



The Pros and Cons of Being an English Major

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As a senior English teaching major at UNH, I have pretty much been through it all. While there are some drawbacks, I love the path I have chosen. So, after four years, here are what I have found to be the pros and cons of being an English major:

PRO:

You will be introduced to genres, texts and authors you've definitely never heard of.

As an English major, you will read a lot. It can be overwhelming, but the material you will be exposed to is priceless. You will read everything from short stories and major novels to poems by Americans, Asians, African Americans, Africans, Hispanics, males, females, the old, the young, the dead. You name it; you'll

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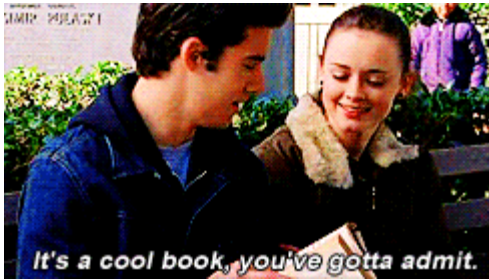
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read it. Where and how else would you possibly be exposed to these kinds of stories told directly by the people who experienced them?



CON:

People may not always take what you do seriously.

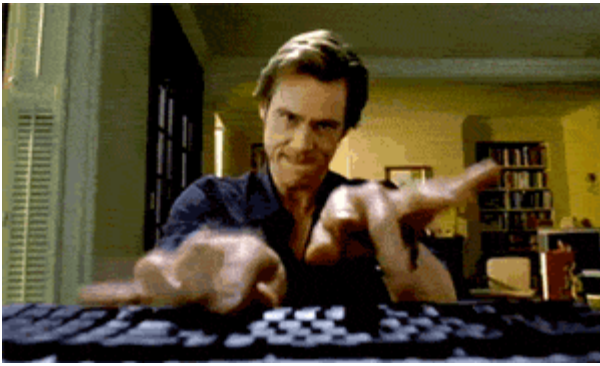
When you tell people you're an English major some will think it's great that you have a creative outlet. While others' first reaction may be to say something like "Oh, that must be so easy. You just read, and you never have exams!" Well, they're not totally wrong; most English classes don't have exams. However, it's not always easy to write a paper that could be anywhere from four to 10 pages every month for every class. You end up writing one or two papers every one or two weeks. And the reading? You may be assigned upwards of 100 pages in one night. It's not easy. It's not a joke.



PRO:

Many classes are discussion-based, encourage creativity and help you develop autonomy.

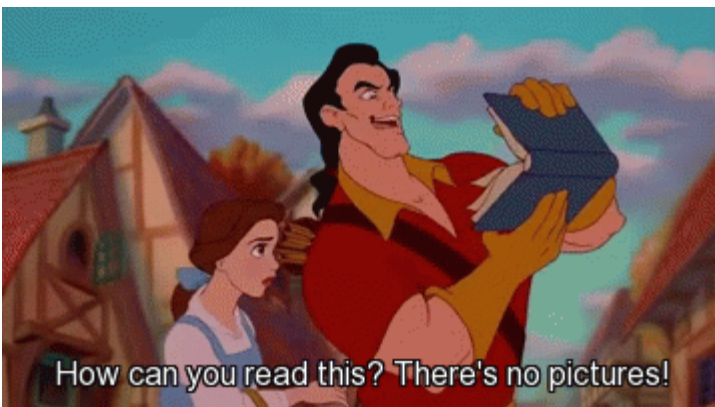
As an English major, you're not going to spend a whole lot of time in lectures. Most of your classes will be spent discussing the reading you were assigned and relating it to your life. Many classes ask questions like, "Why are we reading this? What's the point? Why does this matter? How is it relevant to our lives today?" Even when you are reading something published in 1853, you can find ways to connect the themes to current times. Outside of class, you will write papers about what you have read. Most professors don't require you to write about certain topics. They want you to be creative and inspired to write about something of your own choosing. You won't love, or even like, every piece of literature you read, but you will find something in each work that stands out to you.



CON:

You will read until you think your eyes may fall out of your head.

Sounds gross, I know, but if you are an English major you know exactly what I mean. I really can't stress this enough — YOU WILL READ A LOT, and time management is key. You have to prioritize. But trust me, always...ALWAYS read the novels and poems you are assigned. Articles have headers that can help you pull out the major themes. If you skip one page of a novel, you may miss the one point your professor is going to want to talk about in class, and you will feel like a jerk for relying on your classmates who did the reading to participate so you can hide that day. DO THE READING. You'll thank me later.



PRO:

You will have many classes with the same students, which helps you develop friendships and create working relationships.

Most English majors have the same course requirements, so you will start to see familiar faces in classes. You will start doing projects together and getting to know each other from class discussions. After a while, you will stop having that fear of not knowing anyone in your classes, and class discussions will be more fulfilling as you and your classmates will be comfortable with each other and not afraid to dive into deeper themes and topics from the readings.

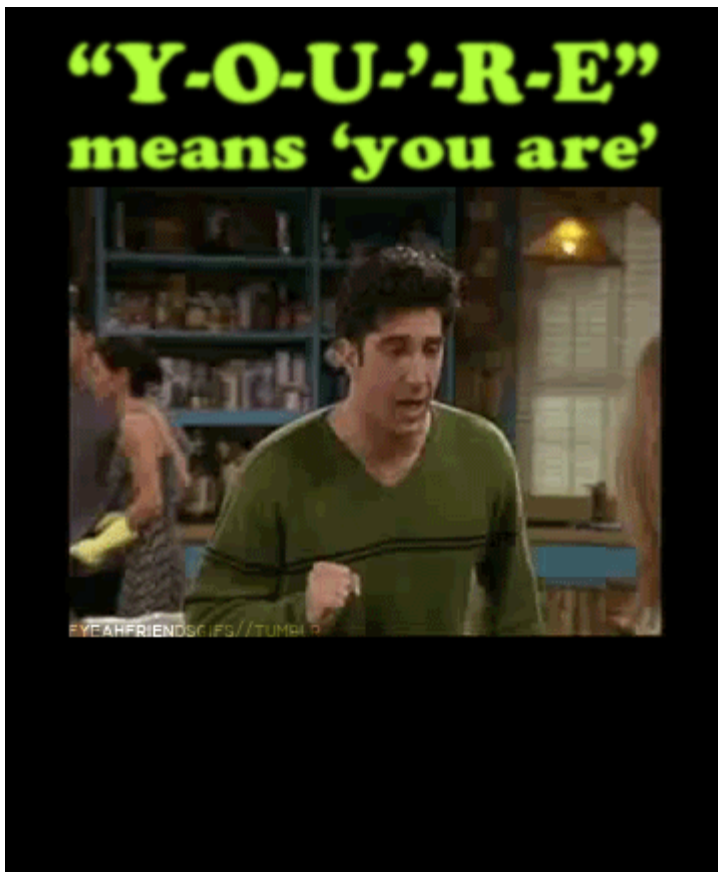


CON:

You will start correcting your friends' grammar...Even in texts.

English teaching majors, like me, are required to take ENGL 791: Grammar. Other English majors will get grammar corrections on papers. Eventually the tables will turn when you go from someone else correcting your writing to you doing the correcting. You will

correct your friends' texts. Embrace it. It's what you do all day; proper grammar will become a part of who you are.



PRO:

The various English majors offered at UNH open up doors for many opportunities.

Here is more information about the English Department:

- [English Department](#)
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Concerned about job prospects? Check out [Why English Majors Are the Hot New Hires](#).

WRITTEN [Callie Ierardi '17](#) | UNH Tales

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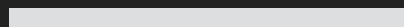
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