

College Majors

Steps to Selecting a College Major:

1. What do you like?

The first thing to consider when picking a major is what you like to do. By the time you graduate high school you'll have enough information and experience from your classes to figure out what you might or might not be interested in pursuing.

Here are some ways you can dig deeper: *List 10 things you love*. Listing what you love doing, both inside or outside the classroom, is a great way to see possible paths you can take. If you enjoy art and drawing but you're also interested in technology, consider majoring in graphic design. If you're into business and traveling, investigate majoring in international business.

Make a list of strengths and weaknesses. Figuring out your strengths and weaknesses can help you assess what kind of major to go into. For example, if public speaking isn't really your thing, you might want to avoid majors that could lead to careers like being a news anchor or spokesperson. You can also take your weaknesses and build on them in college. If public speaking is something you want to improve, go ahead and take a speech class. You might love it!

2. What are your career goals?

After digging into what you're interested in and potential careers options, it's time to think about your goals and your future career—and how easy or how hard it might be to find employment.

If you have a specific career goal in mind, you might need to pick your major or program in advance, sometimes as early as when you're applying to college. It's also good to know what degree you'll need for the field that interests you. Here's an overview of different college

Degrees:

Associate Degree The two-year associate of arts (AA) or associate of science (AS). Some students who earn this degree transfer to a four-year bachelor's program; others use it to go straight to work. Community colleges, career colleges, and some four-year colleges offer associate degrees.

Bachelor's Degree This degree requires completing a four- or five-year college program. Most students earn a bachelor of arts (BA) or bachelor of science degree (BS). You can also study toward a bachelor of fine arts or bachelor of architecture degree.

Graduate Degree are advanced degrees pursued after earning a bachelor's degree. Examples are a master of arts (MA) or master of science (MS). Students generally earn a master's degree after two years of study. A doctoral degree (for example, a PhD) requires four or more years of study.

3. Talk to advisors and professionals

The best source of college advice is your school counselor. They've helped lots of students who are making the same decisions you are. Your school counselor can tell you more about college majors and program offerings. Here are five questions you might want to ask a counselor.

- *Are there any college fairs at this school, or nearby?*
- *Can you put me in touch with recent grads who are going to the colleges on my wish list?*
- *Which elective courses do you recommend?*
- *Do you have any information to help me start exploring careers?*
- *Do you have any college planning sessions scheduled?*

You can also reach out to professionals working in the field you're interested in. They can talk to you about how they got from college to where they are now. Whether they're your parents, guardians, family members, or people you interact with professionally, set up a time to interview them. Be prepared with a set of questions to ask.

4. Backups

Try to come up with one or two backup majors. This way you've got options if you decide to switch your major. What if you can't decide on a major? It's okay to enter college as an undecided major. You don't have to know what you want to major in (or even what you want to do with the rest of your life) during your major search process. College gives you the opportunity to take classes you think you might enjoy or even classes you've never been exposed to before.

Volunteer and find internships. Internships and volunteer work are the best ways to get real hands-on experience in fields a major can lead to. You'll get a great understanding of what day-to-day life in the profession is like. If you can, talk to people in different departments to see if their work interests you.

Events at local colleges/college visits. You can learn a lot from visiting colleges or attending events on campus.