As liberal arts graduates enter the job market, their direction may not be as obvious as that of their technically trained counterparts.

Liberal arts majors are less fortunate because such a heading cannot be found in the want ads. Yet if they learn to target their aptitudes, they have as good a chance as anyone to find meaningful work.

Students are no longer necessarily hired just because they have a particular degree. Math and physics majors are getting engineering jobs and liberal arts majors are getting accounting jobs. The reason new graduates are being hired is because they have specific skills that meet the needs of the employer.

No one is more suited to this approach than the liberal arts major. What you need to do is to find out what you really want to do—regardless of your major. Along with asking "What can I do with a major in..." ask, "What fascinates me? How can I connect my interests with a job? What do I really want to be doing in 20 years?"

Once you have answered those questions, look at possibilities for matching your interests with a job. There are more options than you might think. Don't get stuck on titles. For instance, if you want to be an autonomous problem-solver, someone with good communication skills who can do a good job of utilizing resources, forget about the titles and look at the job descriptions. Management consultants, career specialists, personnel managers, teachers or trainers within organizations and schools are just a few options.

As a liberal arts major, you have to do much more work in terms of researching different job markets and finding out where there is a demand. Conduct in-depth research on any companies that appeal to you, and try to match their needs to your wants. You must be specific, however. It is possible to be too general, too open and too flexible.

To be successful, you should combine your long-term vision with short-term specificity. Present yourself to your potential employer as someone who both understands the broad goals of the company and has the ability to grow and contribute in the long run, but most importantly, show how you can excel in that specific job. Most likely this will involve some specialized skills. If you've taken business courses, had work experiences or utilized a computer in your liberal arts work, point out those strengths.

Once you've taken the time to determine your real interests and have set some long-term goals, map out a plan—long- and short-term—on how to get there. Resources are plentiful—from the Occupational Outlook Handbook or Dictionary of Occupational Titles. Your liberal arts education has equipped you to take a broad topic and research it. Use those skills to make the connection between what you want and what companies need.

Once you find job descriptions that match your long-term interests, set about shaping your resume and, if need be, getting the additional specific skills, training or certification to get that first job.

Your first job may not match your long-term goal. But it's the first step. And that, at this point, is the all-important one.

### What Liberal Arts Graduates Are Doing

A sampling of the wide range of positions filled by liberal arts graduates:

- Accountant
- Administrative assistant
- Advertising account executive
- Air traffic controller
- Artist
- Auditor
- Bank manager
- Business systems analyst
- Buyer
- Child support enforcement officer
- Claims examiner
- Communications specialist
- Computer specialist
- Copywriter
- Counselor
- Customer service representative
- Editor
- Employee relations specialist
- Engineering planner
- Financial consultant
- Graphic designer
- Hotel manager
- Human resource specialist
- Industrial designer
- Interpreter/translator
- Journalist
- Librarian
- Management consultant
- Marketing representative
- Medical/dental assistant
- Museum coordinator
- Office administrator
- Outpatient therapist
- Paralegal
- Photographer
- Probation officer
- Product specialist
- Psychologist
- Public relations specialist
- Quality engineer
- Recreation administrator
- Research analyst
- Restaurant manager
- Retail manager
- Sales representative
- Social worker
- Speech pathologist
- Stockbroker
- Systems analyst
- Tax consultant
- Teacher
- Technical writer
- Underwriter
- Transportation specialist
- Urban planner
- Writer

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**Marketing Your Liberal Arts Degree**

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