

GET THE JOB

Do You Really Need a Degree?

In many fields, secondary education has become a bed-rock requirement

Younger generations have long been encouraged to attend college in order to smooth the pathway to success. We've also been told that the best open positions will have certain degrees as a minimum requirement. But what do the numbers say?

TRENDING UPWARD

Americans who are 25- to 35-years-old are the best-educated generation ever. Some 35% have earned a bachelor's degree, according to recent research. That's up from just 13% for the same age category in the 1960s, and 24% into the 1980s. These degrees have given first-time job seekers a valuable tool that others didn't have, both in terms of an expanded knowledge base and also a confirmation of their ability to focus and complete lengthy, difficult tasks.

The wage gap between those with and without a college degree has nearly doubled over the past three decades. At the same time, the number of jobs requiring higher education has skyrocketed. Just 26% of middle-class workers had any education after high school back in 1970. Today, almost 60% of U.S. jobs require a college degree.



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VALUE ADDED

Those aged 25-to-32 with a college degree can earn as much as \$20,000 more a year than those with only a high-

school education, according to one analysis. This pay gap has continued to widen over the years, as the economy becomes more information-

and technology-based. Obtaining a degree helps in other ways, too. The college educated are more likely to enjoy full-time employment

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LONG-TERM BENEFITS

Workers with a college education are more apt to think of their job in long-range terms, and to set goals for future advancement. Conversely, those with high school education or less are almost three times more likely to describe their career as something they simply do for money. More than 90% of those who graduated from a university said their education has already paid for itself, or would soon. The numbers aren't much different for those who needed student loans in order to complete their studies, as 86% said pursuing their degree was worth it — or would be in the future.