National Park, MT. That was probably my favorite job, combining interesting projects and great location for exploring the outdoors. Definitely utilized my English studies there. I then went to work at Stanford in their religious life office doing public relations, website updates, newsletters, student group outreach and coordinating, event planning, and student advising. Stanford is a very professional and great place to work as well!

Grad school beckoned and I went to Teachers College (Columbia's education school) for a Masters degree in international educational development, focusing on both non-formal education (how we

learn from our families, community institutions, museums, the outdoors, etc.) and formal education. I built on my Brown honors thesis on travel literature and looked at how we learn when we travel, in national parks here and overseas. I took a class on "how adults learn" and culture shock is definitely one way! My "final project" for TC included how we learn from travel experiences, public-private partnerships, the "blur" sector (non-profits running businesses), social enterprise, libertarian philosophy, how to build human capital, the symbiotic relationship between economic development and educational development, World Bank studies on these topics, etc.

I also naturally started looking at education reform in an international and a holistic context, and realized that my classes on how one learns (many styles and many ways) did not fit with our formal education system here in the U.S. I took some classes to explore this and saw that other countries have more flexibility, so I started looking at school choice programs, here and abroad, that introduce creativity and options into the system. I am now working in Utah on a school choice campaign doing communications and a little bit of everything, thus combining my studies and my professional background.

I'm not sure what's next, but I am interested in staying in education reform, particularly reforms that value parental rights and choice and take into account everyone's different ways of learning.

Brown introduced me to these libertarian ideas and the importance of trusting individuals to make educational choices and being able to chart one's own path, and I am definitely applying those ideas now and in the future. – HJ, '99

Business/Corporate/IT

I graduated in May of 2004 with a degree in English and focus in expository writing. While at Brown, I took a number of journalism and creative writing classes. I also spent two semesters interning at TV news broadcast stations (Providence NBC WJAR and Dateline NBC in NYC).

Today (just over three years out of school), I am Manager of Public Relations for Office Depot, a global retailer of office products and services. I am one of four members of the public relations department serving more than 50,000 associates around the world. In my role, I am responsible for all PR activities, tactics and responsibilities surrounding the North American Retail Division (1200 stores in NA), Environmental Sustainability Initiatives and Products, Philanthropic Programs, Segment Marketing (women, multi-cultural and diversity), Furniture Merchandise, Local Marketing, Human Resources, and Information Technology.

PR at a global \$15 billion corporation involves writing, editing, distributing and communicating a variety of materials (press releases, profiles, bios, case studies, overviews, website content) received by the company's many stakeholders (e.g., media, customers, associates, investors). PR coordinates and oversees all media opportunities (interviews, pitches, press events, media tours, executive speeches). We are seen as the ultimate reviewer of all written materials produced by Office Depot.

I attribute my superior writing and communication skills, fast comprehension and unmatched self-discipline to the education and experience I gained while at Brown. Of course, the mere mention of

the name "Brown University" gets me extra attention in the professional work environment, especially in South Florida, but it is truly the lessons learned and knowledge gained while there that have helped me come so far and succeed in such a short period of time. Thanks! – MP, '04

Academic/Education

After graduating with a Sc.B. in geology-biology and a B.A. in Literatures in English, I enrolled at the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. I conducted research in industrial ecology, writing my Master's thesis on Earth's global anthrobiogeochemical copper cycle. I have remained at Yale for a Ph.D., studying under the tutelage of professor Thomas Graedel. My proposed research will spatially model the combined technological and natural stocks and flows of the major metals utilized in human society. My English degree has provided the reading comprehension and writing skills that I believe are essential aspects of good science. – JR, '03

Law

I'm happy to respond. After getting my A.B. in English (focus on modern literature) with honors in creative writing (poetry) in 2002, I spent a little while trying to figure out my life and mentally kicked around ideas of going into various professions. As much as I loved (and still love) poetry, I knew that I did not want to start off by pursuing a career in academia, so I tried to find other areas that would utilize the abstract thinking and analytical skills that I developed at Brown. I decided to give law a try, which appealed to me by virtue of its relatively close nexus to the work I had done as an English concentrator, its intellectual challenges, and the broad professional opportunities it offered. After a year as a paralegal, I decided that law school was right for me. After graduating this past June, I am now in my first year as an associate doing corporate transactional work at a large firm in New York. While my English studies certainly helped refine my reading and writing abilities, I credit my experience in the English department most with making me a well-rounded thinker, further developing and cementing my love of the humanities, and instilling a confidence in me in my abilities as a poet. Though I decided to become a lawyer, I still write poetry frequently and hope I will continue to do so no matter what direction my professional life takes in the future. – PS, '02

Publishing/PR/Journalism

Sounds like a great project! I graduated in '04 with a focus in expository writing. While at Brown, I edited *Clerestory*, Brown's journal of the arts, and contributed to *First Person* (Brown's first creative nonfiction journal...not sure whether it's still around). Anyway, after I graduated, I did an editorial internship and then fellowship at *Mother Jones* magazine in San Francisco. Then I headed out to New York, where I was an editorial assistant at *Surface Magazine*--a fashion and design magazine--for a year and a half. While at *Surface*, I began writing for *Good* magazine (a really wonderful new publication started by Ben Goldhirsch, also a Brown alumnus). I have also been writing for a new preschool literacy show called "Super Why." It premiered on PBS this fall, which was quite exciting. After *Surface*, I decided to further explore kid's media and joined Workman Publishing as an assistant editor in their children's division. I've edited everything from a kid's bug guide to curriculum-based workbooks to books about writing for kids. I am also writing a young adult novel, still very much in nascent stages, but coming along nonetheless.

In terms of how my Brown English education helped me: My degree has provided an extremely

helpful social network. Publishing, magazines, and TV are filled with Brown alumni, all excited and willing to help one another find new and interesting work. Then of course, there is the critical thinking, diligence, and versatility that an English degree cultivates, all of which have been crucial to my various professional endeavors. It is true that people always question the usefulness of such a degree, but I can't think of any other department that would have prepared me better for the "real" world. Through my various classes--and fabulous teachers like Elizabeth Taylor, Jim Egan, and Catherine Imbriglio--I learned how to think creatively, challenge myself, and execute my goals and desires. Really I can't think of a better way to have spent my college education!

Hope this helps. Please do let me know if you need anything else. – ES, '04

Arts & Entertainment

Hello. I am currently an actor living in New York city. I have worked all over the country, and in 2005 I received an M.F.A. from The George Washington University and the Shakespeare Theatre Company's Academy for Classical Acting. I am also a self-employed contractor at a consulting firm here in New York, where I help with administrative tasks. I think my English degree allowed me to pursue a path of my own choosing. With such a diverse set of skills gained in that degree (writing skills, analysis, attention to detail, etc.) I felt free to be an artist and find gainful employment in business to support myself. I find that by studying literature I gained a viewpoint on the world at large, and by studying at Brown I was able to focus that viewpoint where I chose. In my case, theatre. Thank you! -- SN, '01

Publishing/PR/Journalism

I graduated in 2006 with a concentration in English and a focus in expository writing. While I always knew my writing classes would have a direct application to my interest in working in journalism, I was somewhat surprised to discover that the literature classes I took also played a significant role in helping me grow into the writer I am today. Reading great literature and looking at it closely no doubt have some impact on your own writing and I can say it has helped me mature my prose over the years. I am now working as a reporter at *BusinessWeek Magazine* in New York, covering education and business schools. I find myself using the skills I developed writing all of my English papers when I am sitting in front of the screen contemplating how I will structure a story. I think concentrating in English is a way to exercise your mind in analytical thinking. Plus unless you are getting a Ph.D. in English later in life, it is a rare and wonderful excuse to spend your days reading lots of great books. Now that I don't have this luxury, I miss it a lot! I hope this is useful in some way and hope all is well at Brown! – JP, '06

Academic/Education

I am on my way to becoming a high school English teacher through the Multicultural Urban Secondary English credential/M.A. program at Berkeley. I am excited to be sharing with my students what I learned at Brown about literature and writing, and my linguistic studies constantly inform my interactions with English language learners.

Aside from my career, my studies at Brown expanded my ability to enjoy reading and writing, and talking about reading and writing. In fact, that's how my husband and I first hit it off. We happened

to discover that we both admired the same author, which kept us talking for over an hour. The life of the imagination can really bring different people together. – JR, '02

Other

Following graduation, I joined Teach for America, a national organization committed to placing outstanding recent college graduates committed to improving student achievement in challenging low-income public schools. Through the program, I taught middle school language arts in Houston, Texas, for two years to primarily Hispanic students. I then moved to Tallahassee, Florida, to teach intensive reading to 7th- and 8th-grade students as part of a technology-based, small group instructional model designed to stimulate rapid gains in reading proficiency for struggling readers who had been retained in previous years. At that point, I decided that I wanted to magnify my impact in working to close the achievement gap on a larger scale, which brought me to my work with The New Teacher Project (TNTP). As part of the program staff of the Philadelphia Teaching Fellows (a local TNTP contract), I worked to recruit, select, and support a group of 125-175 mid-career changers each year to teach high-need students throughout the School District of Philadelphia. Most recently, I took on a new role as the operations site advisor for TNTP to support our 20 teaching fellows programs across the country in ensuring that they are instituting best practices with their candidates throughout the application process and are able to successfully monitor and track their progress towards meeting their contract goals. I am also enrolled as an executive student in the University of Pennsylvania's Master's in government administration program, which allows me to continue to work full time while taking Saturday classes towards my graduate degree. – KZ, '02

Publishing/PR/Journalism

I spent my first year at Brown thinking I would go to law school; I always loved politics and debating the issues. As I continued taking courses in political science, English and everything else, I became more interested in the politics of literature, particularly African American literature. As a result, I declared my concentration in English and eventually began to imagine a future as a graduate student pursuing a Ph.D. in English. But through the process of writing my thesis, I realized that I didn't necessarily want to spend the rest of my life investigating some obscure realm of the literary canon (no disrespect intended).

As a senior in 2005, I told myself, "I must go out into the 'real world' and see if there's anything else out there for me." (A bit melodramatic, I know.) So I moved to New York, where the book publishing industry is based, and found a job as a "rotational associate" at Simon & Schuster. It seemed like a good idea at the time. After all, I had always loved books. But the job didn't pique my interest. I was more interested in becoming a writer than in editing, publicizing or marketing someone else's book. After work, I would go to the local library and write my own short stories.

After seven months, I quit the publishing job and lined up a position as a 7th-grade English teacher at a prep school in Pasadena, California. This next job was an escape route from publishing more than anything else. I chose it because I knew I could teach well (I had done it with some success in the past) and, at the prep school, it didn't require a Masters degree or a 2-year commitment a la Teach for America. I would also be much closer to my family, who lives behind the "Orange Curtain,"

aka Orange County. During this period, particularly after the publishing job but before the teaching job, I should say that I was often a nervous wreck. I began to envy everyone on Facebook who had handy "grad school" info to list on their profile. Where had I gone wrong??? (More melodrama.)

Once teaching started, I began taking journalism classes in the evenings through UCLA Extension (sort of like the Brown Learning Community) with the idea that journalism would enable me to earn a living as a writer. In addition to my short stories, I was keeping up a blog that sought to dissect the news of the day, so journalism wasn't a total stretch. Towards the end of the school year, I was writing freelance education stories for the local weekly paper. In LA, there's an incredible community radio station called KPFK (90.7 FM), which is very welcoming to volunteer reporters. The summer after teaching, I threw myself into radio reporting and freelance journalism. Now, I'm an intern at *The Nation* magazine, hoping to launch myself into a full-time journalism position.

I'm not quite sure where the next years or decades will take me. The best advice I can offer is something Anderson Cooper said during his commencement address at Yale in 2006--keep taking steps based on what feels right. You don't want to climb the ladder of success, only to find that it's leaning against the wrong wall (trite but true). That being said, I think there's plenty of time to take a circuitous route in your career journey, particularly in your twenties. Have fun! - RK, '05

Business/Corporate/IT

I came to Brown certain that I would be an English major, despite the impracticality of it and my parents' concern that I was putting their tuition dollars to waste. For me, English was less about literature and more about writing. Whether defending my ideas about the literature read and discussed in class or putting my own original ideas on paper for expository writing projects, an English degree was about self-expression. I intended to pursue a career as a reporter, and an English degree seemed like it would help me down that path.

My relatively selfish pursuit of an English degree was actually more practical than I realized at the time. My English concentration, with a focus in expository writing, gave me a degree of credibility when applying for reporting internships throughout college; during college, I landed several internships at large news outlets (including the Associated Press) partly because of my program of study. But even more importantly, I had a compelling message when I began applying for competitive consulting jobs (on a whim) during my senior year. While economics and engineering concentrators knew how to build financial models, I was able to articulate complicated ideas clearly and concisely, and potential employers found that valuable; I believe my skill in that area was largely because I'd spent four years being challenged to articulate my ideas about literature and writing. I ultimately joined a top-tier consulting firm.

Today, as a first-year M.B.A. student at one of the top M.B.A. programs in the country, I'm constantly shocked by my peers' inability to express their ideas in prose. The world we live in relies on strong, clear communication, and it is partly because of my Brown English degree that I'm able to communicate effectively. It has given me an edge over my peers, and I do not regret my decision to be an English concentrator. - JW, '05

Academic/Education

It's nice to hear from you. This sounds like a great project, as I remember receiving similar questions as an English undergrad. Immediately following graduation I was a Helena Rubinstein Fellow in Critical Studies in the Whitney Independent Study Program. During the program I worked at the Dia Art Foundation, and afterwards I worked at the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum as well as at the Paula Cooper Gallery. During these three years I began freelancing for the *Village Voice*, *New York* magazine, *Flavorpill*, *Flash Art*, and *Artforum*. I moved to Buenos Aires for several months to study language and literature before starting a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature at NYU. I am now in my second year in the program and in addition to my studies I work on a performance art journal, conduct research for a women's public policy institute, and continue to write about art. – LC, '02

Arts & Entertainment

I majored in English with a focus in creative writing, and I graduated in 2001. Since then I have followed my passion for radio, which I developed working for WBRU at Brown, and have parlayed it into a career in radio and TV. I've been a radio DJ in Philadelphia, New York, and LA since graduating, and I am currently an entertainment reporter for a national gay and lesbian TV network located in NYC. In addition to developing the radio "bug" at Brown, my freshman year I developed an interest in journalism after taking Elizabeth Taylor's class on journalism. Other classes that stick out in my mind are my advanced fiction writing classes and memoir writing classes, both of which helped me to both feel comfortable in my own skin as well as learn how to escape my life through imagination. All of what I learned as an English major helps me on a daily basis as the basis of my job is communication. Whether being a radio or TV personality, producing or editing my work, and coming up with new ideas for my job, I owe the basic skills I developed to my majoring in English. Every English major, at one point or another, gets someone saying to him, "So, what are you going to DO with your English degree?" Well, my answer is that my English degree gave me the guts to dream, and hopefully through my dreams I've inspired my listeners and viewers on radio/TV to do the same. Thanks. Hope this is helpful. – BH, '01

Publishing/PR/Journalism

I decided to study English literature at Brown for a couple of reasons that had nothing to do with a career path. I wanted the quintessential liberal arts experience, I wanted to study something for the pure joy of it for what I figured would be my last chance, and I wanted to study something that would not pigeonhole me in any one path nor would it bar me from any future professional or academic choices. Graduate school is for specialization. To me, my undergraduate years were about curiosity entirely.

Interestingly, I have become a journalist for a daily newspaper, a career that does seem connected to what I studied at Brown, obviously because it involves so much writing. But also because it centers on trying to decipher what it means to be human, what motivates and moves people and what forces in their lives and experiences matter most. I think that is at the heart of studying literature as well.

My route to journalism was a circuitous one. When I graduated from Brown in 1999, I moved to San Francisco and worked for a domestic violence agency doing education with middle and high school

students in Oakland. I had volunteered for three years at a woman's shelter in Providence, so this was not a great leap. Then I moved to Jackson Hole, Wyoming, and taught skiing for two years. I was, officially, a ski bum. Then I went to the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, to get a Master's degree in human rights law. There I realized I didn't want to be a lawyer. I wanted to write. So I returned to Jackson and started freelancing for the two weekly papers there, eventually moving to New York two years later for a Masters in journalism at Columbia University. When I finished there, I started working at a small New Jersey daily paper, where I cover education.

I am sure that my time at Brown was essential to my learning to love words as I do. And I think it freed me to the idea of taking chances in my professional life. I think you can do almost anything with an English degree, because being well read and articulate are indispensable skills.

(N.B. . . Thanks for doing this. I think it's a lovely idea. And say hello to Prof. Katz for me!) – DS, '99

Law

I graduated in 2003 and am staring down my 5th reunion this May. Following graduation, I went to law school and am now an attorney. Currently, I am a law clerk for a judge on the Massachusetts Appeals Court in Boston. Essentially, I research, write and edit judicial opinions published by my judge and other members of the court.

My background in English literature has been of immense help to me in my post-Brown life. At the very least, concentrating in English taught me how to read and analyze text closely, think critically, and express those concepts effectively in writing. These are skills that I use on a daily basis and consider essential to success in any profession (especially my own).

In addition, my time with the English Department at Brown has instilled in me a lingering love of reading. I make it a habit to always have one non-work related book going at all times. Over the years, other post-graduate friends of mine and I have organized book clubs to provide an outlet for in-depth discussion of whatever books we happen to love at the moment. Now that I am no longer a student, I find I really miss the thoughtful, intellectual banter that I used to enjoy in my classes.

Many people have asked me--what do you do with an English concentration if you don't want to be a professor? My answer to them is: whatever you want. The general skills you will learn through the study of English will prepare you for any career field you seek to enter. How you utilize those skills and what path you ultimately choose is up to you. Please let me know if I can be of any more help--I hope you get lots of helpful responses! – DM, '03

Other

When I graduated I got a job at The Boston Consulting Group as a researcher. I worked as social network analysis researcher for about six months. After six months doing research, I decided to try consulting within the same firm. In consulting, I found my English skills vital as we were always building stories with our presentations, and it was easier for me as I was taught to think of transitions, vocabulary, structure, etc. People who had just studied economics or finance in undergrad had an easier time doing analysis, but they could not communicate their conclusions with ease.

After a year in consulting, I was having difficulty keeping up with all the travel and the long hours, so I decided to switch companies. The Boston Consulting Group had been elected the seventh best company to work for in *Fortune* magazine, so I decided to look up who had been #1. Google had been voted #1 because of all the perks they offer: free food, massages, good work life balance, and a collegial culture. I applied, and got into the Print Ads group which is a "start-up" within Google. We created a bid-auction system, where a company can purchase all of its newspaper advertising space. An Alcoa, for example, can go online and pick the *Wall Street Journal* on Wednesday, for half a page, and choose to bid \$400. If the newspaper accepts the bid, the ad runs; if not, the newspaper might suggest a different price point. Google brought efficiency to an extremely manual way of buying newspaper space. As opposed to calling each newspaper, negotiating a rate, sending them their ad, and then one month later, getting proof that it ran, with Google, you can bid on 20 newspapers in five minutes.

Next year, I plan on applying for a joint M.B.A. and Masters in Education. I would like to pursue a career in business but would also like to start my own non-profit one day related to solving the education problems in Brazil. – JB, '05

Medicine & Social Services

After graduating in 1999, having loved every minute at Brown, I went to medical school at Jefferson Medical College. I graduated with honors and then went on to complete a residency in internal medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City. I am currently half-way through a fellowship in gastroenterology at Tufts-New England Medical Center in Boston. Throughout all of my training in medicine, I have continued to write fiction, which has served as a nice creative release, and I am still an avid reader of contemporary fiction. Personally, I am happily married to a fellow Brown alum and we just had our first child, a beautiful, now 4-month-old boy named Finley.

My experiences as an English major at Brown, learning how to read critically, write effectively and construct theses based on textual evidence have all had direct parallels in medicine and have made me a better and more effective physician. While a major in English may not directly prepare you for any one given career, like electrical engineering may for example, there is no career in existence in which an English major from Brown will not excel. – DW, '99

Publishing/PR/Journalism

I chose English as a major with the anticipation of going to law school. I assumed that strong reading and writing skills would be an excellent foundation for writing briefs, preparing case studies, and performing all of the other common tasks associated with practice of law.

After spending a year post-graduation working as a paralegal for a prestigious law firm and then the subsequent year in law school, I realized that the lifestyle of a lawyer was not for me. Though I met my eventual wife during the one year I spent in law school, it has now been identified by me and my family and friends as simply the most expensive dating service ever.

Shortly after the law school debacle, I started working with authors on a limited basis doing PR. In the last 5.5 years, this "part-time" gig has turned into a multi-media literary PR network. We currently have three main branches: STRATEGIES Literary PR, the La Jolla Writers Conference, and

Writers Roundtable Radio Show. As I am sure this e-mail is becoming far longer than necessary to answer your question, I will not go into detail on each except to say that we have nationwide clientele and have the pleasure of working with some of the best writers, agents, publisher, and distributors in the country. – JK, '00

Business/Corporate/IT

Well, in the 16 months or so since I graduated, I've had two different jobs. The first was as a law clerk for an environmental land use attorney, and the second was as an environmental planner for an urban planning consulting company. Both jobs involved reading lots of dense, difficult to decipher papers and books, and writing what were hopefully concise and clear reports based on the readings. In other words, it's pretty much exactly like being an English concentrator at Brown. So yeah, all of the comments I got ("English major? Hope you like ramen!") turned out to be the cause of a lot of undue stress. Forming opinions and arguing for them, I've learned, is a useful skill, and one I got to sharpen at Brown. I do miss reading actual literature, though—Professor Egan's reading assignments were more fun than these technical reports I'm reading now. – HK, '06

Arts & Entertainment

I am a teaching artist for Dreamyard, where I teach drama (playwriting/acting/film-making) in public schools in the Bronx with an emphasis on literacy. I am also a freelance playwright and theatre director. – KM, '01

Publishing/PR/Journalism

At Brown I took a journalism course with Tracy Breton and did a thesis translating and analyzing from a literary perspective my grandfather's diary that he kept during the siege of Leningrad in World War II. At Brown I wrote for the *Herald* (mostly on topics I proposed to the editors and not as a staff writer) and in the summers I interned for New York-based Web sites, magazines and newspapers. I won the Besty Lehman Journalism Award in my senior year for best student journalism portfolio. And I had the Royce fellowship to work on a broader project around my grandfather's diary.

After graduation I took a job in New York with a financial newsletter, reporting and editing. Within a year our small company got acquired by Dow Jones, and while working as an editor in my group I started writing for the *Wall Street Journal*. In the meantime I freelanced for other publications and had an essay published in the *New York Times*.

Now, five and a half years after graduation, I'm still with Dow Jones--working as a reporter on a daily publication focused on alternative energy, a varied, interesting beat where I learn all the time. I am also working on incorporating my grandfather's siege diary into some literary and biographical and autobiographical essays that I hope to publish at some point. And I contribute to the *Wall Street Journal* on a variety of topics, including health, small business, alternative energy, and technology.

Brown's English department gave me the skills to analyze information quickly, appreciate beautiful language, write precisely and well. I remember my time there fondly. I've also met several Brown alumni in the journalism world and benefitted from their support. – YC, '02

Academic/Education

Thank you for the opportunity to get back in touch with the English concentration! I double majored in English and art history at Brown and began teaching English at a day school in Connecticut the year after graduation. I didn't intend to be a teacher, but I found myself drawn to the classroom and to the world of schools. This year marks the start of my fifth year teaching. I teach 9th and 11th grade English and try to inspire in my students the same love of stories that my professors inspired in me. I try to get my students to see that there is reason and purpose in studying fiction and that their inquiry extends well beyond the English classroom. English is about asking questions—of language and of each other.

I enjoyed my time with Professor Keach and Professor Weinstein, especially, and hope that they are doing well. I am applying this year for Masters programs and hope to return to the classroom as a student next fall. Thanks again. – HW, '03

Other

During a semester off, I worked for an English-language newspaper in Cambodia. Another semester off found me on fishing boats in Alaska. After my final term in Winter '02, I started as an intern at the *Atlantic Monthly*. My wife and I then moved to Indonesia, where she was a stringer for NPR and I worked for *Tempo*, the nation's largest weekly news magazine. In 2004, we moved to New York City. My first day on the job at the *Village Voice* found me interviewing folks on the floor of the Republican National Convention. I left the *Voice* after a year and a half for a staff editor spot at *Rolling Stone* magazine. This summer, I left *Rolling Stone* as a deputy editor and started walking to New Orleans. I have a little fewer than 200 miles to go. What will I do there? Not sure yet. But thanks to Brown (and a little place called Deep Springs College, from which I transferred), it'll be done with a commitment to making the world a better place. – ND, '03

Publishing/PR/Journalism

I graduated this past May, and I have been fortunate enough to find a wonderful PR/communications job at a private school in Stamford, CT. I have my hands on every single publication and communication that is issued from the school, whether it be emails to parents or our big publications, such as our annual report or annual, end-of-year magazine. I also write many, many articles centering on happenings, events, and notable people for the school, which are posted on our Web site and often issued as press releases to local newspapers. Furthermore, I also graphically design various invitations, booklets, and pamphlets. I am quite busy, but I am doing what I love most—writing! I am very fortunate to have pursued a degree in English at Brown. I have learned to write effectively and with eloquence, and I love the process just as much as I love the final published piece. – MM, '07

Other

Lovely to hear from you. It sounds like you're putting together a wonderful resource for students, so I hope that you receive a good number of responses. Below is a summary of what I've been doing since graduation.

Upon graduation from Brown in 2002, I worked as a literary assistant at Sterling Lord Literistic (a

literary agency). Most days at the agency were spent reading and critiquing manuscripts. I simultaneously worked on the conservation of photo negatives in the Walker Evans Archive based at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. This was a fantastic opportunity that was directly related to my studies in the English department at Brown (I wrote my undergraduate thesis on American photo texts from the 1930s and 1940s, one of which included images by Walker Evans).

In 2004, I entered a Master's program in the history of photography at the University of St. Andrews. I recently completed my dissertation and will soon begin working as the Assistant Curator of Photography and Media Arts at the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. -- AM, '02.5

Arts & Entertainment

I am a freelance stage manager. Right now, I'm an assistant stage manager on Broadway. I studied English lit because my parents wanted me to have a more "sellable" major than theatre arts (in case the theatre gig didn't work out). And even though it has worked out, an English degree enables me to do anything. As I am finishing my sixth year of working in the real world, it is nice to know that my degree can be used to go back to med school or law school, work in publishing, or use it as a stage manager when we dissect a play in the first week of rehearsals! English is such a well-rounded major for anyone, in any career. We all speak it and we all write it. Hope that helps. -- AP, '01
P.S. Take a class with Jim Egan -- early in your college career.

Publishing/PR/Journalism

I graduated with a degree in English and honors in creative writing, in 2005. Directly after, I enlisted with a volunteer program based out of Philadelphia. I moved to San Diego for ten months, during which time I volunteered at St. Vincent DePaul Village, a homeless shelter, in the family literature department. There, I spent my days teaching a preschool class and tutoring children (who were very disadvantaged and behind) in reading/writing. The other three days a week I drove across the border and volunteered at an orphanage in Tijuana, Mexico. During those ten months I often thought about the quote by Gertrude Stein that appears engraved in the stone of the English building--"and then there is using everything." I spent my entire four years at Brown trying to make sense of those words---they were always ringing in my head and surprisingly influential in my choice to contribute my time as a volunteer after graduation. Studying English at Brown made me more thoughtful and inquisitive; it made me realize how very fortunate I was and how much of myself I could gather to give back.

Currently, I am putting my English degree to more direct use in Los Angeles, where I live and work for a photography magazine called *Rangefinder*. The editor there was certainly impressed with my credentials when I applied, and after three months as an editorial assistant, I was promptly promoted to features editor. From day to day, I edit articles, interface with writers and photographers, and have even gotten a few bylines. I've been at the magazine almost a year, and although I really enjoy my line of work, I have plans to explore other fields now that I have valid work experience. -- AR, '05

Business/Corporate/IT

As a recent alum, it's still difficult to say where I see my English degree taking me in the next ten years, but one of the great things about an English degree is that it can take you anywhere. What you learn (primarily) as an English major is not so much the content of literature but the ability to think critically, analyze intelligently, draw conclusions and connections, and write with poise and ease. These are skills that are translatable to many professions and careers. I developed an interest in business issues, and I am currently working as a research analyst for a business best practices research process. During the interview process, my thesis topic and methodology came up more often than a discussion of the stock markets. What my employer was looking for was a candidate who could analyze articles, data, studies and draw insightful conclusions. The skills required to do that are no different than reading a complicated literary text and expanding that out to larger, overarching ideas. While literature is not a part of my daily job, my interpretative abilities and analytic skills are used in the research I produce at my work. My love of literature influences me outside the work environment, shaping how I watch a movie, listen to a piece of music or view a piece of art. My English degree gave me a solid foundation in how to think and how to write, skills that I will use in any career I pursue.

I know all English majors suffer from the "what do you do with that" fear or comments from other people. I think it's such a versatile degree that the question should really be, "What *can't* you do with an English degree?" – SW, '07