

Career Fields for History Majors

HISTORIANS AS EDUCATORS

Many history majors become teachers in secondary education. They also enter higher education on many levels, including teaching at community colleges, undergraduate colleges and universities. History majors are also members of other educational institutions such as historic sites and museums, where they can become docents, education directors, curators, guides, and interpreters. In addition, education can take forms other than a classroom; these include work as historical consultants, contract archivists, public historians, writers, and even filmmakers.

HISTORIANS AS RESEARCHERS

Many history majors enter careers as researchers, emphasizing their skills in evaluating and analyzing documentary evidence. Historians as researchers include public historians as well as policy advisers, who serve as planners, evaluators, and policy analysts, often for state, local, and federal governments. In addition, historians often find employment as researchers for museums and historical organizations, or pursue additional specialized training to become professionals in cultural resources management and historic preservation.

HISTORIANS AS WRITERS AND EDITORS

Because success as a history major depends upon learning to write effectively, many historians become writers and editors. They make their living as authors of historical books, or more commonly, they work as editors at publishing houses. Many historians become print and broadcast journalists, and others become documentary editors who oversee the publication of documents such as those produced by government agencies.

HISTORIANS AS INFORMATION MANAGERS

Because history majors learn to deal with documents, many pursue a one- or two-year graduate program in library studies or archival management. With this additional training, history majors enter the fields of archives management, information management, records management, and librarianship.

HISTORIANS AS ADVOCATES

Many history majors find that historical training makes a perfect preparation for law school, as historians and lawyers often do roughly the same thing — they argue persuasively using historical data to support their arguments. Many history majors become lawyers; some undertake careers in litigation support as paralegals. Others enter public service and become policy makers, serve as legislative staff members at all levels of government, or become officers of granting agencies or foundations.

HISTORIANS AS BUSINESS-PEOPLE

Most people overlook the value of a history major in preparing for a career in business. Historians track historic trends, an important skill for people who are developing products to market or are engaged in corporate or financial planning. Many people who complete an undergraduate degree in history enter banking, insurance, and stock analysis. Historians also learn how to write persuasively, and this training gives them an edge in advertising, communications media, and marketing. Many industries additionally depend on an intimate knowledge of government policies and historical trends; thus, history majors have found their skills useful in extractive industries and public utilities.

USEFUL WEBSITES

<http://blog.historians.org/2015/11/history-logistics-degree-in-history-helps-stem-career/>

<https://www.historians.org/jobs-and-professional-development/career-resources/careers-for-history-majors>

<http://history.ucdavis.edu/undergraduate/what-can-i-do-as-a-history-major> [1 source for this handout]

<https://www.aacu.org/leap/liberal-education-nation-blog/myth-unemployed-humanities-major>

CAREERS

Archivist	Legislative Assistant	Publishing Executive
Congressional Aide	Literary Agent	Records Manager
Historic Site Professional	Litigation Support Staff Member	Secondary School Teacher
Information Manager	News Correspondent	Nonprofit Professional
Journalist	Paralegal	Museum Professional
Lawyer	Public Policy Specialist	Lobbyist