

LINGUISTICS

What can I do with this major?

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

EDUCATION

Teaching
Research
Applied linguistics
Teacher training
Curriculum development
Test/assessment development
Foreign language instruction
English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction
English to Speakers of Other Language (TESOL) instruction
Literacy development
Information/library science

Universities and colleges
K-12 school systems
Language institutes
Community education programs
Testing companies (e.g., ETS)

To teach in higher education, earn a doctoral degree in linguistics or a related subject such as English, philosophy, speech pathology, or foreign language.

As an undergraduate, maintain a high GPA and secure strong recommendations from faculty. Serve as a tutor, peer mentor, or other student leader.

Look for opportunities to assist faculty with research. Study languages, both Indo-European and non-Indo-European.

To be more competitive for tenure-track positions in linguistics, plan to complete a post-doc and gain experience with multiple subfields or those that are more applied. Subfields include: phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, historical linguistics, sociolinguistics, dialectology, pragmatics, and language acquisition.

Earn relevant graduate degrees to prepare for other fields (e.g., information science, ESL/TESOL, or language education).

Foreign language instruction requires teacher certification for K-12 and a doctoral degree for post-secondary.

To prepare for work with non-native English speakers, get involved with the campus or local international community. Study abroad and attend multi-cultural events on campus or in the community.

Research the many programs available for teaching English abroad. Consider earning a certificate or seeking specialized training to prepare for these positions.

AREAS

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STRATEGIES

COMPUTATIONAL LINGUISTICS

Speech synthesis
Speech recognition
Natural language processing
Text-content analysis
Machine translation
Artificial intelligence
Database or lexicon development
Information extraction
Text mining
Research

e-Businesses (e.g., Amazon)
Software developers
Computer companies (e.g., IBM, Microsoft)
Natural-language processor firms
Search engines (e.g., Google)
Database developers
Other business firms

Earn a master's or doctoral degree in linguistics, computer science or computational linguistics.
Supplement undergraduate curriculum with courses in computer science, data science, or information science.
Develop skills in computer programming, computer scripting, natural language processing techniques, and other relevant technologies.
Gain experience by completing an internship in the computer industry.
Read publications in professional journals to understand current trends in the field.
Be prepared to continuously learn new computer languages and technologies to stay abreast of changes.
This area represents some of the higher-demand opportunities within linguistics.

GOVERNMENT

Translation
Interpretation
Localization
Forensic linguistics
Cryptology
Intelligence
Analysis
Writing
Editing

Federal government:
U.S. National Security Agency
U.S. Central Intelligence Agency
U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation
U.S. Foreign Service
U.S. Armed Forces
Department of Homeland Security
State and local government

Seek leadership roles in relevant campus groups such as Model United Nations, student government, and cross-cultural organizations.
Develop skills in computers, statistics, and data analysis.
Acquire foreign language competency and travel experience for international positions. Consider studying critical needs languages (e.g., Arabic, Farsi, Chinese, Russian, Spanish, etc.).
Complete an internship with the federal government. The armed forces also sponsor the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center for military personnel. Admittance is based on scores from the Defense Language Aptitude Battery Test.
There are a large number of specialized agencies within the federal government. Do extensive research in order to find the area that best fits your interests and to learn about candidate requirements.

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

COMMUNICATION DISORDERS

Speech pathology
Language disorders
Audiology
Aural rehabilitation
Neurocommunicative science
Cognitive sciences
Teaching
Research

Schools, K-12
Universities and colleges
Hospitals
Physicians' offices
Speech, language, and hearing centers
Developmental learning centers
Home healthcare offices
Nursing homes
Residential facilities
Federal agencies:
 U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
 U.S. National Institutes of Health
 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
 U.S. Department of Education
 U.S. Armed Services
Health Maintenance organizations
Private individual or group practice
Public health departments
Rehabilitation centers

The study of communication disorders is interdisciplinary and draws upon linguistics, speech pathology, audiology, and psychology.
Research prerequisite courses for graduate school admission and take the appropriate undergraduate classes.
A master's degree from an accredited speech language pathology program is required to enter that field. A doctoral degree is commonly required for audiology.
Most states require certification of speech pathologists and all states for audiologists.
Obtain the Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology or Audiology offered by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association.
Take courses in American Sign Language.
Maintain a high GPA and seek related experiences to be competitive for graduate school.
Learn to work well people of varying ages and backgrounds, including those with disabilities.
Develop patience as progress in clients may be slow.

ADDITIONAL AREAS

Translation
Interpreting
Language documentation
Fieldwork
Lexicography (work with dictionaries)
Technical writing
Editing
Journalism
Medical linguistics
Forensic linguistics
Product naming
Consulting

Government agencies
Foreign governments
International businesses
Hospitals
Courts
Publishers: magazine, book, textbook, dictionary
Internet sites
Manufacturers of consumer products
Law firms
Consulting firms

There are many employment settings in which students can utilize a degree in linguistics.
Research areas of interest and seek the appropriate education, skills, and experiences to qualify for that field.
Some of these areas will require graduate degrees in linguistics or educational background in other disciplines.
Gain relevant experience through internships.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Linguistics is an interdisciplinary field and therefore good preparation for a wide variety of graduate programs including: linguistics, speech pathology, audiology, cognitive sciences, English, law, journalism, foreign languages, etc.
- Students who major in linguistics develop strong analytical and communication skills and the ability to debate. They are commonly required to gain proficiency in a second language.
- Students should consider a secondary area of study such as, foreign language, computer science, data science, information science, psychology, or other area of interest to increase opportunities for employment or graduate school.
- Some linguists find jobs outside of academia as computational linguists for e-business and websites. They build and maintain databases and lexicons. They also develop language-processing systems for websites to make it easier for people to navigate and get more precise answers to requests for information.
- Consider study abroad and getting involved with the international community on campus. Attend language conversation tables.
- Research career paths of interest and seek to gain the skills, experiences, and degrees necessary to work in that field.
- Conduct informational interviews with or shadow professionals to learn about various work environments.
- Join related professional associations as a student member.
- Because many career paths require graduate education, learn about the graduate school admissions process and build a strong candidacy.
- Gain relevant experience through jobs, volunteer positions, or internships.