

Where do I start?

Many students who are interested in Linguistics wonder what career options they will have when they graduate. They often have questions about how much education they will need and what classes they should take to be the most competitive for a specific career track.

The good news is that there are a wide range of options available both in terms of careers and the courses that will best prepare you for those careers. These courses can even help you sort through the options and narrow down your interests through practical, hands-on experience within the various subfields of Linguistics.

Included in this brochure is a list of careers and their possible course pairings to help get you started. This list is certainly not exhaustive, but will give you an idea of the many possibilities available. All of the careers listed here would benefit from independent studies or directed research in linguistics (LING 1-499 or 392a-492a), and you are strongly encouraged to participate in these opportunities as part of your linguistics curriculum (see also our Independent Studies Brochure).

For more information on any of these options or if there's something else you're interested in but unsure as to how it pertains to a future career, the undergraduate advisors would love to meet with you and discuss it!



Common Career Paths

Professor/Researcher

With a PhD in Linguistics, you can teach at the university level as well as work on cutting edge linguistics research, both experimental and theoretical. As the field is incredibly broad, this career path can take on a multitude of shapes! If you are thinking seriously about this option, plan to do one or more independent studies to get hands-on experience with exciting and current work in the discipline (see also our Independent Studies Brochure & Grad School Brochure).

Needed: Ph.D. in Linguistics

Related courses: LING 300, 310, 314, 315, 341, 364, 403, 410, 432, 449A

Computational Linguist

Ever wonder how search engines are able to find the relevant documents or answer your questions? Or how your cell phone recognizes what you're saying to it? Computational linguists work for companies that use artificial intelligence, speech recognition technology, sentiment analysis, machine translation, and more to build models and machines that accomplish tasks like these. This is a lucrative and ever growing field within linguistics. If this career path appeals to you, we also have an Accelerated Masters program.

Needed: M.S. in Computational Linguistics/HLT/NLP

Related courses: LING 178, 300, 314, 315, 388, 408, 438, 439, 478

Language Documentation

There are many endangered and understudied languages in the world, which creates a need for linguistically trained native speakers and/or professional linguists to document those languages. This career is often achieved through universities or other government or private organizations.

Needed: M.A. in linguistics or language revitalization, or B.A. and extensive field training

Related courses: LING 104a/b, 210, 300, 307a/b, 310, 314, 315, 320, 421

Education

Many linguistics students opt to teach English in another country or get certified to teach ESL here in the U.S. The skills you have acquired are useful in teaching English or a foreign language at any level. Additionally, some students find careers in curriculum development, teacher training, and the creation and improvement of standardized tests.

Needed: B.A. plus ESL/TEFL teaching certificate or M.A. in applied linguistics, education, or English. (Sometimes only a B.A. is needed to teach English abroad).

Related courses: LING 114, 300, 310, 314, 315, 320, 322, 341

Other Career Paths

Government/Military

Many government agencies look to employ linguists, such as the CIA, FBI, NSA, Foreign Service, Department of Defense, etc. These careers are often possible with a B.A. in linguistics and/or specific language skills. Once achieved, the government may fund further education, if deemed necessary.

Needed: B.A. or higher, depending on position

Related courses: LING 114, 300, 310, 314, 315, 320, 341, 432 (see also Computational Linguist)

Publishing/Journalism/Technical Writing

Students with a B.A. in Linguistics are well-equipped to have a career in publishing, journalism, and technical writing as the language and communication skills required for these careers are a part of what you acquire in Linguistics training. If this option appeals to you, you may want to apply for the UA Press Internship.

Needed: B.A. in Linguistics or related field

Related courses: LING 211, 300, 320, 322, 409, 480

Translator

With a B.A. in Linguistics and perhaps a certification, you can find employment as a translator in a multitude of fields. Often those who are interested in being a translator choose to also focus on a specific language while they're here and even study abroad.

Needed: B.A. in Linguistics or language and very high language proficiency in a foreign language

Related courses: LING 114, 300, 310, 314, 315, 322

Speech Therapist

If you are interested in speech disorders and impairments and helping those who have them, you can pursue a career as a therapist, either in a clinical or educational setting.

Needed: M.A./M.S. in Speech Pathology as well as additional requirements

Related courses: LING 300, 314, 315, 341, 432, 409, 449A, 478

Consultant

Forensic linguists study text and speech in a variety of forms and genres to provide information and insight for police, law firms, and courts on interpretation, identification, and much more. Additionally, companies use language consultants to help with linguistic aspects of advertising, branding, product design, etc.

Needed: B.A. Linguistics or higher, depending on field

Related courses: LING 300, 314, 320, 322, 364, 478

Will I need more education?

Whether or not you need further education after you receive your B.A. in Linguistics depends of which type of career you are interested in.

Graduate Degree:

Most students who want to have a career in academia or industry do need an advanced degree. If you receive a Masters or PhD in Linguistics, you can be a professor or researcher at a university, work in industry (as a computational linguistics, etc) or find a career in a wide range of other options. An advanced degree gives you a lot of possibilities for your future career.

For more information about choosing a graduate program that's right for you, as well as the application process, please see our brochure on Applying to Graduate School.

Certificate:

If you continue on after your B.A. to receive a certification, you can find a career in teaching English as a second language or working as a translator.

Bachelor's Degree:

With a B.A. in Linguistics, you bring a desirable skill set into the workplace. With this education, you will most likely have a career in which knowledge of language and language skills are particularly useful, such as publishing, technical writing, or teaching English abroad, just to name a few.

Your options are as broad as the field, no matter what level of education you choose to complete. Turn the page for more details!

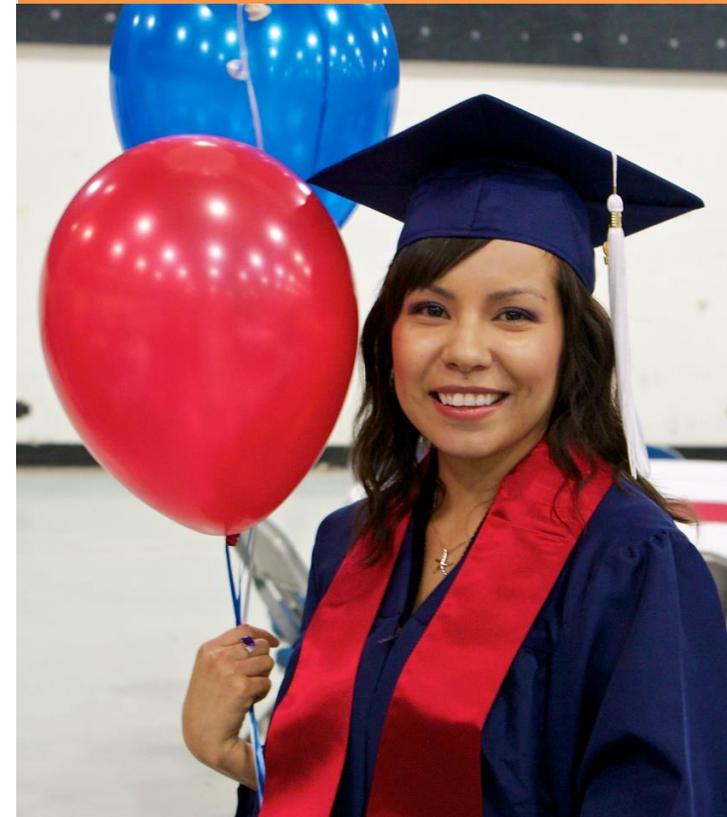
There are more careers in Linguistics than can fit in this brochure. For additional information on what's listed here as well as other options, you may find the following resources helpful:

- <http://www.linguisticsociety.org>
- <http://linguistlist.org/>
- <http://bls.gov/ooh> - the Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook handbook
- <http://usajobs.gov>
- <https://www.fbijobs.gov/124.asp>
- <https://www.cia.gov/careers/opportunities/foreign-languages/view-jobs.html>
- UA Career Services -- (520) 621-2546, 4th floor Student Union

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CAREERS IN LINGUISTICS



*(What on earth will I do
with my degree?)*