What can I do with an Economics major?

The simplest answer: Anything you want. One of the greatest advantages of an economics major is that it allows students a great deal of flexibility. Liberal arts degrees, in general, expose students to many different ways of thinking, and help students develop critical-thinking skills that are crucial for any successful career. As a social science, economics draws from history, politics and mathematics to provide a systematic way of analyzing a wide range of societal issues, from a household’s decision to buy a new car to a nation’s policy on unemployment or the environment. An economics major is thus excellent background for many different professions in business, government, law or education. And according to recent surveys, average salaries for economics majors are higher than for majors in accounting, business administration, or marketing (see chart).

While the possibilities for specific jobs are virtually endless, most economics majors find jobs in business, government or academia:

**Business:** Undergraduate economics majors are recruited by private and non-profit firms of all sizes and industries. Business economists may be asked to forecast the business environment, assess the impact of public policy on the firm, or collect and process data. Good communication and quantitative skills are highly valued and familiarity with spreadsheet, database and statistical software is particularly helpful for students interested in these careers.

**Government:** Legislation and the issues facing Congress are becoming more complex and economic in nature and as a result Congress is turning to economists to give them advice on these issues. There are positions for economists in almost every government agency, although higher positions generally require a graduate degree or promotion from within. Communication skills are particularly important for government jobs, as well as experience with data and statistical software. Since economics requires strong analytic skills, an economics major is also excellent preparation for law school.

**Academia:** Academic economists teach and do research that adds to our understanding of economics and policy. Many academic economists also write textbooks and articles for the popular media, as well as engage in consulting for private businesses, government, and the legal profession. The demand for economics teachers in secondary schools is growing. California requires a one-semester economics course in high school but many of the teachers of these courses do not have a background in economics.

The following is a sample of job titles that could be filled by economics majors (note that some of these jobs would require additional education/experience beyond the Bachelor’s degree):

Where do Econ majors work?

Typical employers in business:

- Accounting Firms
- Advertising Agencies
- Banks
- Import/Export Firms
- Brokerage Firms
- Insurance Companies
- Business Journals / Publishers
- Investment Banks
- Chambers of Commerce
- Labor Unions
- Litigation Consulting Firms
- Collection Agencies
- Manufacturers
- Management Consulting Firms
- Department stores
- Market Research Firms
- Economic Development Councils
- Environmental Associations
- Fundraising firms
- Personnel Departments/Agencies
- Economic Research Foundations
- Public relations firms
- Retailers
- Trade Associations
- Computer / telecommunications firms
- Real Estate Agencies

Typical employers in government:

- Central Intelligence Agency
- Farm Credit Administration
- Commerce Department
- Federal Deposit Insurance Corp
- Commodity Futures Trading Comm.
- Federal Reserve Bank
- Consumer Product Safety Commission
- Federal Trade Commission
- Department of Agriculture
- General Accounting Office
- Department of Labor
- Internal Revenue Service
- Department of Transportation
- International Trade Commission
- Department of the Treasury
- Office of Personnel Management
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Securities and Exchange Commission

Typical economics elective courses include:

- Business Cycles
- Development Economics
- Econometrics
- Economics of Asia / Latin America / the Middle East
- Environmental Economics
- Health Economics
- History of Economic Thought
- Industrial Organization
- International Trade
- Money and Banking
- Labor Economics
- Public Finance

A few famous Economics majors:

| Scott Adams | Cartoonist, creator of Dilbert |
| Crandall Addington | Professional poker player |
| Kofi Annan | Secretary General of the U.N. |
| Bill Belichick | NFL Head Coach--Patriots |
| Cate Blanchett | Actress |
| Barbara Boxer | US Senator |
| William F. Buckley | Journalist |
| George H. W. Bush | US President |
| Col. Eileen Collins | NASA Shuttle Commander |
| Steve Fossett | Aviation pioneer |
| Millard Fuller | Founder, Habitat for Humanity |
| Roger Goodell | NFL Commissioner |

| Jeremy Lin | NBA player |
| Sandra Day O’Connor | Justice of the Supreme Court |
| Mo Ostin | Record industry executive |
| Lionel Richie | Singer/Songwriter |
| John Safer | Sculptor |
| Eduardo Saverin | Co-founder, Facebook |
| Arnold Schwarzenegger | Body Builder/Actor/Governor |
| Donald Trump | Real Estate/TV Mogul |
| Diane von Furstenberg | Fashion Designer |
| Meg Whitman | CEO, Ebay Technologies |
| Young M.C. | Singer |
| General Anthony Zinni | U.S. Marine Corps General |