

The Pros and Cons of Studying English

English is a core subject in British schools. All pupils from infant to school leaving age are required to study it in one way or another. The study of English at a higher level continues to be popular but it is not for everyone.

Most traditional English courses were largely literature based. This meant, and still means, that you have lots to read. If you enjoy reading then this is no problem, but much of the reading in fact most of it is likely to be done in your own time. You will be asked to read literature from different ages and of different genre. It is likely you will study prose, poetry and drama. Unlike some other subjects where there is heavy emphasis on absorbing facts, English is often different because it relies more on your personal responses to what you have read.

More recently there has been a growth in the number of English courses which are language based and look at different aspects of English and linguistics. In courses like this for instance, you may be asked to translate a text from one genre to another. There has also been a development in writing courses which enable students to write expertly in both creative and functional language. Subjects often associated with English are Media Studies and Drama.

The downside of studying English particularly in the more traditional courses is the huge emphasis on reading. If you are not an avid reader and get little pleasure from reading then it might be wise for you to think twice about studying English. With the emphasis being on personal response and opinion rather than on fact based outcomes, then this may cause problems for some. The requirement to write long essays is not specific to English. Other subjects require projects, dissertations, and long essays, but it is unlikely you will be expected to write quite as much as you would for English study.

A qualification in English at whatever level is likely to be an important factor in making the search for a job easier. There are many opportunities for people with English at degree level because its value is recognised in business and the professions.

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