

# HOW TO REALITY TEST YOUR CAREER INTERESTS

There are four key ways to explore and reality test your career interests...

- ▶ Exploring through **READING**  
*(Through the Internet, books, magazines, etc.)*
- ▶ Exploring through **SPEAKING WITH THOSE IN THE KNOW**  
*(This is called informational interviewing and involves 'interviewing', or asking questions of professionals who do work that interests you or who know about what goes on in that career area.)*
- ▶ Exploring through **OBSERVING**  
*(Job shadowing is one way to 'observe' where you spend time with someone who's doing work of interest to you. You follow them around and 'shadow' them as they go about their work activities.)*
- ▶ Exploring through **DOING**  
*(Examples include volunteer work, service learning, internships, Co-op, paid part-time and full-time employment including summer or seasonal work.)*

## Getting started...

Here's an example of how you'd get started with the **READING** approach to exploration. We'll use the career interest, **sportscaster**, as an example. The goal is to learn as much as possible what this career field involves while also searching for the answer to the question...

**Is a specific college major required for this career interest or do I have flexibility with choice of a college major?**

To explore 'Sportscaster' through **READING** three strategies were used.

1. The **Occupational Outlook Handbook** is a great starting place for exploring career interests [www.bls.gov/ooh](http://www.bls.gov/ooh) Once at the OOH site, do a key word search for Sportscaster and you'll see a number of links pop up. When I did this search, I found two related occupation titles for sportscasters: [Reporters, Correspondent and Broadcast News Analysts](#) as well as [Announcers](#). I read through the info offered for these occupations. Under the heading- 'How to Become One', it was indicated that most employers prefer candidates with college degrees in communications, broadcasting, and journalism for these occupations and that some employers hire other majors who combined studies with relevant work experience.

**So, according to the OOH, there is no one required college major for working as a sportscaster.**

2. An **Internet based key word search** is another way to find career info. Try a key word search using the terms: “sportscaster” + “career planning”. You’ll see that this search leads to quite a bit of information on training programs and schools that offer degrees related to this career field (lots of marketing propaganda!). I realized that I had to be careful about what to trust because some sites were heavily promoting specific training programs and trying to say you would have a hard time breaking into sportscasting without their training. I did, however, find this [Insider Info about Sportscasters](#) article at CFNC.org.

3. Try a **key word search for professional associations related to this career field** using: “sportscaster” + “association”. This search led to links for a number of professional associations related to sportscasting including:

[American Sportscaster Association](#)

[National Association of Broadcasters Education Foundation](#)

[National Sports Media Association](#)

Typically speaking, I love professional association sites because they contain helpful information (often with career planning info) and they aren’t commercial sites trying to sell you something. The first association site (ASA) had great career planning info with their link ‘Sportscasting Tips’. At the NABEF site, I found this: [NAB’s Guide to Careers in Radio](#).

These association links offered great insight into the realities of work as a sportscaster and also offered college major selection tips. Still, all in all, research revealed that **there are NO specific college major requirements for work as a sportscaster**. Choice of a college major is flexible but what was stressed the most was the importance of hands on experience and networking in getting into and progressing within the sportscasting world.

Reading is a great start and the steps outlined in this handout will guide you in conducting on-line research. Along with reading, don’t forget to explore your interest(s) through ‘speaking with those in the know’, ‘observing’, and ‘doing’. As is true with sportscasting, these exploration strategies help you begin to build your own network and ‘test drive’ your career interests.