

# WHAT ARE YOU MAJORING IN?

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**How many times have you been asked this question? If your answer is, “I have no clue!” you are not alone!**

Choosing a major is one of the biggest decisions you will make. At least half of the courses you take in college will be part of your major requirements. Your major will become a big part of your “world” when you are in college. Your professors, your academic peers, your mentors, and potentially many of your activities like research opportunities, internships and even clubs, could be centered around your major.

I like to think of a major as the primary “lens” that you choose to see the world from. Therefore, it will be a better fit if it is related to your interests and values. For example, if you major in psychology, you might become a counselor or you may move into a

career in business, but you will apply your knowledge in psychology to be more effective in business.

Your major may, or may-not be directly linked to a specific job. Instead, it might help you to develop crucial transferable skills like reading, writing, oral communication, researching, and critical thinking. For example, your major is computer science and your career is software design or your major is English and your career is law.

The key is to choose a major that is a good match for you! Therefore, it is essential that you spend some time learning more about who you really are: your interests, abilities, values, motivations, and current realities. You can begin by asking yourself some difficult questions. Be open-minded and honest with yourself. Write down your answers.

## 1. What are your interests?

Think about the things in your life that you most enjoy...

1. What kinds of activities and hobbies do you like to engage in?
2. What do you like to read, watch, and listen to?
3. What courses from high school and/or college have been most interesting to you?
4. Do you enjoy outdoor activities or being indoors?
5. When you fantasize about a career, what do you think you would enjoy doing or being?
6. What kinds of activities do not interest you? Why?

## 2. What are your abilities?

Think about the things that you are good at...

1. Do you seem to have a natural talent for helping other people, working with numbers, influencing others, solving problems, using your hands, or organizing activities?
2. Are you a person who likes to take the lead or do you prefer to let someone else do that?
3. How strong are your study skills?
4. Do your past grades accurately reflect your abilities?
5. Do you have abilities specific to one subject over others? Do you like using those abilities?

## 3. What are your personal and professional values?

Think about the values and principles that guide your life...

1. Do certain religious, philosophical, moral, or ethical beliefs and teachings strongly influence your choices?
2. Do you prefer a more structured or unstructured daily schedule?
3. Do you prefer working in a team or mostly on your own?
4. How important is the amount of money that you make?
5. How important is the amount of time that you spend engaged in work vs. free time?
6. What might you have to give up or compromise in order to study a particular major?

## 4. What are your motivations?

Ask yourself why you might be considering a particular major...

1. Do your strongest motivations come from your interests, your abilities, your values, or from some other factors?
2. Are outside pressures (from family, peers, or the job market) shaping and influencing your decisions?
3. Are you thinking about choosing a major because you believe it will be easy, because it is what somebody else said you “should” do, or because it might lead to a high paying job?
4. Would your motivation be strong enough to allow you to succeed in a major even if other factors seemed to direct you away from that major?

## 5. What are the realities?

Consider what situations in your life may have a strong or overriding influence on your choice of major.

1. Do your interests, abilities, values, and motivations match well with the major(s) you are considering?
2. What other realities might you face in choosing your major?
3. Given your life circumstances, (finances, personal responsibilities, etc.) is your choice of major a realistic one?

I hope that you have discovered more about yourself by doing this assessment. Learn more by taking a variety of classes and engaging in extracurricular activities. Also, I recommend that you take your answers to this and meet with an academic advisor and/or a career counselor. They are there to help you. Take the time now to find the best major for you. It will help guide your path in college and your future career!

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