

What Can I Do with a History Major?

The short answer to this question is “everything.” A major in history supports many career options because it provides students with skills in demand in many fields, including writing, researching, problem solving, critical thinking, and oral communication. These skills are transferrable—they are not field-specific but applicable in many ways to many different kinds of jobs.

Many employers look at the college degree, not the specific major, and make their decisions about who to hire based on which applicants best show that they understand the job, have the skills that will help their future employer, and possess a desire to work hard and succeed.

When you graduate and look for a career, know your interests (a visit to the Career Center is highly recommended:

<http://www.gvsu.edu/careers/>), know the skills you have gained, and think ahead by taking advantage of opportunities such as internships or career preparation events that will help you in the future.

For further information, see:

University of Tennessee, *What Can I Do with This Major?* <http://whatcanidowiththismajor.com/major/history/>

American Historical Association, “Why Study History?” <https://www.historians.org/teaching-and-learning/why-study-history>

American Historical Association, “Careers for History Majors” <https://www.historians.org/jobs-and-professional-development/career-resources/careers-for-history-majors>

GVSU History Major http://www.gvsu.edu/cms4/asset/8E60AE8A-DD89-F38B-68F611A92AA5D47A/history_general_15-16.pdf

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_stru.htm

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Projections <http://www.bls.gov/emp/>

There are many options for history majors:

Career Area: Law School and Government

Job Titles

Lawyer
Legislative aide
Foreign Service
Law enforcement
Public advocacy groups

Public office, staff administration, or campaign assistant
Legal aid or public defender's office
Community organizing
Paralegal

Potential Employers

Law firms
Federal, state, and city government
Lobbying organizations

Corporations
Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
Public interest groups

Elective Curriculum Suggestions

BUS 201: Legal Environment for Business
CJ 302: Criminal Law
CJ 305: Constitutional Rights and Civil Liberties
CJ 325: Criminal Justice and Human Rights
CJ/LS 444: Forensic Behavior and Law
CLA 367: Thinking Like a (Roman) Lawyer
COM 303: Debate
HST 317: History of American Foreign Relations
HST 328: U.S. Constitutional and Legal History
LS 201: Introduction to Law
LS 324: Legal Research and Writing

MGT 334: Labor and Employment Law
MGT 432: Grievance Arbitration and Collective Bargaining
PHI 330: Legal Philosophy
PLS 206: American Constitutional Foundations
PLS 306: Constitutional Law I (Federalism and Separation of Powers)
PLS 307: Constitutional Law II (Civil Rights and Liberties)
PLS 314: International Law
WGS/LS 370: Women and the Law

For more curriculum suggestions, see <http://www.gvsu.edu/polisci/pre-law-faq-45.htm>

Students interested in becoming a lawyer will need to attend law school (earning a J.D.) (<http://www.lsac.org/jd/>), which requires taking the LSAT (<http://www.lsac.org/>)

Preparation Strategies

Complete an internship at a government agency or public policy group
Join Law Society of GVSU: <https://orgsync.com/62576/chapter>
Seek leadership roles in campus organizations, including student government
Join debate teams
Volunteer for community organizations, advocacy groups, or political parties
Complete a study abroad program

Resources

GVSU Pre-Law Website: <http://www.gvsu.edu/prelaw/>
American Bar Association, Legal Profession Statistics: http://www.americanbar.org/resources_for_lawyers/profession_statistics.html
What Can I Do with This Major? <http://whatcanidowiththismajor.com/major/law/>

Career Area: Business

Job Titles

CEO
Entrepreneur
Accounts manager

Systems analyst
Business manager

Potential Employers

Manufacturers
Healthcare organizations
Banks and financial institutions
Real estate brokers

Insurance companies
Retail stores
Hotels and restaurants
Non-profit management

Elective Curriculum Suggestions

Interest in General Business:

ACC 212: Principles of Financial Accounting
ACC 213: Principles of Managerial Accounting
ECO 210: Introductory Macroeconomics
ECO 211: Introductory Microeconomics
BUS 201: Legal Environment for Business

BUS 201: Legal Environment for Business
MKT 350: Marketing Management

Interest in Management:

ACC 212: Principles of Financial Accounting
ECO 211: Introductory Microeconomics
BUS 201: Legal Environment for Business
MGT 331: Concepts of Management
FIN 320: Managerial Finance

Interest in Marketing:

ACC 212: Principles of Financial Accounting
ECO 211: Introductory Microeconomics

Alternately, history majors could complete the 12-credit Entrepreneurship Certificate offered by Seidman College of Business, which is designed as "a short track of courses to learn the process and tools, and to develop the skills and experiences necessary to identify and create a sustainable business opportunity." See http://catalog.gvsu.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=40&pooid=5529

Preparation Strategies

Attend professional and career events sponsored by GVSU Career Center, including Job Fair
Gain relevant experience through internships and summer jobs
Join student organizations for business students
Talk to professionals in industry that interests you

Resources

What Can I Do with This Major? <http://whatcanidowiththismajor.com/major/business-studies/>
Seidman College of Business, Student Organizations <http://www.gvsu.edu/seidman/student-organizations-70.htm>

Career Area: Education

Job Titles

Elementary and secondary school teacher
School administrator
College professor

Higher education administrator
Higher education student support services

Potential Employers

K-12 schools
School districts

Community colleges
Colleges and universities

Education Curriculum Requirements

EDF 315: Diverse Perspectives on Education
EDI 337: Introduction to Learning and Assessment
EDT 370: Technology in Education
PYS 301: Child Development
SST 309: Social Studies for Elementary Teacher (for elementary teaching minor)
SST 310: Strategies for Social Studies Teachers (for secondary teaching certification)

For students considering graduate school in history: HST 498: Senior Thesis

Students interested in elementary school teaching can major in Social Studies and must complete the Elementary Education Minor

Students interested in college teaching will need to earn a graduate degree in history (Ph.D.). All students considering graduate study should major or minor in the foreign language(s) relevant to their interests

Preparation Strategies

Volunteer in schools (25 hours of experience with children or youth required by College of Education for admission)

Seek experience with youth, such as summer jobs at camps, churches, or youth organizations

Complete a relevant internship, for example, at a literacy center

Complete a study abroad program

Complete a senior thesis (HST 498) if considering graduate school

Resources

History Major with Secondary Education http://www.gvsu.edu/cms4/asset/8E60AE8A-DD89-F38B-68F611A92AA5D47A/history_secondary_education_15-16.pdf

GVSU Elementary Education Major <http://www.gvsu.edu/coe/undergraduate/programs.htm?id=10C69754-A3AE-B150-64BFCA13351A2F2E>

GVSU College of Education, Admission Requirements <http://www.gvsu.edu/coe/undergraduate/admissions-requirements-10.htm>

What Can I Do with This Major? <http://whatcanidowiththismajor.com/major/education/>

American History Association, "Graduate School Application Process: From Start to Finish" <https://secure.historians.org/projects/cge/PhD/Questions.cfm>

John King and Andrew McMichael, "The Trials and Tribulations of Applying to Graduate School," *Perspectives on History* (Sept. 1998),

<https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/september-1998/the-trials-and-tribulations-of-applying-to-graduate-school>

Career Area: Public History

Job Titles

Government historian
Museum Curator
Cultural resource manager
Conservator

Park service historian
Historical consulting
Historic preservation specialist
Archivist or records manager

Potential Employers

Museums
Historical societies
Federal, state, and local government

Non-profit organizations
Corporations
National Park Service

Elective Curriculum Suggestions

ANT 220: Introduction to Archaeology
ANT 314: Bioarchaeology
HST 405: Local and Community History*
HST 420: Public History*
HST/CLA 415: Museum Studies*
HST 490: History Internship

Students interested in careers in public history often obtain a master's degree (MS or MA) in history or museum studies

Preparation Strategies

Complete an internship in public history <http://www.gvsu.edu/history/internships-119.htm>
Volunteer at local museums, historical societies or other organizations relevant to public history
Complete a study abroad program
Complete a senior thesis (HST 498) if considering graduate school

Resources

American Historical Association, Careers in Public History <https://www.historians.org/jobs-and-professional-development/career-resources/careers-in-public-history>
National Council on Public History, Job Listings <http://ncph.org/jobs>
The Public History Navigator <http://ncph.org/wp-content/uploads/The-Public-History-Navigator-2015-Web.pdf>
Melissa Bingmann, "Advising Undergraduates about Career Opportunities in Public History," *Perspectives on History* (March 2009) <https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/march-2009/advising-undergraduates-about-career-opportunities-in-public-history>
American Association for State and Local History, "Curious about a Career in Public History?" <http://about.aaslh.org/curious-about-a-career-in-public-history/>
American Alliance of Museums <http://www.aam-us.org/resources/careers>
Society of American Archivists <http://www2.archivists.org/profession>

* New course currently in final approval process

Career Area: Library and Information Science

Job Titles

Academic librarian
Services librarian
Liaison librarian
Metadata librarian
Library director or manager

Health science librarians
Archivist
Conservator
Children's or young adult librarian

Potential Employers

Public libraries
Academic libraries
School libraries

Corporations
Government (including National Archives and Records Administration)

Elective Curriculum Suggestions

CIS 160: Programming with Visual Basic
CIS 238: Internet Media and Programming
COM 201: Speech
COM 371: Media and Society

If interested in children's or young adult librarianship:

ENG 304: International Literature for Children and Young Adults
ENG 309: Teaching Literature to Children
ENG 311: Teaching Literature to Adolescents
ENG 334: American Multicultural Literature for Children and Adults

A strong liberal arts background is the best preparation for a librarian.

Most professional-level library positions require a master's degree in library and information science (either MLS, MLIS, MSIS, MSLS, MA in LIS, or MS in LIS)

Preparation Strategies

Volunteer at a public or school library
Gain relevant experience through part-time jobs in libraries
Seek experience with youth, such as summer jobs at camps, churches, or youth organizations (for school librarians)

Resources

American Library Association, "LibraryCareers.org" <http://librarycareers.drupalgardens.com/>
Meredith Schwartz, "How to Become a 21st Century Librarian," *Library Journal*, March 20, 2013 <http://lj.libraryjournal.com/2013/03/careers/how-to-become-a-21st-century-librarian/#>

Career Area: Media and Communications

Job Titles

Reporter
Editor at trade or university press
Editor at newspaper, website, or magazine
Publisher

Documentary film producer
Grant or technical writer
Media planning
Media relations specialist

Potential Employers

Websites, newspapers, or magazines
Radio and television stations
Trade and academic presses

Corporations
Federal, state and local government
Colleges and universities

Elective Curriculum Suggestions

CFV 225: Film Culture
CIS 160: Programming with Visual Basic
CIS 238: Internet Media and Programming
CMJ 236: News in Society
CMJ 256: News Reporting
CMJ 284: Broadcast News 1
CMJ 290: Journalism History
COM 201: Speech
COM 220: Media Literacy

COM 271: History of Communications Technologies
COM 371: Media and Society
ENG 261: Foundations of Language Study
LS 324: Legal Research and Writing
WRT 200: Introduction to Professional Writing
WRT 219: Introduction to Creative Writing
WRT 253: Document Production and Design
WRT 350: Business Writing
WRT 351: Writing for the World Wide Web

Preparation Strategies

Gain relevant experience through internships and summer jobs
Seek leadership roles in campus organizations, including student programming
Work for campus newspaper, radio station, and similar outlets
Volunteer to be announcer at college and local sporting events
Volunteer to create or maintain websites for local organizations
Maintain a personal website or blog to showcase work

Resources

What Can I Do with This Major? <http://whatcanidowiththismajor.com/major/electronic-media-broadcasting/>
What Can I Do with This Major? <http://whatcanidowiththismajor.com/major/journalism/>
Riley Guide, Job and Industry Resources for Writing, Broadcasting, & Journalism Careers <http://www.rileyguide.com/write.html>