

Jennifer Howard, B.A. English For Secondary Teachers, 2014

By Melissa J. Rush & Madelyn Chambers

English Teacher, Russellville High School

“Being an English teacher has allowed me to use every aspect of my degree in a variety of interesting ways. My goal is to get my MA and focus on curriculum design so I can take my love of research and find practical applications for the classroom.”



Jennifer Howard graduated from Western Kentucky University with a bachelor's degree in English for Secondary Teachers (EST) in 2014. Since then, Howard has taught English at Russellville High School. She is also currently pursuing her [master's degree in Literature](#) from Murray State University, which she will complete in December 2019.

Howard didn't take the traditional path through college. In 2004, she began pursuing her bachelor's degree, but she delayed her education after her sophomore year. She left WKU for six years before coming back and finishing what she started. "Graduating from the same university where it had all started 10 years before was one of the most exciting and gratifying moments of my life," said Howard. She said trusting herself was her greatest learning experience. She feared being the oldest in class, not being able to keep up, and not fitting in, but she found that the English department welcomed her back with open arms.

Howard credits Dr. Deborah Logan for challenging her to put forth her best work and instilling a love of Victorian literature in her. Both are skills she uses to teach her own *Sophomore World Literature* class. Dr. David LeNoir also supported her in navigating a full-time work and school schedule. Dr. Alison Langdon helped simplify her chaotic writing and make challenging literature more accessible. "My students still find my Chaucer recitations hilarious, and I talk about it more than anyone should," said Howard. Dr. Angela Jones was also a supportive friend to Howard throughout her WKU career.

At Russellville High School, Howard teaches English, literature, and journalism courses. Students in her journalism course revived the school's newspaper, which hadn't been published in 10 years, and attended the Journalism Scholar's Day and the Mark of Excellence Awards at WKU. "This is such a great program at WKU that provides support, information, and inspiration for student writers and artists," said Howard. "Just to watch and get inspiration from schools with established programs was a fantastic experience, and our staff is determined to compete with some of the bigger schools next year."

Howard's fellow teachers voted her Rotary Teacher of the Year in Logan County. She used all aspects of her English degree to achieve this success. Howard constantly researches new teaching strategies, analyzes [Lexile](#) data, and evaluates student progress. Teaching also requires professional writing when applying for grants or presenting at conferences and workshops. While participating in a writing project at WKU, Howard joined other equally passionate educators to collaborate on teaching methods and work on creative writing.

Howard challenges current undergraduate students to bring their knowledge of literacy, writing, and analysis to the public schools. Schools need passionate educators and English enthusiasts, and many English students would excel in this position. Howard finds many parts of teaching "an incredibly challenging and rewarding experience," and she is very thankful that she returned to WKU to finish what she started.

