Career Resources for History Majors

What can you do with a major in history? Students who complete this major acquire a variety of intellectual skills that employers seek, enabling them to work in a wide array of fields. In particular History majors at Oberlin will have effective research, writing, and critical analysis skills. In addition, you will have an ability to incorporate interdisciplinary thinking in your approach to problem solving and will learn how to think about a problem and its potential solutions from many angles. Keep in mind that only a small percentage of history majors become historians — history majors often become educators, writers, editors, archivists, political advocates, businesspeople, and entertainers.

The following guide contains ideas for popular career paths and ways to gain experience in your potential field of interest. Included is a list of resources for finding graduate school programs, as well as a number of job search resources and related organizations. Some of the opportunities open to history majors exist in private business, government service, nonprofit organizations, education, and graduate school.

**TRANSFERABLE SKILLS**

**Effective Writing Skills** — The ability to successfully and precisely communicate one’s ideas in writing is vital to any job.

**Critical Analysis Skills** — The ability to analyze a situation and come up with creative and practical solutions.

**Research Skills** — The ability to understand past practices and policies, trace the roots of any issue, find new information regarding that issue, and incorporate information into analysis.

**Interdisciplinary Thinking and Training** — The ability to think about a problem from many angles, analyze it using a variety of tools, and provide solutions from different perspectives.

**Curiosity and Inquisitiveness** — The desire to learn more, to examine reasons beneath issues, and to understand them as part of a continual education process.

**OPPORTUNITIES TO APPLY THESE SKILLS?**

**Historians as Educators** — Ability to communicate ideas
Elementary & secondary education, higher education, historic sites and museums as docents, education directors, curators, guides, interpreters, historical consultants, contract archivists, public historians, writers, and filmmakers.

**Historians as Researchers** — Ability to evaluate and analyze documentary evidence
Public historians, policy advisors (planners, evaluators and policy analysts, and participation in think-tanks at the state, local and federal level), researchers for museums, historical organizations, cultural resources management, and historic preservation.

**Historians as Writers/Editors** — Ability to write effectively
Authors of historical books, editors at publishing houses, print and broadcast journalists, and documentary editors.

**Historians as Information Managers** — Ability to handle documents & in depth information
Library science, archival management, information and records management, and librarianship.

**Historians as Advocates** — Ability to apply historical knowledge and training and argue persuasively
Lawyers, paralegals, policymakers, legislative staff at all levels of government, officers of granting agencies and foundations.

**Historians as Businesspeople** — Ability to track historic trends and write persuasively
Banking, insurance, stock analysis, product development and marketing, corporate and financial planning, advertising, communications media, and nonprofit associations, archivists (Private large and medium size corporations often employ to oversee record management), curators and site managers (some large companies build and manage their own museums).
### The Following Table Contains Popular Career Paths and Ways to Gain Early Experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Interest</th>
<th>Potential Employers</th>
<th>Strategies to Gain Experience</th>
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<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>Smithsonian Institution, Library of Congress, National Park Service, Intelligence Services, Foreign Services, State archives/libraries, State museums, parks, historic sites, Municipal archives</td>
<td>- Participate in student government&lt;br&gt;- Intern in a government agency&lt;br&gt;- Develop foreign language ability&lt;br&gt;- Consider entry-level positions in local, state and federal agencies, even if they are not history related.</td>
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<td>Politics</td>
<td>Staff of legislator, governor or mayor, National political party headquarters, Public interest advocacy groups, Political campaigns</td>
<td>- Make contacts through internships with government agency or elected public official.&lt;br&gt;- Volunteer with public interest group, political campaign, community service project&lt;br&gt;- Participate in student government</td>
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<td>Journalism: Broadcast Print</td>
<td>News department of local public and commercial radio and TV stations, Newspapers, National, state, regional radio networks</td>
<td>- Work on campus newspaper, TV, radio&lt;br&gt;- Volunteer with public TV/radio</td>
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<td>Education: Teaching</td>
<td>Public and private schools, Colleges and universities</td>
<td>- Obtain teaching certificate for public school teaching&lt;br&gt;- Obtain a teaching practicum&lt;br&gt;- Obtain graduate degree for university teaching</td>
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<td>Education: Non-classroom</td>
<td>Museums, Zoological parks, aquariums, wildlife refuges, Arboretums, gardens, conservatories, National and State parks</td>
<td>- Develop excellent presentation skills.&lt;br&gt;- Learn how to develop curriculums and workshops, and how to use multimedia.&lt;br&gt;- Become an “expert” in a particular subject.</td>
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<td>Law: Paralegal Lawyer</td>
<td>Law firm, Corporate legal department, Government agencies, Public advocacy groups</td>
<td>- Obtain paralegal training/law degree&lt;br&gt;- Summer/part-time work in a law firm&lt;br&gt;- Volunteer with a public advocacy group.</td>
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<td>Nonprofit Organizations</td>
<td>History museums and historic sites, Historical associations and societies, Cultural heritage organizations, Historical projects, Research and service institutions</td>
<td>- Volunteer or work in a nonprofit organizations that interest you.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Curatorial and Archival Management</td>
<td>Museums, Historical homes/societies, Art galleries, Special collections, Libraries, Universities and colleges, National, state, local governments, Corporations</td>
<td>- Acquire good background in computers.&lt;br&gt;- Excellent written, organizational and oral communication skills.&lt;br&gt;- Earn a master’s degree in information sciences for advanced opportunities in data management.</td>
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### Resources

**Career Exploration**
- American Historical Association: www.historians.org/index.cfm
- American Association for State and Local History: www.aaslh.org/
- The World History Association: www.thewha.org/
- American Association of Museums: www.aam-us.org

**Jobs and Internships**
- Humanities and Social Sciences Online: www.h-net.org/jobs
- Museum Careers: www.aam-us.org/aviso/
- Museum Employment Resource Center: www.museum-employment.com

**Museum Stuff**
- www.museumstuff.com/professionals/jobs/index.html

**Organization of American Historians**
- www.oah.org/announce/jobs.html

**Museum Jobs**
- jobsearch.about.com/cs/museumjobs/index.html?terms=museums

**Government Jobs**
- www.usajobs.com

**Graduate School & Fellowships**
- Peterson’s Guide: www.petersons.com
- Fellowships Resources for Oberlin College Students: www.oberlin.edu/career/hcf/
- Gradschool.com: www.gradschool.com/programs/history.html

**Graduate Guide Search**
- www.graduatetguide.com

**Find The Right School**
- www.findtherightschool.com

**Office of Career Services - Library Resources**
- Great Jobs for History Majors
- The History Internship Book

**Additional Resources**
- American Association for State and Local History: www.aaslh.org
- Bureau of the Census: www.census.gov
- Society for American Archaeology: www.saa.org
- Resources of Historical & Archaeological Societies: www.lib.uwaterloo.ca/society/history_societies.html

**SpotLight On Careers**
- www.oberlin.edu/career/resources.html