

Catherine Piner '16, English & Economics



I'm Catherine Piner and I spent my summer as an intern in Slate's DC office. Slate is an online magazine that publishes stories on news, politics, technology, and culture. My internship had a few set tasks, like working on repostings, transcribing, and unpacking the mail, but the rest of my time was driven entirely by my own interests. I spent much of it writing and, in a few cases, helping other writers research their stories. Basically, the internship varies greatly based on the interests and motivations of the intern. I, for instance, chose to focus on writing for Moneybox, Slate's business blog. Although my Economics major did help me when working on those stories,

skills I gained as an English major are what ultimately set me up for success at Slate.

Clarity of expression is at the core of any good news story. As an English major I essentially spent four years practicing and learning how to best express my ideas. When working on my pieces for Moneybox, as well as some of Slate's other blogs, my ability to express my ideas clearly and quickly proved to be one of my most valuable capabilities.

Moreover, my ability to compile information, condense it, and interpret it was truly vital as an intern at Slate. The magazine is known for its smart and often witty articles, and, although the publication covers breaking news, it always manages to present articles with a purpose. Slate does not publish just to publish, the magazine looks to make an argument, and after years of writing theses and presenting arguments in class, I was well prepared to adapt this skill to the news industry. Although argument building was vital in my internship, the skill that benefitted me the most was my ability to think critically. As an English major I was challenged to think critically about writing from all angles—from the specific words I used, to idea presentation, to larger argument, and finally to argument within all other existing arguments. Breaking a paper apart and then rebuilding it with all of these elements in mind is critical to writing a good essay but also to writing a good news article. Although I ultimately do not intend to enter this industry, this internship has given me the confidence to freelance write articles about issues that are important to me.

The internship is truly an incredible opportunity because of the respect that Slate affords its interns. Even the commonly considered "drudge task" of opening mail is an adventure at Slate. Every week dozens of soon-to-be-published books are sent to the culture editor, and opening them comes with the added benefit of getting to preview some!