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IDEAS FOR CHOOSING A COLLEGE MAJOR

Millions of students attend college after high school. The Education Data Initiative says there were 18,939,568 people enrolled in colleges in the United States last year.

At some point in their pursuit of post-secondary education, students will need to choose a major. Choosing a major can be challenging for students who have various interests and/or did well in multiple subjects in high school. The good news is that once a major is chosen, it isn't set in stone. Many students change their majors as they are exposed to different coursework in college. Here are a few ideas for choosing a major.

- Don't be pressured by family. Some students simply choose "the family business" route and select the same school and major as one or both of their parents. Make this a well-informed choice that considers various aspects and not just what mom or dad do for a living.

- Select a subject you enjoy. You do not want to be slugging through the next four or more years of school studying topics that bore you. Avoid potential burnout by choosing a major that interests you and offers a future.

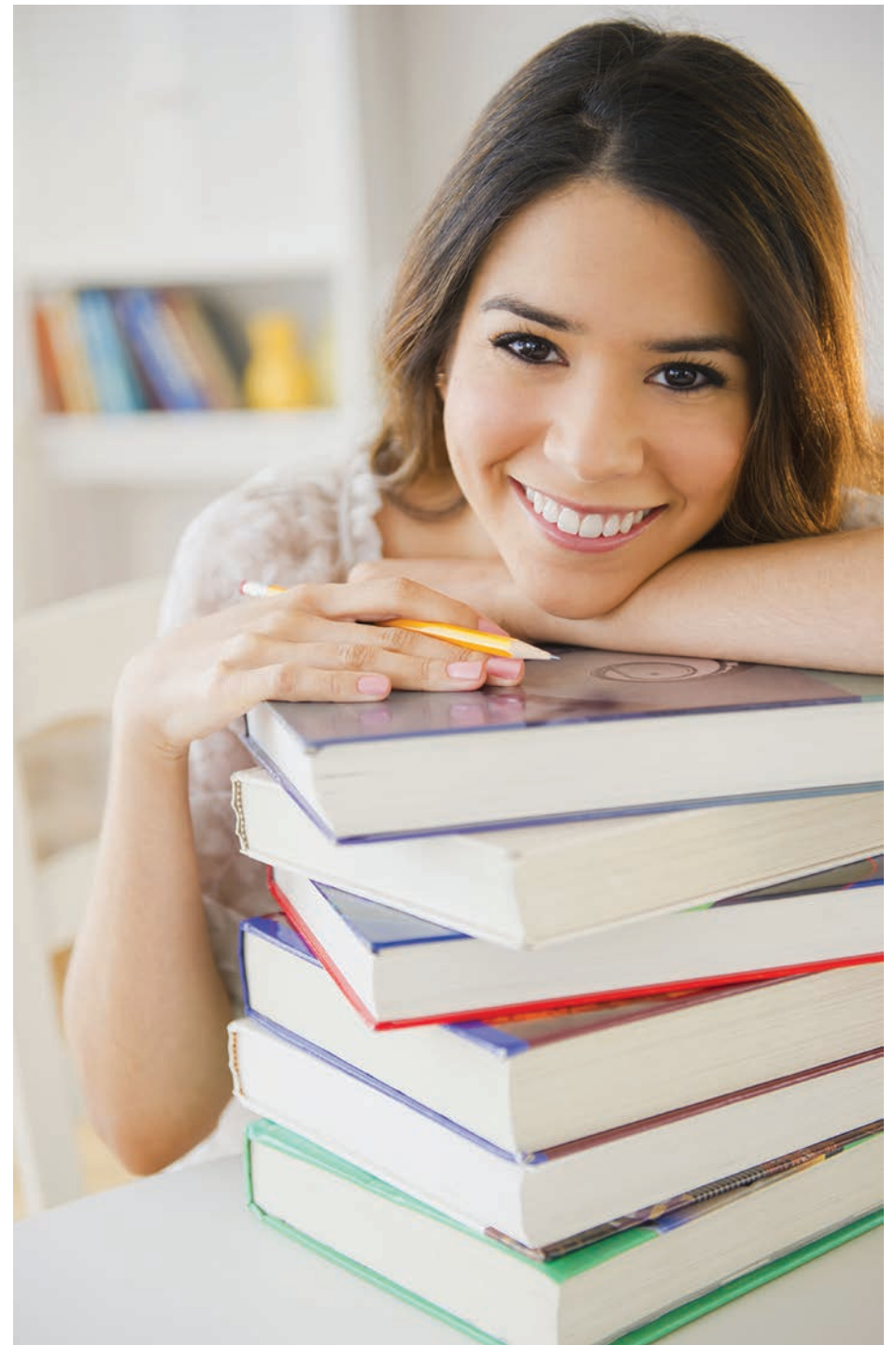
- Research a related industry. Investigate which jobs have higher rates of openings and compare other factors like earning potential. While the goal is not simply to select the major that will lead to a job with the highest earning

potential, you should consider majors that will lead to jobs that are stable and offer growth potential. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics is a good start for data. It currently lists wind turbine service technicians and nurse practitioners as the fastest-growing occupations.

- Determine how rigorous coursework will be. Some majors feature more rigorous coursework than others. If you know that marathon study sessions and lots of research or writing projects are going to lead to extensive stress, it is probably best to consider another course of study. Indiana University Bloomington determined the most difficult majors based on the average time students spent per week preparing included architecture, chemical engineering and aeronautical engineering. Public relations, communications and criminal justice were among the less demanding majors, though it's important to note that excelling in any course of study requires hard work and commitment.

- Check in with your academic advisor. Academic advisors can guide you by offering career assessment quizzes and going over your grades. Such assessments may reveal skills that align well with certain fields of study.

- Delay the decision. If you truly do not know what you want to study, enroll in school undeclared. This will give you a chance to explore some general



education core classes and feel out a school before making a larger commitment. Typically colleges will require a declaration of major by the end of sophomore year to allow enough time for completing

that major's required courses.

When choosing a major, students should weigh various factors to find a course of study that suits their interests and career goals.

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Nickolas Kayson White,
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Jacob Riley Wideman,
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Michael Edward Wilson,
Allyson Danielle Winfrey,

Isaiah Henry Wise,
Jordan Ty Woods,
Lauren Nicole Wrigley,

David Michael Wyatt, and
Elijah Cash Young.

5 TIPS FOR MAKING YOUR GRAD'S CELEBRATION SPECIAL

Graduation marks the end of one chapter and the beginning of another, a significant milestone worth celebrating. However, planning a graduation party can be overwhelming.

To host a memorable celebration for your graduate, consider these tips to help take the stress out of planning.

SET A BUDGET AND MAKE A GUEST LIST

When planning a graduation party, it's important to start by setting a budget and creating a guest list. Determine how much you're willing to spend and allocate funds for different aspects, such as food, decorations and entertainment, which can help you stay organized and ensure you don't overspend.

Next, create a guest list of family members, friends and classmates you want to invite. Consider the size of the venue and your budget when finalizing the guest list. It's also a good idea to send invitations out well in advance to give guests enough time to RSVP.

CHOOSE THE PERFECT THEME

The theme of a graduation party can help set the tone and create a

memorable experience for guests. When selecting a theme, consider the graduate's interests, hobbies and future plans. For example, if he or she is going to college, have a college-themed party with decorations and activities related to the chosen university.

Other ideas include having guests bring items that represent memories with the graduate and creating a time capsule to be opened in the future or a travel theme with wanderlust-inspired decorations, food from different countries and activities that celebrate adventure.

DETERMINE DECOR

Personalize the party by incorporating elements unique to your graduate's achievements and personality. Display diplomas, awards and photos throughout the venue. You can also create a photo collage or slideshow showcasing his or her journey from kindergarten to graduation. Remember to match the color scheme to the overall theme of the party and use lighting, such as string lights, candles or lanterns, to help set the right ambiance.

ORGANIZE FOOD AND DRINK OPTIONS

Food and drinks are an important aspect of any party. Based on your budget and the style of party, decide whether you want to have a sit-down dinner, buffet or finger foods. You can hire a caterer, ask friends and family to contribute dishes or prepare the food yourself

if you enjoy cooking. Don't forget to have a variety of beverages available, including non-alcoholic options, and consider any dietary restrictions or preferences of your guests when planning the menu.

See **TIPS** on page 22

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RAGLAND HIGH SCHOOL



Class of 2026

From left, in front, Anna Bunnham, Allyson Franklin, Madelyn Kaley, Sabrina Rogers, Kase Gardner, Beverly Alexander, Kylee Gardner, and Jewels Williamson; second row, Sophie Nail, Elaina Rivera, Shaylah Turner, Envy Jordan, Emily Veracruz-Canuto, and Kylie Saville; in back, Nick Webber, Hunter Nolin, Shawn Kohler, Byron Mizzell, and A'ron Lee.

VALEDICTORIAN - MADELYN KALEY

Madey is attending JSU in the fall to pursue a degree in business marketing & sports advertising. She has a 4.1 GPA; awards/offices include Ms. Ragland, Beta Club president, Outstanding Senior, Senior Class president, and SGA president.

SALUTATORIAN - SABRINA ROGERS

Sabrina is attending JSU in the fall to pursue a degree in forensic investigation. She has a 3.8 GPA; awards/offices include Homecoming Queen, Beta Club vice-president, SGA secretary, and Bryant-Jordan Award Nominee.

SPRINGVILLE HIGH SCHOOL



Class of 2026

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Charlotte Lynn Ahonen,
Andrew Watson Allan,
Ethan Scott Alvarez,
Amelia Anne Alverson,
Joshua Edward Alverson,
Harper Morgan Anderson,
Tristun Zymir Anderson,

Vincent Anthony Anderson,
Olivia Leanne Armstrong,
Kamden Leigh Arnold,
Addison Reese Ashley,
Braylon Seth Ball,
Elgiana Denise Barnum,
Alyssa Dawne Beach,
Trenton Allen Beard,

Hannah Nicole Beavers,
Shania Arianna Beavers,
Brooke Lynn Bell,
Shelbi Cheyenne Mammie Bennett,
Nathaniel Ryan Berry,
Hunter Layne Bice,
Starr Makenzee Black,
Tucker Joseph Black,

SPRINGVILLE HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 2026

Sadie Lea Blue,
Steven Thomas Bolton,
Kylie Madison Bowman,
Destiny Marie Boyd,
Emily Ann Boyle,
Isabelle Ann Boyle,
Landon Parker Braden,
Audrey Caroline Brogdon,
Emma Louis Brogdon,

Daniel Braxton Brohard,
Devin Alexander Brohard,
Brody Cole Brooks,
Hunter Blake Brown,
Tucker Cole Bryant,
Zachary James Bullard,
Cady Eric Bullock,
Jacob Robert Burgos,
Jordan Allen Burns,

Kayla Leann Byers,
Austyn Isabella Caldwell,
Victoria Leigh Callahan,
Hagan Wayne Calvin,
Casen James Cambron,
Landon Reece Capps,

From **TIPS** page 19

Get creative with your food and drinks by incorporating graduation-themed treats. For example, you can serve cupcakes decorated as graduation caps or cookies shaped like diplomas and create a signature drink that represents the graduate or his or

her future plans. You can give it a fun name and serve it in personalized glasses.

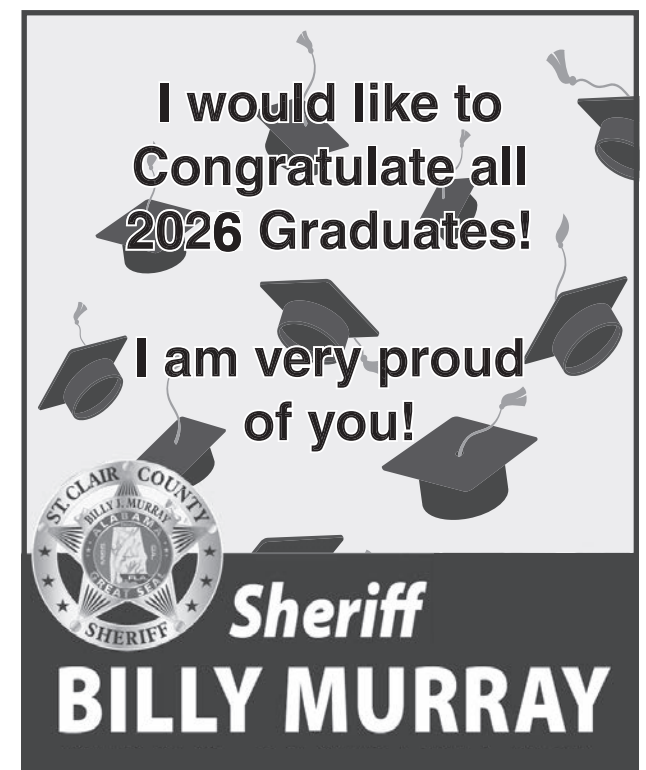
PLAN ENTERTAINMENT AND ACTIVITIES

To keep guests entertained throughout the party, plan fun activities and entertainment. Consider hiring a DJ or creating

a playlist of your graduate's favorite songs to keep the energy up. You can also set up a dance floor or karaoke station for guests to enjoy. Also consider activities like a photo booth with props, trivia game about the graduate or memory jar where guests can write down their favorite memories with the graduate.

If your graduate has any specific hobbies or interests, try to include them in the entertainment. For example, if he or she loves sports, organize a friendly pickup game or set up a mini sports area for guests to enjoy.

Find more ideas to plan a memorable graduation party at eLivingtoday.com.



ST. CLAIR COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL



Class of 2026

Ashlynn Abney,
 Isabelle Adkins,
 Emma Alexander,
 Kamren Alexander,
 Donald Allen,
 Faraje Ballinger,
 Izabella Banks,
 Jonathon Barber,
 Nicholas Barclay,
 Kyleigh Bartholomew,
 Jack Becker,
 Aamira Bellfield,
 Michael Black,
 Adleigh Borgognoni,
 Nicholas Bosque,
 Dayton Bowden,
 Jay Brasher,
 Kamryn Brown,
 Jesse Bullock,
 John Butler,
 Kaylann Byers,

Chloe Carlisle,
 Brody Carney,
 Jasmyn Carter,
 Kaylee Castleberry,
 Kaydence Churchill,
 Ashaunta Clemons,
 Darius Clifton,
 Carlos Cocotl Ocampo,
 Garrett Coker,
 Morgan Colley,
 Aniyah Cook,
 La'Davia Craig,
 Mylon Crum,
 Jacob Curry,
 Bailey Dale,
 Kaitlin Davis,
 Kordarryl Davis,
 Allie Denney,
 Logan DeWinter,
 April Diaz,
 Tayshaun Dillard,

Ava Duke,
 Thomas Duke,
 Erickson Fermin Lugo,
 Abigail Fields,
 Jayla Ford Bass,
 Charlea-Anne Forman Burns,
 Armaria George,
 Laney Giles,
 Justin Gomer,
 Benjamin Goodwin,
 Chloe Goodwin,
 Stephen Grantham,
 Justin Gunt,
 Kameron Harris,
 Catie Harrison,
 Alissa Hasley,
 Jourdin Hawkins,
 Brody Haynes,
 Stephen Henry,
 Bryan Hicks,
 Jackson Hill,

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Hunter Houser,
 Madyson Houston,
 Grace Howell,
 Kason Hubbard,
 Betsy Hurtado,
 Caeley Isbell,
 Jamison Johnsey,
 Amelia Johnson,
 Jaylan Johnson,
 Zane Johnson,
 Chloe Johnston,
 Tra'Veil Jones,
 William Kelly,
 Alexandria Key,
 Elijah King,
 Christina Land,
 Keith Latham,
 Diamond Lee,
 Jalyn Lee,
 Richard Long,
 Devin Looney,
 Coleton Lowry,
 Lily Madison,
 Rose Marlow,
 Randall Marrs,
 Landon McCloud,

Serenity McKinney,
 Shanesty Morales-Ramirez,
 Affion Morriesette,
 Kaleb Mullinax,
 Jaleea Murphy,
 Elliott Neal,
 Dakoda Newland,
 Allene Ornelas,
 Claire Parent,
 Arianna Pates,
 Destiny Patterson,
 Dylan Patterson,
 Gina Pendley,
 Randy Pettway,
 Gracie Phillips,
 Andrea Post,
 Daxton Ragsdale,
 Avery Ray,
 Jerry Rich,
 Ashlyn Riley,
 Kendrick Roberson,
 Kobie Robinson,
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 Jaslin Scott,
 Tyler Scott,

Bo Simmons,
 Haley Simmons,
 Skylar Smith,
 Aubrey Stewart,
 Nakaria Tenant,
 Zoe Tidwell,
 Sarah Tinley,
 Gavin Todd,
 Keonna Towery,
 Lana Trimble,
 Kailyn Turner,
 Charles Ulrich,
 Aaliyah Vandergrift,
 Halie Vanderslice,
 David Wagner,
 Peyton Walker,
 Jordyn Ward,
 Jayde Ware,
 Hannah Wasmer,
 Micheal Watkins,
 Cooper Weeks,
 Jenna Whitehead,
 Dalayah Williams,
 Summer Woods,
 Brooks Wright
 Tralajiah Wright

ANDREA POST - HONOR GRADUATE

Andrea Post is an 18-year-old Filipino-American.

She is involved in Peer Helpers and Key Club, serves as an officer of Beta Club, the yearbook's chief editor, one of the captains of the varsity soccer team, and a member of the outdoor track team, and was manager of the indoor track team.

She plans to attend Troy University where I will major in Cybersecurity with a certificate in Digital Forensics.



GINA PENDLEY - HONOR GRADUATE

Gina Pendley is an 18-year-old Costa Rican-American.

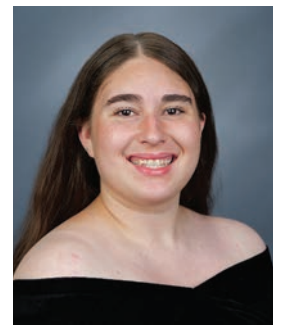
At SCCHS, she is a Key Club and Beta Club officer, a Peer Helper, and Diamond Doll.

At Eden Career Technical Center, she is a Peer Helper, Ambassador, National Technical Honor Society member, and HOSA president.

As a Jefferson State dual enrollment student, she belongs to Phi Theta Kappa and Mu Alpha Theta honor societies.

At ECRT, she has enrolled in EMS and health science classes, earn health certifications while in high school.

She plans to attend Jacksonville State University to major in nursing, specializing in emergency care.



ST. CLAIR COUNTY VIRTUAL PREPARATORY ACADEMY

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Brayden Mikel Barnett,
Emily Kate Beal,
Brooklyn Ann Bearden,
Cohner Blaine Bearden,
Trenton Cash Bearden,
Garrett Anthony Beason,
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Cade Thomas Beeson,
Adley Renee Bentley,
Alexis Nichole Bertram,
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Ruby Sherrill Fowler,
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Lilli Elise Garland,
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Haley Elizabeth Marie Gomer,
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Alissa Michelle Gragg,
Michael Cole Griffin,
Stephen Alan Griffiths,
Lukas Allen Grooms,
Analyn Tyler Harris,
Landon Reese Harville,
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KayCee Leigh Horsley,
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Eric Edward Johnson,
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Skyla Noelle Jones,
Mckenna Brooke Kay,
Austin Michael Morris Key,
Brayden Matthew Krueger,
Noah Gracen Larkin,

Steven Lee Layfield,
Aubrey Nicole Leonard,
Keira Jade Lowery,
Madison Finley Manfre,
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Ava Maria Martinez,
Cally Annemarie Martinez,
Emma Darlene Martinez,
Alexa Paige McCain,
Connor Allen Melville,
Olivia Grace Mewbourne,
Heaven Jarmaica Moffitt,
Shelby Lynn Morgan,
Nakyiah Jaide Mostella,
Lily Kate Nicholas,
Tylan Shundre' Nicholes,
Mackenzie Lynne Nolan,
McKenzi Jo Nolen,
Calvin Owen Overton,
Hanna Jewell Palmer,
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Zoey Marie Stewart,
Caelyx Rose Stokes,
Myah Deanna Strahan,
Mason Lane Swearengin,

Raniyah Lashay Taylor,
Arianna Renee Tevis,
Brayden Wayne Thrasher,
Amy Markayla Ticking,
Dakota Blayne Tidwell,
Kristin Elise Tolbert,
Anthony Kea'shawn Toney,
Lynn Marie Turner,
Shayla Mae Vanwagner,
Brian Vigueras Villagomez,
Luke Braden Walker,

Michael Alexander Wallace,
Zachary Taylor Ware,
Wyatt Gabriel Whisenant,
Brady Scott Williams,
Hope Annalise Williams,
Porter Shawn Williams,
Brently Gadge Willmon,
Eden Jayms Wood,
Connor Anderson York, and
Katelynn Marie Young.

MUST-HAVE GADGETS FOR GRADUATES

Whether your graduate is venturing into the real world for the first time or simply continuing his or her education, tech gadgets can help make post-grad life easier and more enjoyable.

From a computer that will likely come in handy for a new job or classes and a smartwatch to stay organized and on time to headphones that help concentrate and relax or a new television to unwind, these gift ideas are perfect for tech-savvy grads in your life.

LAPTOP

Whether starting a new job, freelancing or pursuing further education, a reliable and powerful laptop is a must-have for graduates. Performance is a key consideration when choosing a laptop. Look for a powerful processor, ample RAM and a high-resolution display to handle demanding tasks such as graphic design, video editing,

programming or data analysis. Also keep factors such as portability, battery life and connectivity in mind. Being able to work without interruptions regardless of location allows for seamless flexibility in post-grad endeavors.

NOISE-CANCELING HEADPHONES

The right headphones can be a game-changer, blocking out unwanted noise and creating a peaceful listening experience while studying in a noisy coffee shop, commuting on a crowded train or trying to relax in a busy apartment. Look for noise-canceling headphones with cushioned ear cups and adjustable headbands to provide a snug and comfortable fit even through extended wear to provide the ability to focus on work or enjoy favorite music with minimal distractions.

SMARTWATCH

Not just a stylish accessory, a smartwatch is also a useful tool for staying connected and organized. From tracking fitness goals and monitoring sleep patterns to receiving notifications, answering calls and making payments with a flick of the wrist, advanced smartwatch features make it easy to stay on top of opportunities and responsibilities. Plus, with customizable faces and interchangeable bands, most watches can be styled to match personal

tastes for any occasion.

PORTABLE CHARGER

A portable charger is an essential gadget for anyone who is always on the go. With the increasing reliance on smartphones and other portable devices, having a reliable source of power is crucial. Available in various sizes and power outputs, these convenient devices can easily fit in a bag or pocket and often feature multiple USB ports to charge multiple devices, including smartphones, tablets, smartwatches, cameras and more, whenever and wherever needed.

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