



Journalism: a Degree Worth Pursuing? Feedback from the Field

Journalism is by no means an obsolete field, and a degree in journalism is not the dead-end street many assert it is. However, your experience and skills are what will land you a job. A degree alone is not as valuable as in-the-field experience.

Studying a broad spectrum of subjects can make you "well rounded" and more appealing. It's incredible how everything is linked together and dabbling in several areas can make you understand each a little better.

Specialization is also important. Anyone can major in journalism, math, or biology; it's what you pair with that degree that sets you apart. Studying journalism? Consider a minor in a science or technical field. The fastest-growing areas are computer and forensic studies. Imagine having a reporter who can write AND translate technical and scientific babble!

*Intern at a national institute for scientific and mathematical research
University of Tennessee, Knoxville '12 (Journalism and Electronic Media)*

The key to finding a job is to create a niche. Find something you really love doing and writing about and find a publication, especially a small, local one, that supports your passion. Having a huge range of skill sets is incredibly valuable: blog, write, fact check, shoot video, record audio, etc.

*Student
Temple '10 (Communications, Journalism)*

Journalism is one of those careers that you can work harder than anyone else, sacrifice more, and still not get a job. With nepotism and politics at play, simply working your butt off doesn't cut it anymore. I know so many people who are more deserving of jobs than anyone, but they can barely scrape together an unpaid internship. If you pursue this field, there's a chance it won't work out, and that chance seems to be getting stronger.

Journalism is not a career for lazy people. If you're going to get hired (especially sans connections), you have to be the best intern: the one who stays late, who talks to everyone, who takes on more work than you can actually handle. You have to make yourself indispensable and make people wonder what the hell they're going to do when you leave. And then, maybe, they'll decide not to *let* you leave.

*Editorial and Community Assistant at an online magazine
Drake University '09 (Magazines, Writing)*

I have not had luck finding a job. At the moment, I'm pretty upset about my degree. I double-majored in English and journalism, so I feel I should have a little more of an edge. I have probably applied to about

30 print publications as well as some marketing and ad jobs. Nothing. I worked so hard - I thought the reward for all that work would be a job.

Unemployed
California State University, Fullerton '09 (English, Journalism)

You have to REALLY want to be a journalist. When I first graduated, I thought I could do writing and editing gigs on the side (while pursuing my acting career), but this is difficult to do if you're not completely devoted to it. When I finally got some sort of work, a sporadic fact-checking gig at *New York* magazine (I got this job through a friend who knew an editor), I was surprised to see that a lot of my co-workers never studied journalism. Due to budget cuts, I haven't been asked to come back to the magazine for a year. However I do not regret my path as a drama major with second major of journalism. I gained practical writing/interviewing/investigating skills.

Actress
New York University '06 (Drama, Journalism)

Content is still king. You may package it in articles, blogs, or 140-character bites and links, but original content is still the most valuable content. To create compelling, original content, you do need the journalism chops.

Social Media Strategist
College of Staten Island of the City University of New York '06 (Media)

On one hand, I think the only shot an aspiring journalist has at getting a job in this industry is with a four-year degree. College is a beneficial experience for everyone; you learn so many things about the world that will only help you grow as a writer. After all, part of journalism is being able to relate to the world around you.

On the other hand, journalism is an industry where practice makes perfect. You will probably not be hired without any experience. You learn so much more by experience than by sitting in the classroom, memorizing the AP Stylebook with your professor.

While exploring other areas of study to supplement my communication degree, I have found which field of journalism most interests. I have also learned about the importance of journalism and the media in the function of our society. If a student is able to complement his/her education with sufficient experience in the field, then obtaining a college degree is a worthwhile use of time and money.

Student
Salem College '10 (Communication)

If your heart is set on a career in journalism, then a journalism degree is worth pursuing. I didn't get a journalism degree in an effort to separate myself from everyone else. Plus, I had an interest in creative writing and wanted to study that more in depth.

In the end, my degree did not determine my quality of job post graduation. I got as good or better jobs than my journalism degree peers. My calling in life is to tell stories, to give a voice to the voiceless, to afflict the comfortable and to comfort the afflicted. Nothing more. Nothing less.

Writer/Ghostwriter
Louisiana State University '05 (English)