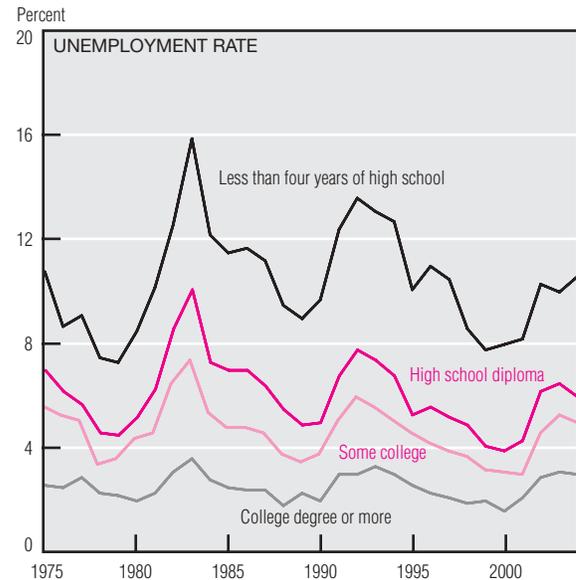
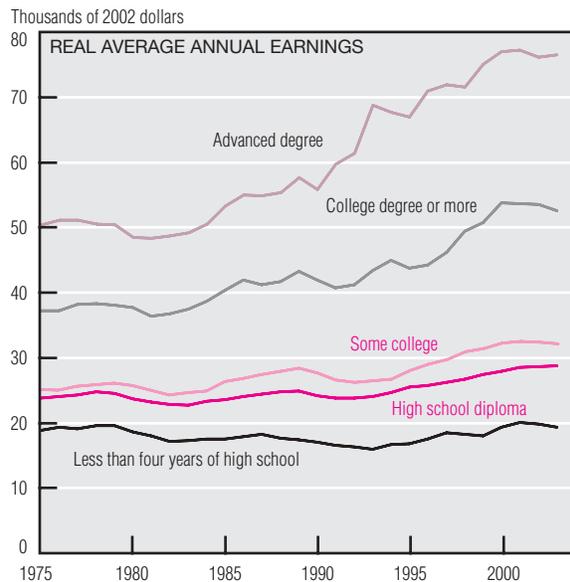
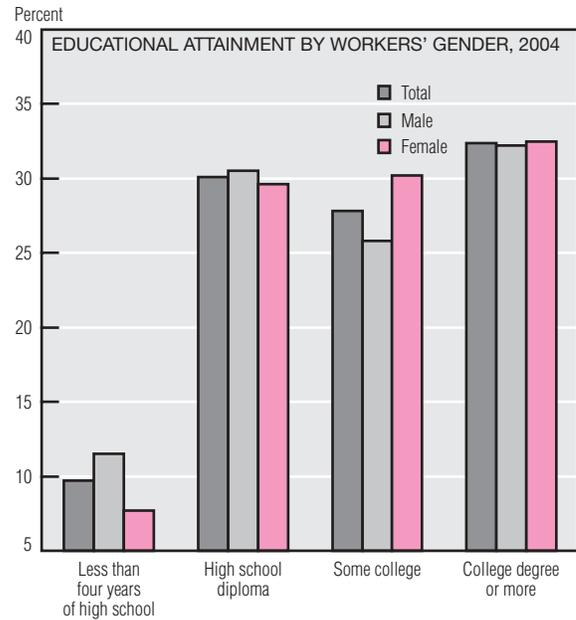
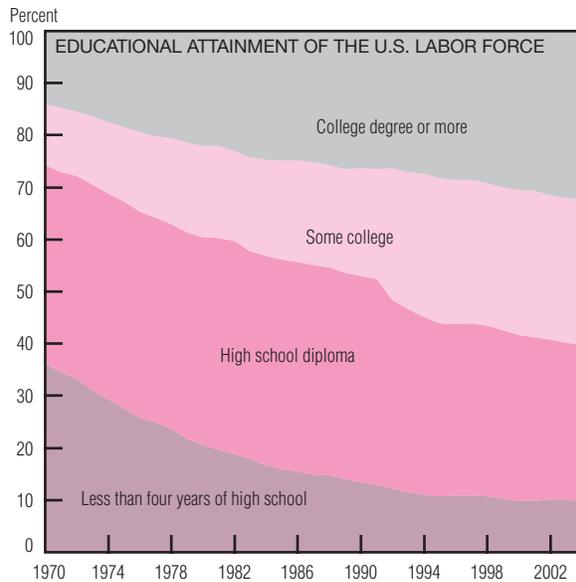


Workforce Education and Income



SOURCES: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census; and U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

American workers are becoming more educated. Over the past 34 years, the share of workers with at least a college degree more than doubled (from 14.1% in 1970 to 32.4% in 2004). Meanwhile, the share who did not graduate from high school plunged from 36.1% to 9.7%. In 2004, female workers' educational attainment surpassed males': About 63% had a college degree or at least some college education compared to 58% of males.

Real (inflation-adjusted) average annual earnings suggest that more

schooling and degrees lead to higher income. Since 1975, real average annual earnings for high school dropouts and those with only a high school diploma have changed very little. Over the same period, real earnings increased about 41% for college graduates and 52% for advanced degree holders. The result is a wider disparity in the earnings of high school versus college graduates, including those with advanced degrees. By 2003, workers with only a college degree earned nearly three

times more—and workers with advanced degrees four times more—than high school dropouts. The earnings premium for college and postgraduate degrees has leveled off over the past couple of years.

While better-educated workers have substantially higher real average annual earnings, they are also more likely to be employed: Those who have not completed high school are about four times likelier to be jobless than those with a college degree or more.