



# What can you do with a degree in anthropology?

Parents or others in your life might ask, “What can you do with a degree in anthropology?” They may be concerned whether you will be financially secure and will get a return on your educational investment. While no college degree guarantees success, a degree in anthropology sets you up to be ready for whatever life brings your way. This guide gives three angles for explaining how.

## 1 What do anthropologists do?

Different jobs require different sets of skills, but all jobs require one very important element: **people who can get things done**. Employers look for this capability: what can you, as an anthropologist, do to help groups and organizations get things done?

Almost every job, from selling cars to going to the moon, involves dealing with people. Anthropologists study people. Dealing successfully with people, whether they are customers, constituents, clients or partners, requires social knowledge. Anthropologists study people and are experts at capturing that social knowledge, providing the information that is essential for getting the job done successfully.

Here’s how anthropologists turn that social knowledge into action:

1. They help people figure out what the key questions in any situation are.
2. They use investigative methods to find the answers to those questions.
3. They use this information to help plan effective responses.

In other words, anthropologists help people and organizations get things done by using:

- A set of **skills** in data collection, analysis, and implementation;
- A **knowledge** base centered on how anthropologists approach and solve problems;
- An anthropological **perspective** which includes an appreciation for qualitative as well as quantitative data, a holistic approach which incorporates insider viewpoints, and an emphasis on ground-level truth to build understanding.

For transferable anthropology skills, check out our [If You’ve Got It, Flaunt It! Translating Anthropology for the Workplace](#) tool.



Visualizing Anthropology’s Edge

## 2

## Where do anthropologists work?

Because anthropologists' contributions are so valuable, they are being sought out more and more in a wide variety of different fields. Few anthropologists work alone these days. Most of them work collaboratively with other specialists and partners across the public, private, and non-profit sectors. Below is a list of areas where anthropologists are working now. Do not let this limit your imagination. There will be jobs in the future we do not know yet.

**Business:** advertising, communications, human resources, management consulting, user experience, organizational development, product design, technology, training, and many more.

**Research and/or Consulting Firms:** quantitative and qualitative research, project management, community engagement, and more.

**Nonprofit Organizations:** administration, advocacy, social services, community development, grant writing and fundraising, program management. Anthropologists work in the arts, human rights, social justice, environmental conservation, and many other areas.

**Museums and Cultural Institutions:** exhibit curation, artifact preservation and restoration, education, archival research, and more.

**Archaeology & Cultural Resource Management Consulting Firms:** excavate, assess, and mitigate the impact of construction projects on archaeological sites.

**International and Nongovernmental Organizations:** addressing issues of cross-cultural understanding, policy implementation, and global challenges like climate change.

**Universities and Research Institutions:** administration, academic research, and teaching.

**Government Agencies:** policy development and implementation, project management, resource management, and community development.

**Healthcare and Public Health:** administration, communications, community health, behavioral research, epidemiology, emergency preparedness, organizational culture and change, and more.

**Media and Publishing:** content and marketing strategy, social media management, journalism, video production, copy writing and editing.

**Forensics:** human remains identification for law enforcement or in disaster situations, forensic archaeology, and many other areas.



### 3

## What is the job market like for anthropologists?

The job market for anthropologists is healthy, with ten-year growth predictions of between 4% (in line with the national growth rate as a whole) to upwards of 10%, depending on the source.

Many people think that anthropologists are mainly college professors. However, the vast majority of anthropologists do not work in academia.

- An **Associate's** degree is an introduction to key anthropological concepts which are useful in understanding cultural differences in organizations and communities.

- A **Bachelor's** degree in anthropology opens up interesting jobs in a wide variety of areas, using skills in data collection, analysis, and planning.

- A **Master's** degree is a professional degree for many anthropologists, who then go on to careers in industry, government, or the non-profit sector.

- A **PhD** in anthropology leads to a variety of specialized roles, often focused on research. It is also an entry-level qualification for becoming an academic.

Many anthropologists find that their anthropology degree works particularly well with a Master's or Bachelor's degree in a cognate area, such as business, public health, public administration or human geography.

One of the great benefits of anthropology is its versatility. Even if you focused in on one topic or sub-field in school, you will continue to learn and grow throughout your career. You are never stuck on one path even if it feels like it. You can change careers. You can craft new careers. You get to define your own path.

**Next time you are asked,  
"What can you do with a degree in anthropology?"  
You can say, "What *can't* I do?"  
And let your passion show!**



Discover the many job seeker tools available on the [Anthropology Career Readiness Network](#) website!

