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

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/
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&poid=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
College professor
Higher education student support services

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
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/
**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](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 Alliance of Museums [http://www.aam-us.org/resources/careers](http://www.aam-us.org/resources/careers)
- Society of American Archivists [http://www2.archivists.org/profession](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**
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/