Wondering what you should major in, or what you can do with certain majors? You’re not alone!

What’s a Major For?
Majors are part of the process that leads to earning a degree. They are designed for academic purposes rather than for career purposes. This is why the link between many majors and specific career fields is often unclear. Once you recognize this, you can begin to ask yourself some questions.

Which Comes First—Major or Career?
Either way works! Do you want to choose a major first and identify career possibilities later, or

Steps to a Major Decision

Step 1: Assess Yourself
Your first step is to do some self-assessment. The more you understand yourself, the clearer your goals and the way to reach them will become. Ask yourself the following questions:

- What do you truly enjoy? Consider the classes and activities that you have liked the best. What did they involve? Why did you enjoy them? There are careers related to every interest you have!
- What are you good at? What is really important to you? Complete the Career Center’s online FOCUS 2 program which will help you explore your skills, interests and values as they relate to majors and careers. Access FOCUS 2 via the Career Center website at www.sbu.edu/cprc.
- What is the coolest job you can imagine? Describe it as specifically as you can.

Step 2: Gather Information and Explore Options
The more information you find, the more informed your final decision will be.

- Examine the majors available to you in your undergraduate catalog. Make a list of your options and eliminate those that don’t interest you. Read more about majors of interest and mark the courses in each major that most interest you. This should help you shorten your list.
- Visit academic department web pages for majors of interest, or read print materials they offer. Talk with students currently in those majors, and faculty of those departments.
- Utilize the varied major exploration resource available via the Career Center’s website at www.sbu.edu/cprc.

Step 3: Narrow Down our Choices

- It’s time to put together the information you have collected. Weigh the pros and cons of each option. If you haven’t already, narrow your list down to two or three majors.
- Consider the feasibility of a double major or making one of your options your minor. Consider creating your own major that will link several interests into one major with an integrated theme.
- Talk with your academic advisor and a career counselor in the Career Center if you are still having difficulty.

Step 4: Take Action and Your Journey Begins

- Sample courses in the majors you are considering.
- Choose activities, internships, volunteer work, and/or part-time employment that can help you further develop your skills in areas that interest you.
- Talk to people who work in career fields that you are interested in. Learn what academic majors might be a good “fit” for the type of work you are considering.
- Make your decision - declare your major!

Adapted from an article written by MaryLou Taylor at www.jobweb.com

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