

Topic: OPPORTUNITY OCCUPATIONS

STUDENT ACTIVITY: Reading Reflection

Article: [Opportunity Occupations: Good Pay; No Degree Required](#)



Core Questions:

1. Why are opportunity occupations an important part of the labor market?
2. What skills or qualities did Kendra and Brian have that will be helpful in their careers?
3. Explain why advancements in automation and technology might impact the job market.
4. The article mentioned the issue of brain drain and its effect on a local community. Why would a community want to reduce brain drain?

5. How can an apprenticeship impact an individual's human capital?

6. Other than wages, what are benefits of pursuing an opportunity occupation right out of high school rather than getting a four-year degree?

7. Why do you believe there could be a negative perception about skilled trade jobs?

8. Which opportunity occupations are important to your state's economy? What might be the impact if those jobs didn't exist in the job market?

Advanced Questions:

1. What economic factors can impact a worker's interest in opportunity occupations?

2. What does it mean if the 'premium of earning a four-year degree is narrowing,' as stated in the article?

3. In the article, Kendra said "I knew people who had graduated before me (from cosmetology school) and they were still working two jobs to make ends meet for themselves and their families." Why do you think their efforts in improving their human capital didn't equate to success in the labor market?

4. One of the employers in the article said that he “wants his plant to be prepared for business surges with upticks in commodity prices”. Why could a future employee leverage this knowledge for higher wages? How would an increase in brain drain impact this employer’s plan?

5. Why would the retirement of the baby boomer generation impact career education for younger generations?

6. The article mentioned that several opportunity occupations will “experience above-average growth through 2026.” How would this affect a consumer’s perspective as compared to that of a producer?

7. In your opinion, what would a sustainable workforce pipeline include or look like from an employer’s perspective?

8. How might foregoing a four-year degree to pursue an opportunity occupation right out of high school benefit someone’s human capital and career opportunities?