

[See this page in the course material.](#)

## Learning Objectives

- List key strategies for selecting a college major

In the United States and Canada, your academic major—simply called “your major”—is the academic discipline you commit to as an undergraduate student. It’s an area you specialize in, such as accounting, chemistry, criminology, archeology, digital arts, or dance. In United States colleges and universities, roughly 2,000 majors are offered. And within each major is a host of core courses and electives. When you successfully complete the required courses in your major, you qualify for a degree.

Where did the term major come from? In 1877, it first appeared in a Johns Hopkins University catalogue. That major required only two years of study. Later, in 1910, Abbott Lawrence Lowell introduced the academic major system to Harvard University during his time as president there. This major required students to complete courses in a specialized discipline and also in other subjects. Variations of this system are now the norm in higher education institutions in the U.S. and Canada.

Why is your major important? It’s important because it’s a defining and organizing feature of your undergraduate degree. Ultimately, your major should provide you with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and/or behaviors you need to fulfill your college goals and objectives.

In this section we look at how to select your major and how your college major may correlate with a career. Does your major matter to your career? What happens if you change your major? Does changing your major mean you must change your career? Read on to find out!

## How to Select Your College Major

Selecting your major is one of the most exciting tasks (and, to some students, perhaps one of the most nerve-wracking tasks) you are asked to perform in college. So many decisions are tied to it. But if you have good guidance, patience, and enthusiasm, the process is easier. Here are some tips to follow as you consider your college major.

1. Seek inspiration
2. Consider everything
3. Identify talents and interests
4. Explore available resources

## 5. In-depth career exploration

The next video shares nine tips:

1. Narrow your choices by deciding what you don't like.
2. Explore careers that might interest you. Ask questions.
3. Use your school's resources.
4. Ask your teacher, counselor, and family about your strengths.
5. 60 percent of students change their majors.
6. Your major isn't going to define your life. But choosing one that interests you will make your college experience much more rewarding.
7. Go on informational interviews with people in careers that interest you.
8. There's no pressure to decide now.
9. Take new classes and discover your interests.



[See this interactive in the course material.](#)

You can view the [transcript for “How to Select Your College Major – WiseChoice” here \(opens in new window\)](#).

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