Value of Education

Does a college degree pay off? Learn how much more money you can make by earning an online college degree.

You can make much more money by earning a college degree.

The data shows that a college degree correlates directly to your salary range—and the relationship between compensation and education level is becoming even more prominent.

At the turn of the 20th century, American working life was different. Only a minority of adults had a high school diploma. But by 1975, full-time workers with a Bachelor's degree had 1.5 times the annual earnings of workers with a high school diploma. By 1999, this ratio had edged up to 1.8. As our society has continued to evolve, **education has become the optimal route to professional success:** pursuing a degree is the best way to receive training, to gain expertise in a given field, and even to guide you and help you make choices about your career.

Today, a formal, focused education is an essential ingredient. Employers have increasingly used diplomas and degrees as a way to screen applicants. And once you've landed the job you want, your salary will reflect your credentials. On average, a person with a Master's degree **earns $31,900 more per year** than a high school graduate—a difference of as much as 105%!

Average Annual Earnings for College Graduates and Non-Graduates



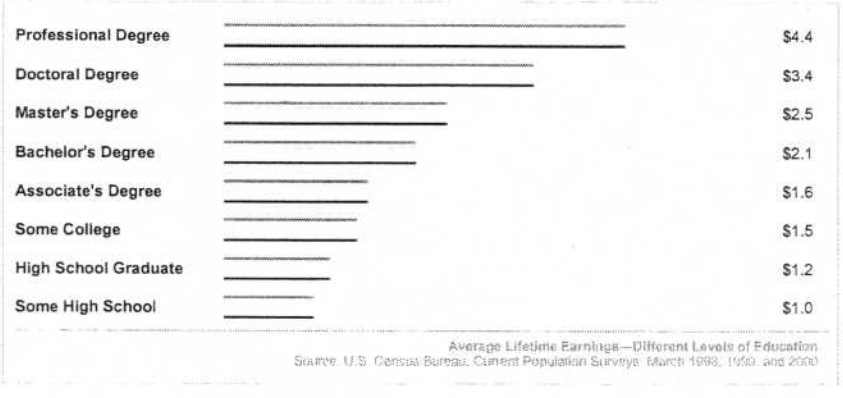
Average Annual Earnings—Different Levels of Education
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Surveys, March 1999, 1989, and 2000

Making a Lifetime of Difference.

By the time you comfortably retire, you'll look back and see that your earnings increase, as figured by your level of education, has compounded over your lifetime.

A person with a Bachelor's degree will earn, on average, almost twice as much as workers with a high school diploma over a lifetime ($2.1 million compared to $1.2 million). This is a result of not only higher starting salaries for people with higher education levels, but also the sharper earnings growth over the course their careers.

Work-Life Earnings for Full-Time Employees (in $ millions)



Average Lifetime Earnings—Different Levels of Education
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Surveys, March 1999, 1989, and 2000