



Topic: OPPORTUNITY OCCUPATIONS

STUDENT ACTIVITY: Facts and Figures

Questions:

1. 90% of 650 employees have jobs that do not require a bachelor's degree. How many employees is this?
2. Out of 2,600 total students, 300 juniors and seniors are enrolled in the Grand Island High School Career Pathways program. What percentage of the student population is enrolled in the program?
3. An average interest rate for a college loan is 6.8%. Calculate simple interest for a four-year degree totaling \$38,500.
4. 68% of Americans who are 25 and older do not have a bachelor's degree. What percentage do have one?
5. Based on Federal Reserve research, the top opportunity occupations across the country include nursing, heavy and tractor-trailer truck driving, bookkeeping, maintenance work and carpentry. Use the [Opportunity Occupation Fact Sheets](#) to find out the annual median wage for each of these careers in the metropolitan area closest to you.

6. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the annual median wage in 2017 was \$37,690 and in 2019, it was \$39,810. Calculate the percentage change from 2017 and 2019 and use that same percentage to calculate what the median wage might be in 2021.

7. Among the metro areas analyzed in the [Opportunity Occupations Revisited](#) research the opportunity employment share ranges from a high of 34.0 percent in Toledo, OH to a low of 14.6 percent in Washington, D.C. Calculate the percentage difference and explain why you believe that is.

8. Out of a total population of 9,000, 4,500 are full-time employees and 2,500 are contract workers. Create a chart or graph to represent these figures visually, including percentage differences.

9. Research the number of students who graduated from your high school last year who went on to college.

10. Kendra Morgan works in an opportunity occupation as a welder at CNH Industrial America in Grand Island, Nebraska. Before this job, she graduated from cosmetology school and worked as a waitress. Research how many careers a worker is likely to have in their lifetime and write an explanation as to why you think that is.

11. Those who choose to pursue opportunity occupations don't have to earn a 4-year degree to work in those fields. Meanwhile, the cost of college and student loan debt is steadily increasing. Using [Big Future](#), identify the cost of tuition and fees for completing a four-year degree at both a private and public institution of your choice.

12. According to [EducationData.org](https://educationdata.org), completion time for a 4-year degree at a private college is 4.2 years and completion time for a 4-year degree at a public college is 4.6 years. Average the two together to find out the overall average for graduating from a 4-year institution and explain why you think that is.

13. According to [EducationData.org](https://educationdata.org), 30% of college freshman drop out before their sophomore year. What might be the cause?

14. In 2017, opportunity occupations comprised nearly 22 percent of all jobs studied and many displayed significant growth potential. The chart below, taken from page 8 of the [Opportunity Occupations Revisited](#) research shows the largest opportunity occupations. Based on the chart below, why do you believe that these occupations are projected to grow?

15. Using the chart below, compare the occupations with the highest percentage of opportunity employment to those with a low percentage. Explain how human capital differs between the two groups and how that could impact the degree of opportunity employment.

TEACHING TIPS PLUS: OPPORTUNITY OCCUPATIONS

Occupation Title	Opportunity Employment	Share of Sub-Baccalaureate Job Ads	Opportunity Employment
Registered Nurses	1,374,014	65.9%	65.9%
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	1,032,790	100.0%	93.1%
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	581,455	58.8%	52.8%
Maintenance and Repair Workers	491,285	100.0%	54.0%
Carpenters	457,460	100.0%	91.7%
Electricians	453,790	100.0%	100.0%
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	446,360	100.0%	100.0%
Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	433,025	38.9%	39.5%
General and Operations Managers	432,315	24.6%	26.0%
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing	426,495	39.5%	40.3%
Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers	405,652	89.0%	87.9%
Sales Representatives, Services, All Other	370,776	44.9%	45.0%
Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	368,040	64.9%	45.1%
Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	338,550	100.0%	76.9%
Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	313,670	100.0%	99.7%
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	284,418	73.6%	17.7%
Construction Laborers	270,250	100.0%	40.2%
Computer User Support Specialists	262,827	53.1%	52.6%
Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	254,647	65.9%	65.3%
Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants	227,786	46.0%	47.3%
Securities, Commodities, and Financial Services Sales Agents	225,101	70.8%	66.9%
Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	221,640	100.0%	100.0%
Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers	204,586	65.4%	65.5%
Supervisors of Transportation and Material Moving Workers	204,286	71.8%	72.0%
Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	202,699	53.5%	53.5%

Charts/tables are from *Opportunity Occupations Revisited: Exploring Employment for Sub-Baccalaureate Workers Across Metro Areas and Over Time*, developed by Keith Wardrip from the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, as well as Kyle Fee and Lisa Nelson from the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland. April 2019