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collegeapp101.com

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Talking to Your Student about College Major

More than a decade has passed, since Pew Research published "The Rising Cost of Not Going to College." While the landscape of higher education has changed in the intervening years, the article still presents topics that parents should address with their college-bound high school students. One topic is college major.

In a broad sense, "The Rising Cost of Not Going to College" evaluates the usefulness of a college major to a college graduate's present job. Researchers asked college graduates, what is the relationship between your job and your college major? Respondents had four answer options: (1) very closely related, (2) somewhat closely related, (3) not very closely related, or (4) not at all related. 78% of Science/Engineering majors answered #1 or #2. 72% of Business majors answered #1 or #2. 60% of Social Science/Liberal Arts/Education majors answered #1 or #2. These percentages mean many college graduates have jobs quite unrelated to their college major: 22% of Science/Engineering majors, 28% of Business majors, and 40% of Social Science/Liberal Arts/Education majors.

How should parents use this information in dinner table conversations? If a college bound high school student plans to major in, for example, Education, then her parent should explain that, statistically, four in ten Education majors will work a job that is not very closely related or not at all related to Education. Put differently: there is a 40% chance that she will never be a teacher. Perhaps the desired major is Art History. Prospective Art History majors should face the reality (before entering college) that there is a 40% chance they will land a job that is not very closely related or not at all related to Art History.

College App 101 supports the pursuit of any and all college majors. There are two primary caveats. One, college-bound high school students should simply count the cost in advance, accepting the reality that they may work a job that is unrelated to their major. Two, all college expenses should be paid with scholarships, grants, personal savings, and the like, and NOT student loans. A debt-free degree and recognition that a desired major may not result in a major-related career field will result in fewer educational regrets.

Career Planning Session
College App 101 is excited to announce a new career aptitude service: Career Planning Session. This service is for students, who do not know what college major to declare or career path to pursue. The Career Planning Session is a meeting to discuss a high school student's prospective career choices and the education that such career prospects require. A pre-meeting assessment is required. Connect with Dr. Riley at collegeapp101.com and request more information today.

College App 101 Podcasts
Designed for college bound high school students and their parents, these podcasts are brief, informational, and entertaining. They are available on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and collegeapp101.com/podcasts/. Recent episodes:

- The Importance of Wonder in Education
- The Case for a Classical Education (K-12) Part 1
- Foresight's Role in Academic Success
- Fall 2025 Financial Tips: FAFSA, Generosity, and More

Dates to Remember

- Early Jan: a Regular Decision application deadline for many colleges (check your deadlines!)
- Jan 9: regular registration deadline for the Feb 14 ACT
- Jan 23: late registration deadline for the Feb 14 ACT (fee increase)
- Feb 14: ACT test day
- Feb 27: regular registration deadline for the Mar 14 SAT

Click here for SAT registration and here for ACT registration

Past College App 101 Newsletters
Past editions of the College App 101 Newsletter can be found here.