

History

Much of the content of history courses studied in schools, colleges and universities, for example, Elizabethan England, the French Revolution or the First World War, is directly relevant only to a very small number of occupations. However, the skills you can develop by studying history are relevant to many careers, especially those that involve understanding information and coming up with your own opinion on it.

For example, by learning how to use historical documents, you can develop the ability to look at the way writers present different versions of an event, and to make a judgement about what actually happened. Interpreting and evaluating sources in this way, and drawing conclusions, are skills that can be used in many occupations - by a journalist, for example, or by a government official who has to present a report based on conflicting evidence.

Studying history also involves developing investigative and research skills such as using libraries, *databases* and the internet to find the information you want. This is useful training for further academic study in almost any field. Universities welcome *GCSEs* or *A levels* in history as entry qualifications for a wide range of courses. Studying history can also help you to present clear arguments, based on your interpretation of the evidence, both verbally and in writing. This is a valuable skill in many areas of work.

History helps us to understand the present and work to improve the future. It's very hard to understand current affairs without knowing the historical events behind them. A knowledge of history helps us to understand our role and responsibilities as citizens, for example, when it comes to voting in elections.

This section looks at the small number of careers that are directly related to the study of history.

Often, you will need a history degree, and sometimes a postgraduate qualification, to enter these careers. Competition for entry is very strong, so only a small number of history graduates find work in these areas. However, you should remember that studying history can help you to develop a general set of skills that are highly valued by employers. Because of this, history graduates can enter a wide range of occupational areas that might not be directly related to history, such as journalism, political research, the Civil Service, library work, local government, general management, etc.

Professional Historian/University Lecturer - Professional historians study and attempt to explain history - a process that is never complete. This is because there is always room for different views on historical events and because each generation re-interprets history in the light of its own experience. Historians try to find out what happened and why it happened, and how people behaved, thought and felt in the past. They draw their conclusions from a range of sources, often using documentary evidence. However, they need to develop an awareness that sources are often biased or incomplete. Research, for example, in libraries, archives and by using databases and the internet, is an important aspect of the historian's work, which usually leads to writing books, articles and academic papers. Depending on their area of study, research could include carrying out oral history interviews or analysing visual and material sources such as posters, pottery, jewellery and coins. However, very few professional historians earn a living purely by research and writing; many historians combine their research with teaching their specialist period of history at university.

History Teacher - History teachers inspire their students with a love of the subject and an understanding of its importance. They don't just teach 'what happened'. Instead, they help students to ask questions about the past, examine sources and form their own opinions. History teachers plan varied and interesting lessons. They use resources such as film, posters, photos, websites and eye-witness accounts. Teaching could also involve visits to places of historical interest such as museums, castles and battlefields. History teachers have to plan lessons, mark work, write reports, go to meetings and give feedback. Most secondary school history teachers qualify by taking a history degree followed by a one-year PGCE.

Archivist - Archivists select, store, care for and provide access to records including written documents, maps, photos, CDs and films. They keep records for a wide variety of organisations, including central government national archives, museums, local authorities, religious groups, businesses, courts and universities. They might also manage the archives of private individuals, such as retired politicians. Archivist's catalogue and index documents, identify those that need repairing and select the best way to store them. They also decide which documents to keep for their historical value and which to discard. Research skills are important in this work as archivists need to find out about the background of materials. Some archivists have contact with the public by answering enquiries, giving talks and mounting exhibitions. To enter this work, you need a degree in any subject, followed by a postgraduate qualification in archives and records management.

Museum Work - There are a number of careers in museums. Perhaps the most closely linked to history is the job of curator (also known as keeper) who looks after the museum's collection - obtaining objects, as well as cataloguing, storing and displaying them. Curators might also carry out other tasks such as administration, fund-raising, research, marketing, arranging publicity for exhibitions and managing budgets. Curators need an in-depth knowledge of a subject relevant to their collection. Most entrants are graduates in subjects such as history, classics, art history, archaeology and museum/art gallery studies. Competition for posts is intense and it can be an advantage to have a postgraduate qualification in museum and/or art

gallery studies. For some posts, a postgraduate qualification is essential. Other jobs in museums include education officer (usually, teaching experience is required), conservator (who specialises in preservation and restoration work) and attendant.

Archaeologist - Archaeology is the scientific study of the past through remains such as bones, pottery, coins and buildings. Archaeologists excavate, identify, record and conserve the remains. They also relate these remains to environmental and historical evidence to contribute to a broader picture of life in the past. Archaeologists might specialise in one geographical area, a particular historical period or type of artefact. Entrants usually hold a degree. Apart from archaeology, it's possible to enter with a degree in a relevant subject such as history, anthropology, geology, biology, chemistry, physics or environmental science. Increasingly, entrants have postgraduate qualifications in archaeology.

Genealogist - Genealogists supervise and advise on the tracing of family histories through parish records, censuses and other archive material. There are only a very small number of professional genealogists, and most of them work on a freelance basis.

<p>Careers for which history is a useful background</p>	<p>Taking a GCSE, AS level, A level or degree in history can be useful for entering many careers.</p> <p>Journalist - Journalists work for newspapers, magazines, online publications, journals, radio and television. They collect information, investigate stories, cover newsworthy events, and write articles for publication or broadcast. They might also work as, or with, sub-editors, who prepare the articles to the length or style required, select the most important stories and check them for accuracy, legality and correct use of English. Journalism uses many of the skills that you can develop through studying history, such as evaluation of sources, investigative skills, judgement, and writing clear accounts of events.</p> <p>Political Researcher - Political researchers carry out research for members of the UK parliaments and national assemblies, political parties, pressure groups and research institutions. They support and advise politicians by gathering and analysing information, and writing policy papers, briefings (notes on the key points of a policy or topic), speeches and press releases. Political researchers sometimes prepare agendas and take the minutes at meetings. Most political researchers are graduates, unless they have considerable relevant experience. Relevant degree subjects include politics, economics, law, history and journalism. One of the usual ways into the career is by completing an internship first, to gain experience.</p> <p>Fast Stream Civil Servant - Each year, a number of graduates enter the Civil Service through its Fast Stream accelerated development programme. They are selected for their potential to gain promotion early in their careers and to reach senior levels of the Civil Service. They help to plan and put into practice government policy, and to support the work of ministers. They could be involved in a very wide range of issues, including defence, education, overseas development, industry, transport, justice and the arts. Early on in their careers, Fast Stream civil servants might research and analyse information, investigate existing data and prepare documents to help ministers consider the different policy options. Later, they could manage multi-million pound budgets, negotiate on behalf of the UK internationally, or be responsible for drafting a government 'white paper' on a particular policy issue. To become a Fast Stream civil servant, you will need at least a second class honours degree or equivalent (in any subject for the general scheme and in a relevant subject for some of the specialist options). For some options, you will need at least a 2:1 degree.</p> <p>Diplomatic Service Officer - Diplomatic service officers (DSOs) protect and promote British interests abroad. They advise and support ministers as they form, and put into practice, the UK's foreign policy. They work for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in London departments, and in embassies, high commissions and consulates around the world. DSOs may have a number of specialist roles. Political officers monitor political, economic and social developments in the country where they are based, reporting them back to London. Trade and investment officers promote British businesses abroad. Press and public affairs officers brief the local media and respond to enquiries about the UK. Consular work involves helping or advising UK nationals abroad, and immigration work such as processing visa applications. DSOs work at one of two levels. Fast Stream (policy) entrants mainly help to form political, commercial and economic policy, for example, by briefing ministers on a particular issue. Administration/operational officers have more practical work in trade, consular, immigration or management areas. Fast Stream entrants need a degree in any subject. Entrants must meet nationality and residency requirements.</p> <p>Librarian/Information Scientist - Librarians select, buy and organise sources of information, which include books, computer software, DVDs and other media, and make them available to library users. Information scientists deal with information storage and retrieval. They work in a variety of</p>
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areas, including business and industry, legal firms, health services, and national and local government. They store information, find information requested by their employer or a client and distribute the information in a way that is easy to understand. Sources of information include audio-visual materials, books, databases, reports and web content. Information scientists often specialise in a particular area such as science, economics or law.

Editor - Editors select, arrange and prepare material for publication. Editors who work in book publishing read manuscripts and select those which are suitable. They then commission the authors to write them. Editors who work for (print or online) newspapers or magazines decide which articles to include and how they will be laid out. They also review and select submissions from freelance writers.

Barrister - Barristers work within the legal system of England and Wales. There are two main aspects of their work: giving specialist advice on complex legal issues and representing people in court. If a case does go to court, the barrister will spend a large amount of time in preparation. Preparing for a case involves thorough research to become familiar with all the facts. During a court case, barristers present all the relevant facts to the judge and jury, cross-examine witnesses and then provide a summing up, to argue why the court should decide the case in their client's favour. Barristers need to complete a degree followed by postgraduate training and qualifications.

Solicitor - Solicitors provide advice and assistance to members of the public on all legal matters. They work directly with their clients and are usually the first point of contact for anyone looking for expert legal advice. Solicitors may advise on a wide range of issues, such as business law (including issues such as VAT, employment law and company mergers), conveyancing, probate, patents and copyrights. They advise people who are involved in disputes; if the case goes to court, they give instructions and information to the barrister, who argues the case in court. However, solicitors are able to represent clients in some types of court. The most direct route into this career is to complete a law degree followed by one year (full-time) of professional training (the Legal Practice Course) and then two years in paid training with a firm of solicitors or an approved organisation. (The work of a legal executive is very similar to that of a solicitor. The main difference is that legal executives usually specialise in one area of law.)