

LESSON

Exploring College Majors

Note: Tell students that majors are chosen based on student interests and that not all majors are offered at all colleges.

GOAL

- To help students understand the concept of choosing a “major” in college.
- To help students think about how knowing the kinds of majors offered at a college can help them build their list of colleges to apply to.
- To help students distinguish between a liberal arts college and more career-focused post-secondary options.

ACTIVITY

- 1 Start with a whole group brainstorm:
 - > What is a “major”? What does it mean to “major” in something?
 - > List as many “majors” as you can think of. Sometimes a major can have more than one name such as Women’s Studies and Gender Studies.
- 2 Tell the class they will be playing a game called School Scramble. The students will be acting as guidance counselors to 8 fictitious students. The goals of the game are:
 - > To help your fictitious student choose some possible majors.
 - > To help your fictitious student choose 3 schools to apply to that have appropriate majors.
- 3 Split class into 8 groups of 2 - 4 students. Give each group 1 Student Profile, 1 set of College Majors handouts, and 3 Post-it notes. The group should write their student’s name on each of the 3 Post-it notes.
- 4 The group should read their Student Profile. They should discuss together some possible majors that would be a good fit based on that student’s interests. They should identify colleges that have those majors. Each group should plan three colleges for the student to apply to, using the College Majors handouts as support. Write the name of an appropriate college and possible major on each of the 3 Post-it notes.
- 5 The teacher then explains the rules of School Scramble.
 - > Each group sends one representative to participate in the “scramble.”
 - > During the scramble, the group rep needs to find 3 different schools for the student to apply to.
 - > You “apply” by sticking one of your group’s 3 Post-it notes on the college signs around the room.
 - > If the slots at the college are filled, the rep must scramble to find a different college and major for the student to “apply” to. Their group members can help. They might need an extra Post-it note.
 - > Each group must be able to justify why their student should apply to each college by showing that there is a major at that school that would interest that student.
 - > Each group that is able to find 3 colleges to apply to, all of which have an appropriate major, wins a small prize.

MATERIALS

- 6 College Signs
Posted throughout the room
- Post-it notes
24 + extras
- Handout: Student Profiles
1 cut into strips
- Handout: College Majors
8 sets

VOCABULARY

Terms students may not be familiar with

- Major

LESSON

Exploring College Majors >>> *continued*

ACTIVITY >>> *continued*

- 6 After students return to their seats, debrief the game by discussing the choices groups made. What were their student's interests? What majors seemed to be good fits for the student? Why did each group choose the colleges they did? How did each group handle it when a planned college's slots were filled? Did all colleges have the same majors? What did the class observe about the range of majors available at the different colleges? Were there any majors they had never heard of? Did any of the students remind them of themselves? In what ways?

FOLLOW UP

- Discuss the majors students weren't familiar with. Follow up in the next class with research on any they are interested in.
- Ask students to pick one of these colleges that they might be interested in learning more about and do research on the college.
- Have students interview current college students or college graduates about their majors. Questions could include: How did you choose your major? Did you change majors during the course of your college education? How did or didn't your major connect to your job once you graduated? etc.