

## Choosing a Major

Choosing a major is, for many, a very difficult part of college. Not only do they have the stress of desperately wanting to give an answer when asked "what's your major?" by everyone they meet. They are also likely to have pressure from family to either hurry up and decide or choose a certain type of major. For some, they have to live up to what a parent does, or an older sibling, or someone else they know. Often, college students have to (or feel they do) meet everyone else's expectations for them with their major choice.

To "everyone else", I say LAY OFF! College students have enough pressure without adding to it. It really isn't easy to decide what they want to do with the rest of their life &ndash; even if it was for you.

To the "undecided" college students, I say here are some suggestions. Oh, and just ignore all those people.

Personally, I don't think you can control when you'll find the right major. I do think you can control how much thought and effort you put into it. As long as you're working toward deciding on a major, you're doing all you can.

Choosing a major is about self analysis and introspection - thinking about jobs and careers that play to your strengths and interests. You should be thinking about what you like to do, what you're good at (not always the same thing), the type of setting you want to work in, how long you'd like to (or can afford to) be in school, if you want to travel for work, and a hundred other factors. Part of this also involves seeking professional assistance from a high school counselor or career counselor. They can have you take a variety of assessments and inventories to look at aspects of your personality you may not even be aware of.

While you're doing the self-analysis, you also need to talk to as many people as you can about what they do and how they got there. Talk to your parents and other family members, to your parents' friends and your friends' parents, to your teachers and clergy, and other adults you respect. It's not like they're not going to be asking you what you're majoring in&hellip;

Once you figure out what you want to do (or even start to have an idea), your job isn't through. Then you need to start getting hands-on experience doing that. If you try hard enough, you should be able to secure a job or volunteer doing something related to a major you're interested in. That experience serves three purposes: 1. to help you ensure you will really enjoy that career, 2. as evidence to future employers that you're serious about that job, and 3. as a resume builder.

Eventually, something is going to fit. Remember, figuring out things you DON'T want to do is still progress.

The Occupational Outlook Handbook (<http://www.bls.gov/oco/>) provides excellent information on virtually every career.

Submit questions or contact the College Answer Guy at [lance@collegeanswerguy.com](mailto:lance@collegeanswerguy.com) and visit his web sites at <http://www.collegeanswerguy.com> and <http://www.collegeprep101.com>