### QUESTIONS – College Major Fact or Myth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Fact</th>
<th>Myth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Students need to choose a major before starting college -- the earlier, the better.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Students who choose the wrong major are destined for dead-end jobs and careers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. In terms of majors, the largest group of incoming first-year college students at most schools is &quot;undecided.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Undecided college students should take a wide variety of courses until they find a subject area that most interests them -- and then declare a major in that subject.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Most college students stick with the major they choose in high school or during their first year of college.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. It’s essential for students considering a professional degree in medicine or law to major in pre-med or pre-law.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Once a college student chooses a college major, it’s hard to change that major -- and harder to graduate on time.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. What you study in community college locks you into what you can major in when you transfer to a four-year college.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. At most colleges, with proper planning, students can have a double major or one major and multiple minors and still graduate in four years.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Parents and family who are footing the bill for college often exert undue influence on college major choice.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Majoring in the liberal arts -- especially something like philosophy -- will result in having limited job and career choices.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. All business majors find great jobs at graduation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. The job market -- jobs that are projected with the highest growth and pay -- should be a major determinant in choosing a college major.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. All colleges and universities have numerous resources for helping students find the right major.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. The best approach for choosing a college major is taking the time to know yourself -- your interests, abilities, passions, values, life goals, and the like -- and then finding a major that best fits you.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### SCORING:  
Give yourself 4 points for every correct response.

- **55-60 pts.** -- Major Wisdom. You are a whiz at this whole college majors thing and should have no problems with choosing your college major.
- **48-54 pts.** -- Major Knowledge. You are definitely knowledgeable about college majors, but you need to brush up on some of the key facts and myths.
- **Under 48 pts.** -- Major Struggle. You could be letting many opportunities slip through your fingers, so hit the books so that you know all the realities of college majors.
ANSWERS:  College Major Fact or Myth?

Here are our detailed explanations of each college major fact and myth. Once you've read each explanation, total up your correct responses and go to the scoring section to see where you stand in your understanding of college majors.

1. Students need to choose a major before starting college -- the earlier, the better.

Myth. While it's certainly wise to start thinking about college majors while in high school, very few teenagers have the depth and breadth of experiences necessary to fully understand what they want to do for the rest of their lives. Start building a list of subjects and careers that interest you, adding and subtracting as you learn more about yourself.

2. Students who choose the wrong major are destined for dead-end jobs and careers.

Myth. There is really no such thing as the wrong major. While many students choose a major related to a career choice, there is little that limits a business major from obtaining a job in a non-profit or a philosophy major from obtaining a sales job. College-educated students typically have a much higher income and quality of life than those with just some college -- and those with just a high school diploma.

3. In terms of majors, the largest group of incoming first-year college students at most schools is "undecided."

Fact. Don't believe anyone who tells you differently. The number of "undecided" or "undeclared" is so large at some schools, in fact, that these colleges have started special first-year "college major explorer" programs to help students find direction and focus that leads to college major choices.

4. Undecided college students should take a wide variety of courses until they find a subject area that most interests them -- and then declare a major in that subject.

Myth. This is partly a trick question because on one hand, the more courses and different majors students experience, the better it seems they will be able to make a decision about a major. On the other hand, aimlessly taking a variety of courses that cause you to stay in college longer really offers no benefit. A much better strategy is to talk with professors and students in a variety of subjects -- gathering information to help you make a more informed decision when ready.

5. Most college students stick with the major they choose in high school or during their first year of college.

Myth. A very high percentage of first-year students change their majors by the end of that first year. Many others change majors in their sophomore year. In fact, some students change their majors four or five times before settling on the one best for them. Expect a lot of life changes to occur in your life as you transition from high school to college.

6. It's essential for students considering a professional degree in medicine or law to major in pre-med or pre-law.

Myth. In fact, students considering a professional degree can major in any subject -- just as long as they complete all the required courses that the graduate schools seek. For example, students who have been accepted into medical schools have had majors ranging from English to marketing (and, of course, the
sciences). Often a major outside the professional degree area of study can actually enhance your graduate studies -- and beyond.

7. Once a college student chooses a college major, it's hard to change that major -- and harder to graduate on time.

Myth. Students should NEVER feel locked into a major. In many colleges and universities, changing a major is as simple as completing a standard form. In terms of graduating on time, many colleges and universities require "core" courses during the first two years of school, so changing your major up through the sophomore year of college should not delay graduation; changing majors later may require an extra summer session or two to catch up.

8. What you study in community college locks you into what you can major in when you transfer to a four-year college.

Myth. Community colleges are wonderful alternatives for many college-bound students, and what is studied at the junior college level has no impact on the four-year college. It's important to note, however, that many different rules and protocols relate to what courses will transfer from the junior college to the four-year school -- so do your homework so you won't be unpleasantly surprised.

9. At most colleges, with proper planning, students can have a double major or one major and multiple minors and still graduate in four years.

Fact. Why limit yourself to one major when you can consider multiple majors -- or one major with multiple minors? Students often choose one major that is their life focus and another major or minor(s) that enhance and complement their major. Other times, a minor is simply for self-fulfillment. The key to graduating on time is planning -- and perhaps an additional summer of coursework. See also our article, Should You Consider Multiple Majors or Minors? Examine the Pros and Cons.

10. Parents and family who are footing the bill for college often exert undue influence on college major choice.

Fact. Whether intentional and direct, or not, sometimes families unduly pressure and influence college-bound students. If you face this situation, first try to discover your true passions -- and what you desire as a major. If you stay in a major for which you have no interest or competency, it will sour your college career -- and adversely affect your search for a fulfilling career.

11. Majoring in the liberal arts -- especially something like philosophy -- will result in having limited job and career choices.

Myth. While certain majors have a direct line toward a career (accounting for accountant careers, engineering for engineering careers, and the like), the majority of college graduates can find jobs in most non-technical careers -- regardless of major. Some business employers, for example, actually prefer to hire non-business graduates. That said, students majoring in the liberal arts should NOT ignore career planning while in college; having a projected career path (or several) helps provide direction. Note that in some cases, it may take additional training and certifications for students to obtain job offers. Read more in our article, Ten Ways to Market Your Liberal Arts Degree (URL: http://www.quintcareers.com/marketing_liberal-arts_degrees.html).
12. All business majors find great jobs at graduation.

Myth. No college major offers any guarantees of hiring and job success. While certain majors are more in demand than others, that demand -- if it still exists by the time a student graduates from college -- does not translate into automatic hiring. Factors such as the health of the economy, the number of employers hiring, quality of the student/graduate, and level and use of job-search skills all play a role in job-hunting success at graduation.

13. The job market -- jobs that are projected with the highest growth and pay -- should be a major determinant in choosing a college major.

Myth. Sadly, some students choose majors based on the expectation that the major will lead to high-paying jobs at graduation. The issue is not so much whether these majors actually do lead to high-paying jobs, but that the students are choosing a major based on money (or status) rather than one their passions, abilities, interests, and values.

14. All colleges and universities have numerous resources for helping students find the right major.

Fact. The best idea for all college students is to visit their college's career services office early -- as early as the first semester. These career services offices have trained career professionals who can offer guidance and direction. Most of these offices are also a hub of career resources -- including books, videos, and assessments that can all help you find the ideal major. See also our article, it's Never Too Early -- or Too Late -- to Visit Your College Career Office (URL: http://www.quintcareers.com/college_career_office.html).

15. The best approach for choosing a college major is taking the time to know yourself -- your interests, abilities, passions, values, life goals, and the like -- and then finding a major that best fits you.

Fact. The better you know yourself -- the better you know what you want from college and life -- the better you'll be able to narrow the plethora of majors available at most colleges and universities. Most of this assessment can be done on your own, but as the last question attests, don't forget to also use the resources of your school's career center.

SOURCE: College Major Reality Quiz: Do You Know Fact from Myth? A Quintessential Careers Quiz
by Randall S. Hansen, Ph.D.
http://www.quintcareers.com/college_major_reality_quiz.html

Additional articles, Choosing a College Major: How to Chart Your Ideal Path (URL: http://www.quintcareers.com/choosing_major.html) and What Can I do With a Major in...? (URL: http://www.quintcareers.com/majors/).