



Published on *Go Ask Alice!* (<https://goaskalice.columbia.edu>)

[Home](#) > [Regretting degree choice](#)

Regretting degree choice ^[1]

Dear Alice,

I am a senior who will soon (hopefully) be graduating with a BA in Anthropology. During my freshman year, I chose my major because I thought it would be interesting to study. Now I realize how completely useless a degree in Liberal Arts is unless you also go to graduate school and get at least a Masters, if not a PhD. I don't want to go to school anymore!

While I enjoy my major and feel like I've learned a lot, sometimes I think I should have just majored in business, engineering, or some other "real" major that would have helped me get a job. I feel like the last few years have been completely for nothing, and find it very difficult to motivate myself to finish, or even start, any schoolwork during this last year. I'm beginning to not even care if I graduate at all.

— Underwhelmed Undergrad

Answer

Dear Underwhelmed Undergrad,

While it might seem difficult to directly translate an anthropology degree to job prospects, it's worth noting that for centuries, colleges and universities have considered liberal arts the bedrock of a sound education. Through a variety of classes in the humanities, writing, foreign languages, and social sciences, students develop critical tools of observation, evaluation, and judgment that can be transferred into all spheres of life. Your liberal arts background has likely given you a solid foundation for a fantastic future, whether you decide to dive straight into the job market, volunteer abroad, score an internship, or go to graduate school.

Beyond the content you've learned in different classes, anthropology grads also develop a number of skills that can be utilized in various job settings. For instance, anthropologists have helped architects design housing for groups from different cultures, they've supported successful reforestation programs abroad, and they've also shed light on cultural aspects of epidemics. As with any degree, it's good to highlight the transferrable skills you've gained that can be applied to the position for which you're interviewing. The following strategies may open the door to a wide range of job prospects:

- **Show off your written and oral communication skills.** These skills can be demonstrated in your cover letter, résumé, or in the interview itself.
- **Highlight your interpersonal skills.** Perhaps you have experience interviewing different populations, adapting to other cultures, or understanding group dynamics, all of which could be beneficial to a potential employer.
- **Show your critical and analytical thinking skills.** You could demonstrate how you take the time to look at every situation from several different viewpoints before acting.
- **Demonstrate teamwork.** You can provide examples of group work, either for a school project or extracurricular activity, to showcase your ability to work on a team.
- **Highlight your previous knowledge and experiences.** It's likely that your major provided you with a breadth of knowledge in a wide range of topics, or perhaps you had unique internships or practicum opportunities that demonstrate your diverse work experiences.
- **Show that you're an avid learner.** You may showcase your willingness to learn and gain new skills, which can drive your desire to keep growing as an employee.
- **Promote your problem-solving skills.** As a liberal arts student, you've likely been trained to dissect complex problems, analyze issues, and develop practical solutions. Then, you can share examples of how you've applied those skills in a project or work experience.

If you're still feeling unsure about your future prospects, it might be helpful to visit your school's career education center. They might be able to provide some perspective about the types of opportunities you could pursue or how to promote your transferrable skills. They may also be able to connect you with some alumni who graduated with your degree to learn more about their career paths, how they learned about opportunities, and to grow your professional network.

It's also good to remember that you're much more than your major. Aside from the time you spent preparing for classes, what other experiences did you have in college? Internship, work, and extracurricular activities can all contribute to a well-rounded experience that will be appealing to prospective employers. College may have been a long and winding road, but the experiences, skills, and strengths you collected along the way will prove to be invaluable.

Alice!

Category:

[Emotional Health](#) [2]

[Blues & Depression](#) [3]

[Stress & Anxiety](#) [4]

[Miscellaneous](#) [5]

Related questions

[I want a better job!](#) [6]

[Health insurance options after college](#) [7]

[Building self-confidence](#) [8]

Published date:

Nov 10, 2011

Last reviewed on:

Jul 17, 2020

Footer menu

- ▼ [Contact Alice!](#)
 - [Content Use](#)
 - [Media Inquiries](#)
 - [Comments & Corrections](#)
- ▼ [Syndication & Licensing](#)
 - [Licensing Q&As](#)
 - [Get Alice! on Your Website](#)
 - [Full Site Syndication](#)
 - [Link to Go Ask Alice!](#)

Go Ask Alice! is not an emergency or instant response service.

If you are in an urgent situation, please [visit our Emergency page](#) to view a list of 24 hour support services and hotlines.

Source URL: <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/regretting-degree-choice>

Links

[1] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/regretting-degree-choice>

[2] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/category/emotional-health>

[3] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/category/blues-depression>

[4] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/category/stress-anxiety>

[5] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/category/miscellaneous-0>

[6] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/i-want-better-job-0>

[7] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/health-insurance-options-after-college-0>

[8] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/building-self-confidence-0>