

## Advice for Aspiring Economists

A student from abroad emails the following question:

Do you have some hints for me, how to become a good economist?

Here is some advice for, say, an undergraduate considering a career as an economist.

1. Take as many math and statistics courses as you can stomach.
2. Choose your economics courses from professors who are passionate about the field and care about teaching. Ignore the particular topics covered when choosing courses. All parts of economics can be made interesting, or deadly dull, depending on the instructor.
3. Use your summers to experience economics from different perspectives. Spend one working as a research assistant for a professor, one working in a policy job in government, and one working in the private sector.
4. Read economics for fun in your spare time. To get you started, [here](#) is a list of recommended readings.
5. Follow economics news. The best weekly is The Economist. The best daily is the Wall Street Journal.
6. If you are at a research university, attend the economic research seminars at your school about once a week. You may not understand the discussions at first, because they may seem too technical, but you will pick up more than you know, and eventually you'll be giving the seminar yourself.

You may find some other useful tidbits in [this paper](#) of mine.

*Updates:* Here is some advice from [Susan Athey](#) about applying to grad school in economics. And [here](#) are the criteria a top economics PhD program uses in determining admissions.