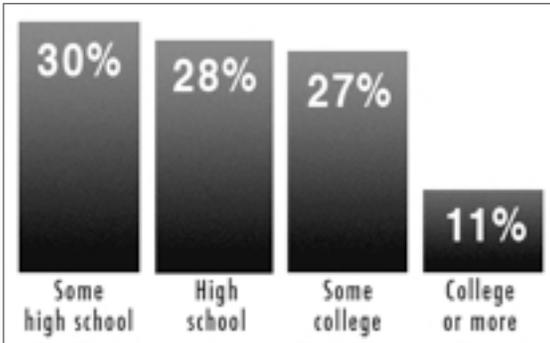


### Smoking Rate by Education Level



SOURCE: *Education Pays 2007* by The College Board

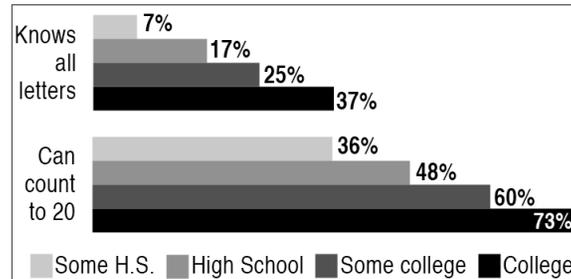
dangerous behavior (tobacco chart above) or to work at dangerous jobs.\*

The better-educated you are, the better your health insurance benefits—thus you seek medical care sooner. When *recovering* from illness, education is a key to survival. Not only does the individual better understand what needs to be done for recovery, the higher educated also tend to live in areas with the best medical facilities. They're married to or live with better-educated persons who better monitor the recovery process, administer physical therapy, read prescription dosages, and recognize side-effects.\*

As for one's education level affecting children's achievements, the chart (above right) shows that those with more knowledge pass it on more often. They speak to their children more often\* and have more print available in the home (library cards, books, magazines, newspapers, and catalogs).\* They watch less commercial television,\* and they read aloud to their children more frequently.\*

As for reading making you smarter, would you have an advantage if you could choose more than just your *own* brain when taking a test? How about taking three other brains

### Preschoolers' Skill Levels by Mothers' Education Levels



SOURCE: *Education Pays 2004* by The College Board

into the exam with you? When you read, you download information and experiences from other people's brains (authors) into your own — making yours that much deeper and better able to understand the world. For example, reading a brain surgeon's memoir would help you better understand not only your *own* brain, but also the thinking and behavior of doctors and surgeons, even the way hospitals function.

**T**he more educated you are, the more apt you are to have smarter habits and avoid dangerous ones. The higher-educated volunteer more often in their communities, vote more often, even give blood more often.\* As a result, he or she is more of an asset and less of a danger to self, family, and community.

Since it's almost impossible to transcend social classes without education, one can argue that **READING** is today's Great Emancipator.



\* Footnotes for all facts included here are online at: [www.trelease-on-reading.com/spcial-force.html](http://www.trelease-on-reading.com/spcial-force.html).  
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# READING: THE MOST POWERFUL SOCIAL FORCE IN AMERICA

**And Here's Proof!**

**BY JIM TRELEASE**

Author of the New York Times Bestseller  
*The Read-Aloud Handbook*



**R**eading is at the very heart of education. The knowledge of almost every subject in school flows from reading. One must be able to *read* the word problem in math in order to understand it. If you can't *read* the science or social studies chapter, you cannot answer the questions at the end of the chapter. Unlike a TV show, a computer manual must be *read*, not *viewed*, to be understood. Reading is the tide that lifts all of school's "boats."

One can even argue: reading is the single most powerful social factor in American life today. Here's a formula to support that. It sounds simplistic, but all its parts can be documented, and while not universal, it holds true far more often than not: nothing affects our society like reading (or not-reading).

1. The more you read, the more you know.\*
2. The more you know, the smarter you grow.\*
3. The smarter you are, the longer you stay in school.\*
4. The longer you stay in school, the more diplomas you earn and the longer you are employed—thus the more money you earn in a lifetime. (chart below)
5. The more diplomas you earn, the higher your own children's grades eventually will be in school.\*
6. And the more diplomas you earn, the longer you live.\*

*The opposite will also be true:*

1. The less you read, the less you know.
2. The less you know, the more likely you'll drop out of school.\*

3. The sooner you drop out, the sooner and longer you are poor.\*
4. The sooner you drop out, the greater your chances of going to jail.\*

The basis for that formula is firmly established: poverty and illiteracy are related—they are the parents of desperation and imprisonment.

- 70 to 82 percent of prison inmates are school dropouts.\*
- 60 percent of inmates are illiterate to semi-literate.

**T**he connection between reading and the dropout rate is simple: If you cannot read well enough to do the work, it affects the entire report card. Day-in and day-out, the student meets frustration and failure in every classroom and he or she constantly feels like dirt. Since there's a strong connection between reading and graduation and prison (the less you know, the more you think you won't get caught), if you change the reading scores you'll also change the prison population—which changes the social climate of America in a *big* way.

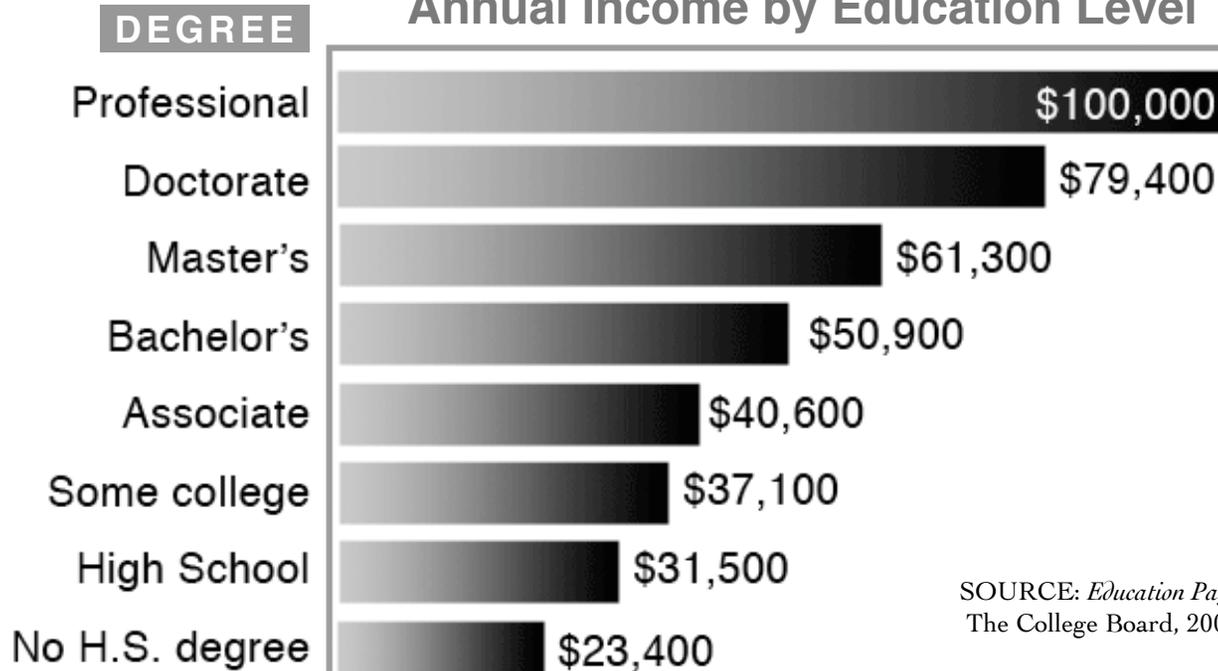
Why will you live longer if you're more educated? Let's look at that (again keeping in mind that while these stats are not 100% true, they're true far more often than not):

Common sense demonstrates the more educated you are, the more apt you are to live in a safe neighborhood—thus there's less danger from vermin, fire, or gunfire for you and your family.

The better educated you are, the less apt you are to engage in



## Annual Income by Education Level



SOURCE: *Education Pays*  
The College Board, 2007