The Career Center’s

GUIDE TO
CHOOSING A
COLLEGE
MAJOR

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GUIDE TO CHOOSING A COLLEGE MAJOR

In an attempt to develop an occupational classification system closely tied to psychometric research, John Holland, Ph.D. (1959) proposed the following six basic categories of occupational interest: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional. The following exercises will rely on these occupational interest categories as a means of assisting you in choosing your college major.

Exercise 1 - Party Exercise

Below is a description of six groups of people that will be attending a party. Given that the people in these six groups all have similar interests, we will wager that they will socialize only with members of their same group. Of the six different groups, you are to decide with which three groups you are more comfortable socializing at the party. Indicate your top three choices by putting 1 - 3 in the designated blanks. Each of these groups further describe the six basic categories of occupational interest developed by John Holland.

___Realistic: People who possess athletic or mechanical abilities. These people also prefer working with objects, machines, tools, plants, or animals, or to be outdoors. Some jobs include that of a carpenter, engineer, park ranger, professional athlete, mechanic, army officer, architect, and machine operator. These people enjoy working with things.

___Investigative: People who enjoy observing, learning, investigating, analyzing, evaluating, or solving problems. Some jobs include that of a physician, mathematician, computer programmer chemist, veterinarian, and lab technician. These people enjoy working with ideas and things.

___Artistic: Innovative, intuitive, or artistic people who like to use their imagination or creativity working in unstructured situations. Some jobs include that of an artist, writer, commercial artist, interior decorator, and musician. These people enjoy working with ideas.

___Social: People who enjoy working with, informing, enlightening, helping, training, developing, or curing other people. These people are also skilled with words. Some jobs include that of a teacher, counselor, social worker, and psychologist. These people enjoy working with people and data.

___Enterprising: People who enjoy working with, influencing, persuading, and leading other people. These people also enjoy performing, and managing for organizational goals or economic gain. Some jobs include that of a politician, marketing representative, salesperson, and stockbroker. These people enjoy working with people and ideas.

___Conventional: People who enjoy working with data, possess clerical or numerical abilities, carry things out in detail, and follow through on the instructions of others. Some jobs include that of an accountant, banker, secretary, and office manager. These people enjoy working with ideas and things.
Exercise 2 - A Guide For Occupational Exploration

Read through the following twelve paragraphs of occupational interests. Determine which paragraphs are most similar to your personality and interests. Rank the top five occupational interests most like you.

_____ 1. ARTISTIC: An interest in creative expression of feelings or ideas. You can satisfy this interest in several of the creative or performing arts fields. You may enjoy literature. Perhaps writing or editing would appeal to you. You may prefer to work in the performing arts. You could direct or perform in drama, music, or dance. You may enjoy the visual arts. You could become a critic in painting, sculpture, or ceramics. You may want to use your hands to create or decorate products. Or you may prefer to model clothes or develop acts for entertainment. (HOLLAND'S CODE: Artistic)

_____ 2. SCIENTIFIC: An interest in discovering, collecting, and analyzing information about the natural world and applying scientific research findings to problems in medicine, the life sciences, and the natural sciences. You can satisfy this interest by working with the knowledge and processes of the sciences. You may enjoy researching and developing new knowledge in mathematics. Perhaps problem solving in the physical or life sciences would appeal to you. You may wish to study medicine and help humans or animals. You could work with scientific equipment and procedures. You could seek a job in research or testing laboratories. (HOLLAND'S CODE: Investigative)

_____ 3. PLANTS AND ANIMALS: An interest in activities related to plants and animals, usually in an outdoor setting. You can satisfy this interest by working in farming, forestry, fishing, and related fields. You may enjoy animals. Perhaps training or taking care of animals would appeal to you. You may have management ability. You could own, operate, or manage farms or related businesses or services. (HOLLAND'S CODE: Realistic)

_____ 4. PROTECTIVE: An interest in using authority to protect people and property. You can satisfy this interest by working in law enforcement, fire fighting, and related fields. You may enjoy mental challenge and intrigue. You can investigate crimes of fires. You may prefer to fight fires and respond to other emergencies. Or you may want more routine work. Perhaps a job in guarding or patrolling would appeal to you. You may have management ability. You could seek a leadership position in law enforcement and the protective services. (HOLLAND'S CODE: Realistic)

_____ 5. MECHANICAL: An interest in applying mechanical principles to practical situations using machines, hand tools, or techniques. You can satisfy this interest in a variety of jobs ranging from routine to complex professional positions. You may enjoy working with ideas about things/objects. You could seek a job in engineering or in related technical fields. You may prefer to deal directly with things. You could find a job in the crafts or trades, building, making or repairing objects. You may prefer routine or physical work in settings other than factories. Perhaps work in mining or construction. (HOLLAND'S CODE: Realistic-Investigative)

_____ 6. INDUSTRIAL: An interest in repetitive, concrete, organized activities in a factory setting. You can satisfy this interest by working in one of many industries that manufacture goods on a mass production basis. You may enjoy manual work -- using your hands or handtools. Perhaps you prefer to operate or take care of machines. You may like to inspect, sort, count, or weigh products. Using your training and experience to set up machines or supervise other workers may appeal to you. (HOLLAND’S CODE: Realistic)
7. BUSINESS DETAIL: An interest in organized, clearly defined activities requiring accuracy and attention to details, primarily in an office setting. You can satisfy this interest in a variety of jobs in which you can attend to the details of a business operation. You may enjoy using your math skills. Perhaps a job in billing, computing, or financial recordkeeping would satisfy you. You may prefer to deal with people. You may want a job in which you meet the public, talk on the telephone, or supervise other workers. (HOLLAND'S CODE: Conventional)

8. SELLING: An interest in bringing others to a point of view by persuasion, using sales and promotional techniques. You can satisfy this interest in a variety of sales jobs. You may enjoy selling technical products or services. Perhaps you prefer a selling job requiring less background knowledge. You may work in stores, sales offices, or in customers' homes. You may wish to buy and sell products to make a profit. You can also satisfy this interest in legal work, business negotiations, advertising, and related fields. (HOLLAND'S CODE: Enterprising)

9. ACCOMMODATING: An interest in catering to the wishes and needs of others, usually on a one-to-one basis. You can satisfy this interest by providing service for the convenience of others, such as hospitality services in hotels, restaurants, airplanes, etc. You may enjoy improving the appearance of others. Perhaps working in the hair and beauty care field would satisfy you. You may wish to provide personal services, such as taking tickets, carrying baggage, or ushering. (HOLLAND'S CODE: Realistic)

10. HUMANITARIAN: An interest in helping individuals with their mental, spiritual, social, physical, or vocational concerns. You can satisfy this interest by working in a field in which caring for the welfare of others is important. Perhaps the spiritual or mental well-being of others concerns you. You could prepare for a job in religion or counseling. You may wish to help others with physical problems. You could work in the nursing, therapy, or rehabilitation fields. You may like to provide services via less difficult care by working as an aide, orderly, or technician. (HOLLAND'S CODE: Social)

11. LEADING/INFLUENCING: An interest in leading and influencing others by using high-level verbal or numerical abilities. You can satisfy this interest through study and work in a variety of professional fields. You may enjoy the challenge and responsibility of leadership. You could seek work in administration or management. You may prefer working with technical details. You could find a job in finance, law, social research, or public relations. You may like to help others learn. Perhaps working in education would appeal to you. (HOLLAND'S CODE: Enterprising)

12. PHYSICAL PERFORMING: An interest in physical activities performed before an audience. You can satisfy this interest through jobs in athletics, sports, and the performance of physical feats. Perhaps a job as a professional player or official would appeal to you. You may wish to develop and perform special acts such as acrobatics or wire walking. (HOLLAND'S CODE: Social-Realistic)
Exercise 3 - Self-Evaluation of Skills and Abilities

What are the things that you do best? Of all the things you have done before, what do you perform with the greatest of skill? Some of these may be talents that come naturally to you, and thus be difficult for you to notice in yourself. Read through the skill and ability categories outlined below, and evaluate yourself on the specific functions within each category according to the following scale:

1 = No ability at all
2 = Enough ability to get by with help from others
3 = Some ability in this area
4 = Definite, strong ability in this area

When evaluating your skills and abilities, do not compare yourself with any particular reference group. Rate yourself according to your best estimate of your capability to perform the functions in each category. Write in your ranking in the space to the left of each listing.

Verbally Persuasive (Holland's Code: Enterprising)

_____ Writing: I am able to express myself well in written forms of communication.
_____ Talking: I relate easily with people in ordinary conversational settings.
_____ Speaking: I am able to deliver a speech or address to an audience.
_____ Persuading: I am able to convince others to believe something that I hold to be true.

Social (Holland's Code: Social)

_____ Social ease: I relate easily in situations such as parties and receptions.
_____ Deal with public: I relate on a continual basis with people who come to an establishment for information, service, or help.
_____ Good appearance: I dress presentably and appropriately for a variety of interpersonal situations or group occasions.
_____ Deal with negative feedback: I am able to cope with criticism.

Numerical (Holland's Code: Conventional)

_____ Computational speed: I am able to manipulate numerical data rapidly.
_____ Work with numerical data: I am comfortable with large amounts of quantitative data. I enjoy compiling, interpreting, and presenting such data.
_____ Solve quantitative problems: I am able to reason quantitatively so that problems having numerical solutions can be solved without the aid of a computer or other mechanical equipment.
_____ Computer use: I am able to use electronic computers to solve quantitative problems. I have knowledge of programming and computer capabilities.
Investigative (Holland's Code: Investigative)

_____ Scientific curiosity: I have the ability to learn scientific phenomena and investigate events which may lead to such learning.

_____ Research: I am able to gather information in a systematic way for a particular field of knowledge in order to establish certain facts or principles.

_____ Technical work: I work easily with practical, mechanical, or industrial aspects of a particular science, profession, or craft.

Manual/Physical (Holland's Code: Realistic)

_____ Mechanical reasoning: I am able to understand the ways that machinery or tools operate and the relationships between mechanical operations.

_____ Manual dexterity: I am skilled in using my hands or body.

_____ Spatial perception: I am able to judge the relationships of objects in space, and to judge sizes and shapes. I am able to manipulate objects mentally and visualize the effects of putting objects together, turning them over, or turning them around.

_____ Physical stamina: I have a physical resistance to fatigue, hardship, and illness.

_____ Outdoor work: I am familiar with the outdoors and have the ability to work outside without encountering obstacles or knowledge deficiencies.

Creative (Holland's Code: Artistic)

_____ Artistic: I am keenly sensitive to aesthetic values, and able to create works of art.

_____ Imaginative with things: I am able to create new ideas and forms with various physical objects.

_____ Imaginative with ideas: I am able to create new ideas and programs through conceiving existing elements of behavior in new ways. I am able to merge abstract ideas in new ways.

Working With Others (Holland's Code: Social)

_____ Supervising: I am able to oversee, manage, or direct the work of others.

_____ Teaching: I am able to help others learn how to do or understand something. I am able to provide knowledge or insight.

_____ Coaching: I am able to instruct or train an individual to improve his or her performance in a specific subject area.

_____ Counseling: I am able to engage in a direct helping relationship with another individual in situations where the person's concern is not solvable through direct information-giving or advice.
Managerial (Holland’s Code: Conventional)

____ Organizational and planning: I am able to develop a program project or set of ideas through systematic preparation and arrangement of tasks, coordinating the people and resources necessary to put a plan into effect.

____ Orderliness: I am able to arrange items in a systematic, regular fashion so that such items or information can be readily used or retrieved with a minimum of difficulty.

____ Handle details: I am able to work with a great variety and/or volume of information without losing track of any items in the total situation. I am comfortable with small informational tasks that are part of the larger project responsibility.

____ Make decisions: I am comfortable making judgements or reaching conclusions about matters which require specific action. I am able to accept the responsibility for the consequences of such actions.
Exercise 4 _ Identity Exercise

Circle all words which you believe describe you as a person (a few words will appear twice). After doing so, total the number of words circled in each of the six groups and record those totals at the bottom of each column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>athletic</td>
<td>analytical</td>
<td>artistic</td>
<td>accepting</td>
<td>acquisitive</td>
<td>conforming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conforming</td>
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<td>creative</td>
<td>altruistic</td>
<td>adventurous</td>
<td>conventional</td>
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<td>disorderly</td>
<td>caring</td>
<td>ambitious</td>
<td>dependable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>materialistic</td>
<td>curious</td>
<td>emotional</td>
<td>cooperative</td>
<td>articulate</td>
<td>efficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mechanical</td>
<td>independent</td>
<td>expressive</td>
<td>empathetic</td>
<td>assertive</td>
<td>methodical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outdoor-type</td>
<td>intelligent</td>
<td>idealistic</td>
<td>friendly</td>
<td>confident</td>
<td>obedient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>persistent</td>
<td>logical</td>
<td>impractical</td>
<td>generous</td>
<td>determined</td>
<td>orderly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>practical</td>
<td>mathematical</td>
<td>independent</td>
<td>helpful</td>
<td>dominant</td>
<td>organized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>realistic</td>
<td>methodical</td>
<td>innovative</td>
<td>humanitarian</td>
<td>energetic</td>
<td>persistent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rugged</td>
<td>precise</td>
<td>insightful</td>
<td>idealistic</td>
<td>enthusiastic</td>
<td>practical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shy</td>
<td>questioning</td>
<td>intuitive</td>
<td>kind</td>
<td>persuasive</td>
<td>precise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stable</td>
<td>rational</td>
<td>original</td>
<td>persuasive</td>
<td>influential</td>
<td>reliable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strong</td>
<td>reserved</td>
<td>perceptive</td>
<td>responsible</td>
<td>political</td>
<td>systematic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>technical</td>
<td>scientific</td>
<td>reflective</td>
<td>sociable</td>
<td>productive</td>
<td>traditional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thrifty</td>
<td>studious</td>
<td>sensitive</td>
<td>understanding</td>
<td>resourceful</td>
<td>well-controlled</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL TOTAL TOTAL TOTAL TOTAL TOTAL
Exercise One: Party Exercise

Complete the page 1 as directed, then record your top three group choices below. These groups describe the six basic categories of occupational interest developed by John Holland.

1. ____________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________

Exercise Two: Discovering Your Interests

Record your top five choices and their corresponding Holland’s Codes from pages 2 and 3 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational Interests Prioritized</th>
<th>Holland’s Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ______________________________</td>
<td>__________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. ______________________________</td>
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<td>3. ______________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. ______________________________</td>
<td>__________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. ______________________________</td>
<td>__________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exercise Three: Discovering Your Skills and Abilities

After completing the “Self Evaluation of Skills and Abilities” exercise, rank your top five categories according to the number of “4’s” or “3’s” occurring within each category, and then record those top five categories and their corresponding Holland’s Codes below. Do not add the ratings within each category, as some categories have more items than others.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational Skills and Abilities Prioritized</th>
<th>Holland’s Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. _________________________________________</td>
<td>__________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. _________________________________________</td>
<td>__________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. _________________________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. _________________________________________</td>
<td>__________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. _________________________________________</td>
<td>__________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exercise Four: Identifying Your Individual Characteristics

Complete pages 5 and 6 as directed, then record the names of the three groups in which you received the highest scores below. These groups further describe the characteristics of those individuals in John Holland’s basic categories of occupational interest.

1.__________________________________________________________________________________
2.__________________________________________________________________________________
3.__________________________________________________________________________________

Exercise Five: Integrating Exercises One Through Four

Review your Holland’s Codes records from exercises one and two, and general records from exercises three and four. List below the three Holland’s Codes that appear most often.

1.__________________________________________________________________________________
2.__________________________________________________________________________________
3.__________________________________________________________________________________

Exercise Six: Identifying Possible Majors

Now that you have identified your top three Holland’s Codes, turn to the last page in your packet, entitled “Majors According to Holland’s Codes,” and select three majors of interest to you. Record those three choices below.

1.__________________________________________________________________________________
2.__________________________________________________________________________________
3.__________________________________________________________________________________
Majors According to Holland's Codes

In order to identify a major that might suit both your personal and career-related interests, locate the Holland Code that most represents you and browse through the corresponding majors. Those majors offered at Christian Brothers University have been highlighted for your convenience. Please consult the University's catalog for more information on majors and minors.

REALISTIC

Pre-Forestry; Civil Engineering; Mechanical Engineering; Urban Planning Technology; Architectural Construction; Horticulture; Radiology; Law Enforcement.

INVESTIGATIVE

Biology; Chemistry; Earth Science; Economics; Geography; Geology; Mathematics; Physics; Psychology; Chemical Engineering; Electrical Engineering; Electrical Engineering Technology; Electronics; Biological Science; Material Science; Electrical Power; Respiratory Care; Medical Technology; Natural Science; Computer Science; Telecommunications/Information Systems Management; Engineering Physics.

ARTISTIC

English; Art History; Art; Educational Media; Advertising Art; Commercial Art Technology; Public Administration Technology; Graphic Technology; Design Technology; Drafting; Studio Art/Commercial Art; Theater; Applied Music; Performing Arts; Pre-Law.

SOCIAL

American Studies; History; Anthropology; Foreign Language; English; Health; Physical Education; Political Science; Sociology; Religious Studies; Speech; Special Education; Pre-Law; Communications; Child Care; Corrections; Dental Hygiene; Dietary Technician; Home Economics; Food and Nutrition; Medical Assistant; Russian Social Studies; Classical Studies; Elementary Education; Secondary Education; Nursing; English for Corporate Communication; Humanities; Psychology.

ENTERPRISING

Finance; Business Administration; Industrial and Transportation Management; Industrial Marketing; Management Marketing; Retail Marketing; Public Administration; Business Education; Real Estate; Law Enforcement; Political Science; Administration; Advertising; General Administration; Marketing; Management; Economics.

CONVENTIONAL

Accounting; Business Administration; Transportation Management; Computer Technology; Secretarial Studies; Executive Technology; Legal Office Management; Medical Office Management; Court Reporting; Mathematics.
The Mechanics Of Choosing A College Major

The challenge in choosing a college major is to find one that fits in with long-term career goals you have set for yourself. The key is to choose a major based on your values, skills and interests.

To begin the process, ask yourself:

What subjects am I interested in? Those related to data, people, numbers or words?

What specific subjects are interesting to me? Art, business, science, math, literature, human issues or combinations of these areas?

What is my learning preference? Lectures; hands on projects; group discussions; reading?

Which courses have I truly enjoyed?

In which subjects do I perform the best?

Some students find choosing a major a difficult task. These are a few reasons why:

They believe choosing a major will force them into a specific career, when, in fact, major does not necessarily equal a specific career.

They believe choosing a major will restrict them from studying other areas of interest, which is not true.

They do not have enough information about the various major and subject choices available to them.

Others’ influence to choose a major they really do not like.

FACT: Over 60% of college students change their major at least once.

Become Informed

There are many resources and ways to become informed about college major options as well as careers related to those options. Following is a list of resources that might be helpful in finding the college major that is right for you:

1. Read college catalogs.
2. Visit your guidance counselor at school and talk with him/her about what you are interested in pursuing. Ask them for resource materials.
3. Visit your school or public library; inquire about career resources.
4. Visit college campuses; participate in workshops offered on campus and career fairs, if possible.
5. Talk to the students; ask what courses they find interesting.
6. Volunteer for agencies, organizations or your school with the purpose of learning more about a profession, using special talents you possess, or learning a new skill.
7. Talk to professionals who work in jobs or fields you are interested in pursuing.
8. Talk to your teachers about careers you might be interested in and ask them to help you get related information.
9. Don’t be shy-ask questions!

Assessment Tools

These tools can be found and are used in high school and college counseling offices. They are helpful in selecting a major and/or career, but are only one tool in what should be a lifelong learning process.

Strong Interest Inventory-Takes into account a person’s interests and self-reported abilities (computerized version).

SIGI Plus-Takes into account a person’s interests, abilities and values (computerized version).

Some Examples:

What if I am interested in Math?

Math-Related Majors:
- Mathematics
- Statistics
- Engineering
- Chemical
- Civil
- Environmental
- Industrial
- Electrical
- Mechanical
- Business
- Economics
- Accounting
- Finance
- Management
- Marketing
- Information Technology
Math-Related Careers:
Statistician
Psychology (Research)
Chemical Engineer
Civil Engineer
Electrical Engineer
Environmental Engineer
Industrial/Mechanical Engineer
Economist
Accountant
Financial Analyst
Management
Marketing (research)
Computer Analyst/Programmer
Information Technology Manager/Analyst
Teacher

Examples of employers:
Banks
Hospitals
Manufacturers
Retail and consumer products companies
Local, state and federal agencies

Science-Related Majors:
Biology
-Pre-Med
-Marine
-Ecology/Environmental
-Zoology
-Forestry
-Microbiology
-Horticulture
-Psychology
Chemistry
-Pre-Med
-Pre-Pharmacy
Natural Science
Physics

Science-Related Careers:
Biologist
Doctor
Nurse
Lab Technician
Dentist
Optometrist
Psychologist
Ecologist
Environmental Scientist/Researcher
Forest Ranger
Forestry Management
Horticulturist
Pharmacist
Radiologist
Physical Therapist
Speech Pathologist
Teacher

Examples of employers:
Hospitals
Research laboratories
Museums
Schools and Colleges or Universities
Industry
Manufacturers
Local, state and federal agencies

What if I am interested in the Liberal Arts?

Liberal Arts Majors:
Behavioral and Social Sciences
- Psychology
- Sociology
- Political Science
English
English for Corporate Communications
Foreign Language
History
Education
Religion and Philosophy
Communication & Performing Arts
Pre-Law

Liberal Arts-Related Careers:
Psychologist
Historian
Counselor
Archivist
Copy Editor
Social Worker
Research Analyst
Teacher/Professor
Public Health Statistician
Urban/Regional Planner
Writer/Author
Librarian
Interpreter/Translator
Community Relations Director
Editor
Human Resources
International Trade Specialist
Grant Writer

Examples of Employers:
Local, state, federal, or community agencies
Libraries and museums
Schools, colleges, and universities
Theater, film, and video