



# BOUNDLESS HORIZONS: CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN GEOGRAPHY

Geography can lead to all manner of exciting careers and will teach you a wide range of useful skills for your future

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What do environmental scientists, urban planners, small-business entrepreneurs, climatologists, sustainability managers, park rangers, teachers and political analysts have in common? 'Not much', you might think at first glance. But look more closely: they are just a handful of the careers where geography can take you.

In this article, we'll introduce you to some professionals who have merged their passion for geography with a desire to make a difference in the world. We'll also suggest some resources for getting started on the job search and share some advice for making the most of your geography skills throughout your career.

## **Why major in geography?**

Geography provides excellent preparation for a broad range of careers spanning the social and environmental sciences, technology, and arts and humanities. Far more than map reading and memorisation, geography is an exciting, dynamic and rapidly-growing field.

Training in geography equips graduates with a diverse combination of professional skills such as oral and written communication, project management, organisation, problem-solving and technical skills. Because they can integrate and synthesize information from multiple disciplines at a variety of scales, geographers are uniquely prepared to meet the rapidly evolving demands of today's industries. Geographers pride themselves on their ability to see the world from a 'big picture' perspective, understanding how people, places, and phenomena interact with each other across space and time.

## **What kind of job can I get with a geography degree?**

Geographers work for large corporations, small businesses, government agencies, schools and universities, and nonprofit and nongovernmental organisations. Although there are relatively few people with the specific job title of 'geographer', geographers are found in literally hundreds of different occupations. One trait many geographers share is an interest

in careers that allow them to make positive contributions to society, the environment, or human well-being at local, regional, or global scales.

### **What does it take to be successful?**

Geographers are known for being curious about the world, open to new experiences, and eager to learn. Many employers tell us that these are key qualifications they seek in their employees. Because a degree in geography provides such a broad background, some kind of practical, hands-on experience - a part-time job, internship, service-learning course, or other form of work-based learning - will help you discover how you can apply what you've learned in the classroom to real-world problems and situations.

These experiences can also help you discover the sorts of jobs and industries that are the best match for your unique skills and interests, while also helping you begin to build your network of professional contacts.

### **Where can I learn more?**

For more information about careers in geography and related fields, visit the following websites:

[www.aag.org/careers](http://www.aag.org/careers)

[www.agiweb.org/workforce/](http://www.agiweb.org/workforce/)

[www.asprs.org/students/career-brochure.html](http://www.asprs.org/students/career-brochure.html)

[www.gis.com/content/careers-gis](http://www.gis.com/content/careers-gis)

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Michael Solem, Joy Adams and Mark Revell  
Association of American Geographers

[www.aag.org](http://www.aag.org)

Turn over to learn about some professionals who have pursued careers in geography...





William Shubert credits his undergraduate studies in geography with enabling him to communicate effectively using text, maps, oral presentations, photos, and graphics - all of which directly support his work at *National Geographic* magazine.

Kate Pearson of Habitat for Humanity International is helping communities recover from devastating natural disasters. “Even the poorest people living in the US have it good compared to Haiti,” she says. “That harsh reality keeps me going.”



Reena Patel says one of the best things about her career as a Foreign Service Officer for the U.S. Department of State is “being out in the world and meeting people I wouldn’t have access to otherwise.”

Dave Selkowitz of the US Geological Survey uses geospatial technology to assess the effects of climate change on Alaska’s landscapes. His skiing, hiking, rafting and outdoor navigation experience all come in handy while collecting field data in remote parts of the state.



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