What Can I Do With A Major In…

History?

Compiled by the staff at the SUNY Oneonta Career Development Center

Introduction

The study of the past broadens our perspective and allows us to learn about important aspects of human life. History establishes connections between various cultures, nations and economic realities. Studying history develops two skills in particular: the ability to understand complicated changes in the world, and the ability to put it into an organized pattern and express in a written form.

The main purpose for studying history is to recognize and analyze the intricacy of changing powers which are responsible for the creation of our world today. History is here to help us understand accomplishments as well as major human events. A Historian covers a vast range of job settings and career options. Generally, historians study, assess, and interpret the past to determine what happened and why.

Functional Skill Set for History Majors:

Effectively explain ideas.
Ability to communicate and present ideas & information.
Ability to analyze and interpret information and ideas.
Ability to accurately identify and evaluate records of past events, ideas and facts.
Decision making.
Interviewing and collecting information from people and communicating it to others.
Broad background of general knowledge.
Proficiency for accuracy and detail.
Ability to concentrate for long periods of time.
Related Career Titles for History Majors

- Administrative Officer/Govt. Service
- Anthropologist
- Antique Dealer
- Archeologist
- Architectural Historian
- Archivist
- Art Appraiser
- Art Conservator
- Artisan
- Auctioneer
- Author
- Banker
- Biographer
- Clergy
- Collections Manager
- College Professor
- Community Relations
- Congressional Aide
- Consultant
- Consumer Advocate
- Counselor
- Criminologist
- Critic (book, drama, film)
- Curator
- Demographer
- Economist
- Editors
- Educator
- Environment Education
- Exhibit Designer
- FBI/CIA Agent
- Folklorist
- Foreign News Correspondent
- Foreign Service Officer
- Genealogist
- Geographer
- Govt. Official
- Historian
- Historian Dramatic Arts
- Historical Advisor
- Historical Archaeologist
- Historical Society
- Indicter
- Information specialist
- Insurance Agent
- Intelligence analyst
- International Relations
- Interpreter
- Investment Banking
- Journalist
- Lawyers
- Lecturer
- Legal Assistant
- Legislator
- Librarians
- Lobbyist
- Manager/Chamber of Commerce
- Managers/Social Science
- Market Research Analyst
- Media Consultant
- Movie Critic
- Museum Technician/Curator
- New Editor
- News Producer
- Newspaper Reporter
- Paralegal Assistant
- Park Ranger
- Peace Corps Worker
- Photographer
- Photojournalist
- Political Scientist
- Preservationist
- Psychologist
- Public Administrator
- Public Relation Specialist
- Recruiter
- Research Assistant
- Research Library Assistant
- Research Writer
Some Organizations that Typically Employ Historians:

- Advertising
- Broadcasting
- Bureau of the Census
- Business and Industry
- CIA/FBI
- Department of State
- Media
- Museums & Archives
- Paralegal Profession
- Peace Corps/Vista
- Politics
- Public Interest Groups
- Campaigns
- Legislators
- Political Parties
- Research Foundations
- Schools and Universities
- State and Local Governments
- Travel and tour services
- Administration & Legislation
- Corrections & Court Systems
- Education
- Health and Human Services
- Highway & Street Construction and Maintenance
- Housing & Community Development
- Library
- Parks & Recreation
- Police & Fire Protection
- Social & Welfare Services
- Transportation
- Air, Bus, and Rail Lines
- Banks, Savings/ Commercial
- Federal Government Agencies
- Historical Societies
- Insurance Companies
- Law Enforcement
- Non-Profit Organizations
- Private Homes
- Publishing Co.
- State Parks
- TV/Radio/Cable
- Archives
- Chambers of Commerce
- Exhibits
- Film Companies
- Immunization and Naturalization
- Service
- International Government Agencies
- Law Firms
- Magazines & Newspapers
- Political Campaigns
Start a Strategic Plan

**Government:**
Get relevant experience in student government or intern in a government agency.
Demonstrate superior academic record.
Plan to obtain an advanced degree.
Develop foreign language ability.
Become familiar with government hiring procedures.
Consider entry-level positions in local, state and federal agencies even though they may not be history-related.
Gain experience and make contacts through internship with government agency or elected public official.
Volunteer to work with public interest group, political campaign, political association, or community service project.
Participate in student government and campus politics.

**Journalism:**
Work on campus newspaper, TV, or radio.
Find summer or part-time work (paid or volunteer with local commercial TV or radio station.)
Volunteer with public TV or radio.
Acquire minor or double major in journalism or broadcasting.

**Teaching:**
Obtain teaching certificate for public school teaching.
Obtain graduate degree for college and university teaching.
Get experience as tutor, camp counselor, church school teacher, etc.
Solicit strong personal recommendations.
Develop excellent presentation skills.
Find an internship or volunteer in a setting that appeals to you.
Learn how to develop curriculums and workshops and how to use multimedia.
Become an “expert” in a particular subject.

**Law:**
Get experience as a volunteer in nonprofit organizations that interest you.
Obtain paralegal training or law degree.
Find summer/part-time work in a law firm.
Volunteer with a public advocacy group.
Seek leadership roles in campus organizations.
Acquire good background in computers.

**General:**
Get an internship or volunteer in a related organization.
Develop excellent written and oral communication skills.
Hone organizational skills and learn to have eye for detail.
Professional Organizations and Associations for History Majors:

Organization of American Historians
112 N. Bryan Ave.
Bloomington IN 47408-4199
http://www.oah.org

Historians Film Committee
Popular Culture Center
Route 3, Box 80
Cleveland OK 74020

Society for Historians of America Foreign Relations
Department of History
Wright State University
Dayton OH 45435

Bureau of the Census
http://www.census.gov

National Register of Historic Places
http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/index.htm

Society for American Archaeology
http://www.saa.org/

Yahoo! Resources for History
http://www.yahoo.com/Arts/Humanities/History/Organizations/

Resources of Historical Societies
http://www.lib.uwaterloo.ca/society/history_soc.html

Resources of Archaeological Societies
http://www.lib.uwaterloo.ca/society/archaeol_soc.html

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# HISTORY

## What can I do with this major?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREAS</th>
<th>EMPLOYERS</th>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **GOVERNMENT** | Federal agencies including:  
  - The Smithsonian Institute  
  - National Archives and Records  
  - Library of Congress  
  - National Park Service  
  - Intelligence services  
  - Foreign service  
  State and local agencies including:  
  - Archives and libraries  
  - Museums, parks, and historic sites  
  - Municipal archives  
  - Arts and humanities councils | Gain relevant experience in student government or other related organizations.  
  Complete an internship with a government agency.  
  Maintain a superior academic record.  
  Plan on obtaining an advanced degree.  
  Develop foreign language skills.  
  Become familiar with specialized government hiring procedures.  
  Consider a variety of entry-level positions in all branches of local, state, and federal government. |
| **POLITICS**   | Elected or appointed public officials (i.e., legislators, governors, mayors, judges)  
  National political party headquarters  
  Public interest/advocacy groups  
  Political campaigns | Gain experience and make contacts through internships with government agencies or public officials.  
  Volunteer to work with public interest groups, political campaigns, political associations, or community service projects.  
  Participate in student government and campus politics. |
| **LAW**        | Law firms  
  Corporate legal departments  
  Government agencies  
  Public advocacy groups | Obtain paralegal training or law degree.  
  Gain experience through summer or part-time work in a law firm.  
  Volunteer with a public advocacy group.  
  Participate in mock trial and pre-law associations. |
| **NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS** | History museums and historic sites  
  Historical associations and societies  
  Cultural heritage organizations  
  Historical projects  
  Research and service institutions | Volunteer with various nonprofit organizations of interest.  
  Consider supplementing curriculum with relevant course work in anthropology, sociology, art history, or foreign languages. |
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREAS</th>
<th>EMPLOYERS</th>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CURATORIAL AND</td>
<td>Museums</td>
<td>Acquire strong computer knowledge and experience.</td>
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<td>ARCHIVAL MANAGEMENT</td>
<td>Historical homes</td>
<td>Obtain an internship or volunteer in a related organization.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Art galleries</td>
<td>Develop excellent written and oral communication skills.</td>
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<td>Special collections</td>
<td>Hone organizational skills and develop attention to detail.</td>
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<td>Historical societies</td>
<td>Earn a master's degree in information sciences for advanced opportunities in data management.</td>
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<td>Libraries</td>
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<td>Universities and colleges</td>
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<td>National, state, and local government</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Corporations</td>
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<td>Non-profit organizations</td>
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<td>Research institutes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Complete an internship or volunteer in a setting of interest.</td>
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<tr>
<td>JOURNALISM</td>
<td>Museums</td>
<td>Work on campus newspaper, TV, or radio.</td>
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<td>Historical homes</td>
<td>Find summer or part-time work with local commercial TV or radio station.</td>
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<td>Art galleries</td>
<td>Volunteer with public TV or radio.</td>
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<td>Special collections</td>
<td>Consider obtaining a minor or double major in journalism or broadcasting/electronic media.</td>
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<td>Historical societies</td>
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<td>Universities and colleges</td>
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<td></td>
<td>National, state, and regional radio networks</td>
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<td>EDUCATION</td>
<td>News departments of local, public, and commercial radio and TV stations</td>
<td>Develop excellent presentation skills.</td>
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<td>Syndicated radio services</td>
<td>Become skilled in the use of multimedia.</td>
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<td>Newspapers</td>
<td>Learn how to develop curriculums and workshops.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>National, state, and regional radio networks</td>
<td>Become an &quot;expert&quot; in a particular subject.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>Public and private schools</td>
<td>Obtain teaching certificate for public school teaching.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elementary, Middle, or Secondary</td>
<td>Colleges and universities</td>
<td>Obtain a graduate degree for college and/or university teaching.</td>
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<td>Higher Education</td>
<td>Museums</td>
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<td>Zoological parks, aquariums, wildlife refuges, and bird sanctuaries</td>
<td>Gain experience as a tutor, camp counselor, church school teacher, etc.</td>
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<td>Aboretums, gardens, and conservatories</td>
<td>Build strong relationships with professors, supervisors, or other community leaders for strong personal recommendations.</td>
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<td>Community Education</td>
<td>Camps</td>
<td>Complete an internship or volunteer in a setting of interest.</td>
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<td>National and state parks</td>
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### AREAS

**BUSINESS**
- Management
- Sales
- Office Administration

**EMPLOYERS**
- All major retail firms including drug, specialty, variety, and department store chains
- Wholesalers
- Manufacturers
- Insurance companies
- Real estate agencies
- Financial institutions
- Nonprofit organizations

**STRATEGIES**
- Earn a minor in business.
- Obtain related experience through advertisement sales positions with campus yearbook or newspaper.
- Gain relevant retail sales experience.
- Acquire good computer and statistical skills.
- Develop excellent communication skills.
- Demonstrate a high energy level.
- Obtain leadership experience in student or community organizations.
- Consider an MBA for brand management, consulting, and research opportunities.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

- An undergraduate degree in history is good preparation for graduate study in history as well as other areas such as psychology, law, or business.
- Research the prerequisites of the area of interest and tailor program of study to meet curricular and skill needs.
- Part-time, summer, internship, and volunteer experiences are critical.
- Develop skills by obtaining a leadership role in a school or community organization.
- Get involved in Student Government.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills are imperative for most careers related to history, politics, or government.
- Become familiar with the government application process for opportunities in federal, state, or local government.
- Prepare to develop a specialty area including both academic training and work experience for history related careers.
- Develop patience, persistence, and drive in obtaining history related positions.
- For careers in politics, be prepared to volunteer extensively before being hired or elected as an employee or official. Begin by working with the campaign or official of choice while in college.
- For careers in arts and humanities, obtain a broad liberal arts background including knowledge of the arts, personal and mass communication, and foreign languages.
- Join related social and/or professional organizations.
- Develop a network of both formal and informal contacts.
- Research websites and books that address various job opportunities, pay structure, and hiring processes.