

English

Suzy Lee



What Is the Study of English?



- The study of English focuses on analyzing and exploring various works of literature written in the English language.
 - Critical reading/writing skills are nurtured to better assess literature.
- Contrary to popular belief, obtaining an English degree can open limitless doors for those majoring in English. E.G., an English degree will allow you to obtain these careers:
 - Editor
 - Web Content Management
 - Scriptwriter
 - Foreign Language Teacher
 - Public Relations Specialist



Why Did I Choose English?

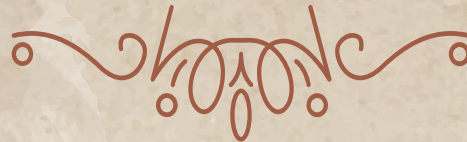


- I was originally pursuing a degree in Graphic Design; however, my passions for that field dwindled. I knew I still wanted to dabble in an area where I can be creative, so I decided to major in English.
- Back when I was pursuing the arts, someone told me my work inspired them to continue pursuing art, so I hope my creative writing can inspire others the same way.
- I hope to come to a better understanding of the writing, reading, research, and communication aspects of my department with this project.



Preconceived Ideas I Had about English

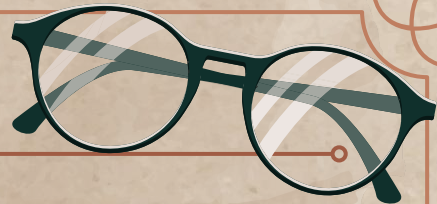
- Although I knew there were rules and structures to follow when writing formally, I assumed there would be more leeway for English students to be creative.
 - I was quickly proven wrong after taking my first few English-focused courses. Formal writing isn't cherries and rainbows. There's blood, sweat, and tears put into it at times.
- I had previously assumed finding credible sources would be easy.
 - I later learned researching can take hours or even days. Genuinely credible sources are often difficult to come by.
- I thought vague, figurative language was the best way to get my message across.
 - Later I realized I need to be direct instead of having my target audience constantly guess what I mean with my cryptic writing.
- I didn't think writing was a viable career choice.
 - I was hesitant to major in English at first because I was always told an English degree wouldn't get me anywhere in the "real world."



Research Methods

- Conducting an Interview
 - The interviewee I selected is Professor McKinney, a Creative Writing Coordinator here at Sacramento State University.
 - He has experience in the English workforce having published multiple poems throughout his lengthy career.
 - Another reason I selected him is because I'm currently taking him this semester. His suggestions and advice during our courses thus far have helped me improve my reading, writing, and communication skills.
 - We conducted this interview over Zoom.
 - A highlight of this interview was being told by Professor McKinney how he began planting his roots in the industry to get to where he is now. His experiences are a reminder to me to never be discouraged by failure.
- Documents Relating to the English Major
 - My first document is a poem analysis assignment I was assigned by Professor McKinney.
 - My second document is a copy of a poem written by the creator of "chainpoems," and many other writers.

Interview Questions



What are some stereotypes you would like to quell regarding the English field? Do you believe these stereotypes drive people away from joining this field?

"English is not an applicable degree. Science is important, but the emphasis placed on it [and STEM] has made the humanities, particularly English, seem largely irrelevant. The humanities, if nothing else, will teach you to be open-minded. Nothing will wither a conversation quicker than telling people you're an English professor, and especially a poet."

In what ways do English majors collaborate for academic and/or non-academic projects? Is collaboration necessary for the English discourse community?

"Sometimes [student] writers will get together and work on a project together. [For example,] a couple of poets I know went to graduate school together. One guy would write a line or two, and then he'd mail it to his friend, and he'd write a couple of lines and mail it back. They wrote a whole book this way. For the most part, people in my discipline (literary/critical) tend to work privately."

What documents do members of the English discourse community produce? How should I, a member of this community, prepare to produce my best work?

"You're asked to write poems, stories, and essays. You produce your best work through multiple drafts. One thing that all students could benefit from is to not wait until the last minute to write their essay. Reading also goes hand in hand with writing. Every writer that you could name who is any good were voracious readers as children and as adults."

Interview Questions Cont.



What specialized terminology specific to our area would I hear on the job? What do they mean, and how do they reflect our community's practices and beliefs?

"We have a lot of field specific terminology, but very little of it seems to be applicable to the culture at large. There's 'anadiplosis,' a poetic device pertaining to repetition of the last word in one phrase/clause at the beginning of the next line, and there are figures of speech. That's all I've got for you there."

What principles and ideals should I adopt and practice if I want to be a part of the English community? Why?

"Read and write every day. Although I say this, I do not practice it. It's the most difficult aspect. If you want to, get up in the morning, have a cup of coffee or tea, and write for half an hour. That's all you need. Writing should be this idea of inspiration. Writers are curious, and they're what I call aggressively receptive."

Do you have any concerns regarding the future development of the English discourse community? Why or why not?

"One of the things I'm concerned about is, again, the technological aspect. I have a real issue with this technological stuff, like Canvas. What I really find insidious about Canvas is the grading. It's the same type of logarithms that other social media uses. It is designed to get students to click, click, click. It doesn't foster independence, and it doesn't foster responsibility."

Document 1: ENGL 130D Meter & Rhyme Analysis Paper

- This document's genre is a poetic analysis essay assigned by Professor McKinney for the Intro to Poetry course I'm taking.
- MLA formatting (double-spaced, 12 pt font, and 1 in margins) was required for this writing assignment.
- For this paper, we had to read the assigned poem and analyse how the poetic devices used in it enhance the author's intended meaning.
- This document is written by educators and assigned to students to analyze their understanding of the course material.
- This assignment encouraged me to apply the poetic devices I learned in class to a piece of published literature.

English 130D/230D – McKinney

Analysis #2: "Elderly Lady Crossing on Green" by Wyatt Prunty

The Assignment:

Conduct a thorough prosodic analysis of this poem. In other words, scan it, consider the poet's use of base meter, metrical substitutions, stanzaic structure, and other prosodic devices such as enjambment, alliteration, etc. **70% of your paper must address meter. Apply iconic theory (and frame theory, too, if you can).**

In a paper of three double-spaced pages (no more, no less), discuss how the prosodic aspects of this poem (especially meter) affect/enhance the poem's meaning and overall effect.

Style: Nothing is more boring than an essay that discusses only meter. Remember to keep the poem's plot and theme in mind so that you have a context for the prosodic effects you discuss. Also, when you quote a line or more from the poem, be sure to include prosodic notation. I want to see some scansion. When you are talking about metrical effects, quote the line under analysis and insert prosodic notation. In short, illustrate what you're talking about.

Tips:

Assume an intelligent audience unfamiliar with Prunty's poem. In other words, you don't have to explain what an iamb is, but you do have to summarize the plot of the poem.

Watch out for subjective and idiosyncratic statements regarding meter: "It flows . . ."; "The anapests give it a silly tone . . .", etc.

Finally, if I find more than ten secondary errors (spelling, mechanics, grammar) I will lower your paper one full grade. Proofread!

Deadline: Friday, October 14, 2022, at the beginning of class. As always, email your essay to me as a Word attachment.

Document 2: Chainpoem Written by Charles Henri Ford, et al.

- This document's genre is a collaborative poem that was published in a book.
- Format is a stanza with a title reflecting its genre: an international chainpoem.
- I was referred to this poem by my interviewee as an example of real-world collaborative work done by professionals in the field of English.
 - This genre of poems was created by Charles H. Ford. He wrote the first two lines then mailed off the unfinished piece in the post to another writer to write another line or two. This cycle repeated until all writers felt the poem was completed.

International Chainpoem

Charles Henri Ford et al.*

When a parasol is cooled in the crystal garden,
one spire radiates and the other turns round;
a toad, the Unwanted, counts the ribs' teardrops
while I mark each idol in its dregs.
There is a shredded voice, there are three fingers
that follow to the end a dancing gesture
and pose a legend under the turning shade
where the girl's waterfall drops its piece.
Then balls of ennui burst one by one,
by and by metallic metres escape from ceramic pipes.
Oh sun, glass of cloud, adrift in the vast sky,
spell me out a sonnet of a steel necklace.

- *1. Takeshi Fujii
- 2. Katue Kitasono
- 3. Charles Henri Ford
- 4. Dorian Cooke
- 5. Norman McCaig
- 6. Gordon Sylander
- 7. George Marion O'Donnell
- 8. Parker Tyler
- 9. Saburoh Kuroda
- 10. Nagao Hirao
- 11. Syuiti Nagayasu
- 12. Tunco Osada



Research Findings

- Working on this project allowed me to develop a deeper understanding of the importance of the study of English.
 - Studying literature isn't just about decoding authors' intents or writing research essays nonstop.
 - Studying English is studying the humanities and how society's nature is reflected in works of literature whether it's novels, poems, scholarly journals, etc.
 - E.G. The analysis paper not only helped develop my critical thinking skills but also gave insight into the author's beliefs during his time period.
- I learned my discourse community has incredible patience, and that patience contributes to some of their best work.
 - E.G. The chainpoem shows the pure time and dedication 12 writers put into publishing just a single poem.
- Interviewing Professor McKinney gave me insight on the concerns our educators have for us.
 - Professor McKinney's worries about technology grooming students into seeking instant gratification instead of focusing on developing their skills stuck with me.

Shared Beliefs and Attitudes

- My interview with Professor McKinney revealed how although collaborative work isn't too common in our field since each person has their own niche, our desire to see each other's best literature work encourages us to uplift each other.
 - This goes back to how the humanities are commonly promoted in the English community so we can reflect society's beliefs in our work.
- The documents I found and my interviewee suggest that a common attitude towards reading, writing, and research is for us, the writers, to be inspired by them. This inspiration then serves as endless fuel for our creative minds.
- I believe the most significant difference between the types of reading, writing, and research required for our community and others is how those types of work are meant to make us repurpose that information into new original works of literature.



Shared Genres

- My discourse community typically relies on writing genres such as research/analysis/argumentative essays.
 - Information is structured into an introduction paragraph, body paragraphs, and a conclusion paragraph. The topic of the paper is introduced in the intro, and it's concluded with a thesis statement which states our stance on the topic. The body paragraphs contain evidence to support our argument, and the conclusion paragraph reaffirms our stance.
 - These genres are important because analyzing how other writers utilize literary devices helps us apply them to our own work.
- My community's research methods include reading literature to see how other writers apply literary devices to their writing. We collect these by searching for credible journals on the web as well as consulting libraries/bookstores. Incorporating these techniques in our routine helps us produce our best work.



Shared Language

- Prosody – all aspects of poetic meter and form
- Metrical Feet – number of unstressed and stressed syllables in a poetic line
- Scansion – method of scanning a line of poetic verse to determine its rhythm
- Apostrophe – addressing a person or personifying a nonhuman being/thing in a poem
- Scheme – the order of words in a sentence
- These terms are significant to our discourse community because they separate each literary device from different types of literature.
 - E.G. We can do scansion on poems, but we cannot do them on novels; Apostrophe can refer to punctuation (') or the poetic device above; Scheme can refer to a story's plot or the way a sentence is constructed as explained above



Conclusion

Overall this project has taught me to rethink the way I feel regarding reading and writing. I've always felt the two were laborious, especially because I have to do them every day for my field of study; however, viewing the two as a crucial step in my improvement to become a better writer will motivate me to dedicate more passion to my studies. I'll apply what I learned from this project to my daily routine. I'll develop a habit of taking inspiration from my studies just as much as I do my casual reading and writing projects.

