



Summer Jobs 2000

The following executive summary is from a nationwide survey conducted by Junior Achievement Inc. in May of 2000. For a full copy of the report, please contact Edwin Bodensiek at ebodensiek@ja.org or at (719) 540-6297 or Brad Kaufmann at bkaufmann@ja.org.

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Executive Summary

The days when summers were reserved for sports leagues, camps and amusement parks have passed. The boys and girls of summer are now spending their days on the job, in an effort to make extra spending money and save for a new car or for college. **Nearly nine-in-ten students (87%) surveyed will be working this summer.**

This figure is higher than the most recent data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), which predicted 73% of teens worked last summer. The difference is most likely due to the fact the Interprise Poll respondents are older on average than the mean age of those profiled by the BLS.

Gender does not appear to play a role in the tendency to work during the summer. Boys and girls are both equally likely to have jobs this summer. Age is a factor. Older students are more likely to be working during the summer. While only one-quarter of 12- and 13-year olds are working this summer, 87% of 16- and 17-year olds as well as 88% of 18- and 19-year olds are working this summer.

The Most Popular Jobs

Respondents were asked what job they will be working this summer. Their answers were grouped into 13 job categories. The most popular summer jobs are retail sales (41% of respondents), restaurant/fast food (20%), office assistant (14%), babysitting (6%), arts & entertainment (4%) and manual trades (4%). The least popular of those receiving responses are telemarketing, computer programming and government/civil service.

The top jobs for teenage boys are retail sales, restaurant/fast food, manual trades, lawn care and arts & entertainment. Boys are 13 times more likely to work in the manual trades, 10 times more likely to do lawn care and 8 times more likely to be a computer programmer during the summer. The top jobs for girls are retail sales, restaurant/fast food, office assistant, babysitting and education. Girls are six times more likely to be a babysitter for the summer.

Retail sales is the number one job for all age groups. While restaurant/fast food is the second most popular job for students 16 and older, babysitting is tied for the most popular among students under-16. Office assistant is number three for all age groups. There are a number of jobs that have official or unofficial minimum ages. None of the respondents under-16 work in lifeguard, telemarketing, computer programming, education, manual trades or government jobs.

The jobs that require teens to work the most hours per week during the summer are computer programming (42 hours per week), government/civil service (41), telemarketing (39), manual trades (39) and lifeguard (37). The jobs requiring the fewest hours are babysitting (27) and retail sales (31).

Just as high tech jobs are paying high wages in the adult working world, the highest paying summer job is computer programmer, paying \$10.13 per hour. The other high-paying jobs are government/civil service (\$9.13), manual trades (\$8.27), education (\$8.25) and lifeguard (\$8.22). The lowest paying summer jobs are babysitting (\$6.31) and restaurant/fast food (\$6.32). The most popular job, retail sales, is the third-lowest paying job, averaging \$6.66 per hour.

There is no positive correlation between job pay and popularity. In fact, there is a negative correlation. The most popular four jobs are ranked 7, 11, 12 and 13 among the 13 listed jobs based on pay. The two highest paying jobs are ranked 12 and 11 according to popularity.

Healthy Wages in a Prospering Economy

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average hourly wage for adult workers in the U.S. is \$13.16. With the record expansion in the U.S. economy and higher demand for skilled labor, this figure is increasing. While teens are not making wages that are that high, they are still making very decent pay on average. In fact, 91 percent are making more than minimum

wage--\$5.25 per hour. In many cases, the increased demand caused by the low unemployment rate is giving them the opportunity to take higher-paying jobs.

The average wage for teens working a summer job is \$6.99 per hour. Still, one-third make less than \$6 per hour and three-quarters make less than \$7.50 per hour. On the flip side, 15 percent make more than \$9 per hour. If they were working full-time, which some of them come close to doing, that would amount to an annual salary of more than \$20,000.

Eighteen and 19 year-olds earn more than any other age group, averaging \$7.21 per hour. The youngest group of students surveyed, those under-14, make the least. They average \$5.63 per hour. Fourteen- to 17- year olds make about the same amount.

The Gender Wage Gap exists among teens

The gender wage gap that exists among adults also persists among teens. Boys make significantly more per hour than girls--\$7.36 for boys compared to \$6.73 for girls. This amounts to teenage girls making 91 cents for every dollar earned by their male counterparts. Despite the disparity, there is some heartening news. The gap is not as wide as it is for adult women.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, adult women are paid only 74 cents for every dollar earned by their male counterparts. Still, considering that the range of salaries in the adult working world is much greater than that in the teen working world, the wage gap in the latter is still very pronounced.

While some of the adult gender wage gap is accounted for by the fact that women often choose industries or positions that pay less, a job-by-job analysis of the teen working world finds that even within the same industry or in the same position, girls still make less than boys. Boys are paid more in 10 of the 13 industries that teens are working in this summer. The biggest pay differences are in lawn care and manual trades. The only industries that girls earn higher wages in are telemarketing, computer programming and government/civil service work.

Teens Believe They Deserve Higher Pay

Nearly half of working teens believe they are underpaid. Less than 5 percent think they are overpaid. Fifty percent think they are paid the right amount. Even though teenage boys make high wages than girls, they are still more likely to think that they are underpaid. Fifty-eight percent of boys think they are underpaid, compared to 40% of teenage girls. Roughly the same percentage of boys and girls think they are overpaid.

Students who think they are overpaid earn an average of \$7.53 per hour. Those who think they are underpaid average 90 cents per hour less. Students who think they are paid the right amount essentially split the difference between the other two groups, averaging \$7.23 per hour. Comparing this to the actual average wage for all students during the summer (\$6.99), we can see that overall, students think they are paid less than they deserve. Those making more than \$9 per hour are the most likely to think that they are overpaid. This same group, along with those making between \$7.50 and \$9.00 per hour are also the most likely to think they are underpaid.

Older students are less likely to think that they are being paid equitably. While only 19% of those under-16 believe they are being underpaid, 45 percent of 16- and 17-year olds as well as 48 percent of 18- and 19-year olds think they are underpaid. On the flip-side, while only 4 percent of students 16 and older think they are overpaid, nearly one-quarter of working teens under-16 think they are paid too much at their summer job.

Teens Savings Rate Dwarfs the Adult Savings Rate

On average, students working during the summer save slightly more than one-third of their earnings (34 percent). According to the US Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Statistics, the overall personal savings rate was 1.8 percent in the fourth quarter of 1999, the most recent period on record. More recently, economic analysts and the Alan Greenspan, chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank, have estimated that the savings rate has moved into the negative. **In other words, teenagers working this summer are saving at least 17 times more than adults.**

To put the saving deficiencies of American adults and the saving tendencies of American teens in perspective, Southeast Asian countries typically have personal savings rates between 20 and 30 percent. The last time personal savings rates were in double digits in America was 1984, when the rate was 10.6 percent of disposable personal income. In order to find a year that Americans were saving as much as Southeast Asians do today, you would have to go back to a year when America was engulfed in World War II, 1944. The last time the US personal savings rate was under two percent was during the Great Depression, between 1932-1934.

Though some of this difference in the adult and teen savings rates can be accounted for by the fact that the parents of these students pay their much or all of the teens' food, clothing and shelter expenses, the difference is still too extreme to be ignored. Though the American economy is reaching near-record levels and individual earnings are climbing with the expanding economy, American's are saving less and carrying more debt than ever before. We can only hope that these working teens will continue to earmark significant amounts of their earnings to savings when they leave school and enter the working world full-time.

The savings rate increases with earnings. Teens making less than \$6.00 per hour, save 29% of their earnings on average. Those making between \$6.00 and \$7.50, save an average of 34%. Students earning more than \$7.50 per hour save 41% of their summer's wages.

Students who are working to gain specific experience for a future career save the largest share of their earnings (40%) followed closely by those saving money for college (39%) or saving for a car (39%). Respondents who are working to support their family, because their parents insist or for extra spending money have the lowest savings rate.

Gender Savings Gap Compounds Wage Differences

Boys save more of their summer earnings than girls do. Since boys are paid more per hour than girls and work more hours per week as well, they earn more over the summer and therefore end the summer with more money in their bank accounts. This gender savings gap means that over a single summer, boys save an average of \$1156.11 and girls save an average of \$778.51, a **difference of 33%**.

Why Teens are Working - Spending Sprees and College Fees

Despite high savings rates, three-in-five teens are working to earn extra spending money. With their basic necessities taken care of by their parents, these teens view summer employment as a means to getting the material possessions that they want. Such spending sprees include shopping for music, clothing and big ticket items such as cars.

The very high percentage of students working (87%) combined with the high percentage of those that are working to have extra spending money (59%) reflects our increasingly consumerist culture. The result of our hyper-prosperity is the ever-increasing drive to bring about happiness through material possession.

Even with the motivations towards consumerist tendencies, 40 percent of the students working are also doing so to save for college. Nearly one-third are working to save money for a car and one-quarter are working to gain employment experience. Though we are in the greatest peacetime expansion in the history of the country, one-in-ten are forced by economic circumstances to work to help support their family.

Boys are more likely to be working to save for a car or to gain experience in preparation for a future career. Girls are more likely to be working for extra spending money, to save for college, because their parents insist, to help support their family or to gain general work experience.

Older students are more likely to be working to save for college. Eighteen- and 19-year olds are three times more likely than 14- and 15-year olds to be saving for college. Older students are also more likely to be working to help with their family's expenses and to prepare for a specific career path.

First time workers are primarily motivated to get a job by the insistence of their parents, the desire to gain general work experience or to gain specific career skills. There are least motivated by the need to help support their family.

Teens Average 32 Hours Per Week

Teens working during the summer aren't just working, they are working a lot. Respondents work an average of 32 hours per week during the summer. Nearly one-third work more than 40 hours per week, meaning more than one-third of our teens are full-time workers while they are still in high school, albeit during their summer break. Only 15 percent of working teens work less than 20 hours per week on average during the summer.

Boys work 10 percent more hours than girls during the summer. While guys average 34 hours per week at their summer job, girls average 31 hours per week. This weekly difference compounded through entire summer amounts to guys working 40 more total hours, 408 hours compared to 368. When this difference is combined with the lower pay that girls earn on average, the total pay out for a summer's worth of work is quite different for boys and girls.

Students who work more hours per week during the school year are also more likely to work more hours during the summer. This correlation reveals that there is a class of full-time students who are also full-time workers.

The summer jobs with the most average hours per week are computer programmer (42 hours), government/civil service (41), telemarketing (39), manual trades (39) and lifeguard (37). All of the students surveyed who are working in the computer industry this summer are working more than 30 hours per week. All of the government and telemarketing jobs that employ survey respondents require them to work at least 20 hours per week. The jobs with the fewest hours are babysitting (27), arts and entertainment (30), retail sales (31), education (32) and restaurant/fast food (32). It should be noted that the most popular jobs, retail sales and restaurant/fast food are two of the three jobs requiring the fewest number of hours per week.

Friends Help Teens Find Jobs

The most popular way for teens to get a job is through their friends. The second most popular means is through their parents. School counselors and teachers play a job-hunting role for one-in-ten students. The Internet generation does not appear to be relying on the Internet for summer jobs. Only one percent of job seekers turned to the Web for job direction. Radio is the only means that claims fewer job seekers.

Both boys and girls first turn to their friends for guidance on getting a summer job. Boys are more likely to turn to family members or the Internet to find a summer job. Girls are more likely to seek a job through newspapers, employment agencies or the radio. None of the boys surveyed relied on the radio to get their job.

Teens under the age of 16 are much more likely to turn to their parents to find a job than any other source. While one-third of teens over the age of 16 rely on their parents in their job search, they are more likely to seek out job opportunities through their friends. Nearly half of these older teens rely on their friends to find a job. These older teens are also more likely to seek a job through the Internet, the newspaper or the radio.

Students who use the Internet to find a job get the highest paid jobs, most likely because they are searching for jobs that are related to computers, the highest paying summer job. Jobs found through school officials and parents bring in the next highest salaries. The newspaper, the radio and friends refer jobs that pay the least.

First-time Employees

One-third of teens working this summer are working for the first time. Fifteen percent have had both a summer and school year job before. Forty-two percent have had a summer job before and 43 percent have had a school year job previously. Overall, girls are more likely to be working for the first time this summer. Boys are more likely to have worked a summer job before. Girls are more likely to have worked previously during the school year.

As can be expected, younger students are more likely to be first time workers this summer. While all of the students surveyed who are age 13 and under are working for the first time this summer, 59 percent of teens under-16 are working for the first time. One-third of 16- and 17-year olds are working their first job and only one-quarter of 18- and 19-year olds are doing so. Based on age, students are progressively more likely to have worked either a summer job, school year job or both jobs previously. While only 17 percent of those under-16 have worked during the school year previously, 38 percent of students who are 16 or 17 and half of students who are over-18 have done so.

First time student workers earn less on average than students who have worked previously. First-time workers earn 82 cents per hour less than their job veteran counterparts—\$6.55 per hour compared to \$7.37 per hour. Over the length of a summer, this amounts to a difference of \$315 in earnings. Those who have worked previously during the school year make the most during the summer. Their average wage is \$7.70 per hour.

The jobs that have the highest share of first-time employees are government/civil service (43%), restaurant/fast food (38%), medical (38%) and arts and entertainment (33%). The computer industry favors first-time employees the least. All of the respondents working in the computer industry this summer have previously held jobs.

Two-thirds of Teens are Working Students

For two-thirds of America's high school students, having a job is an integral part of their school year experience. Sixty-seven percent of students work during the school year. That means they make time for a job in addition to doing all their schoolwork, attending class for 35 hours per week and taking part in extra-curricular activities. The vast majority (79%) of those working during the summer carry the same job during the school year and summer.

Boys are more likely to work during the school year. Seventy percent of boys work during the school year compared to 65

percent of girls. Boys are also more likely to work the same job year-round. Older students are also more likely to work during the school year. Forty-two percent of students under the age of 16 surveyed work during the school year, compared to two-thirds of 16- and 17-year olds. Seventy-one percent of students 18 and older work during the school year. Sixteen- and 17-year olds are the most likely to work the same job year-round. They are three times more likely to work the same job than a different one.

Students Work Four Days Per Week During the School Year

Students work four days per week on average during the school year. Even if they work both days during the weekend, that means they average two weeknights on the job as well. More than half of the students surveyed work at least four days per week during the school year. Eleven percent work six or seven days per week.

Older students work more during the school year than younger students. While none of the students surveyed under the age of 14 work during the school year, 14- and 15-year olds work an average of almost 3 days per week. These are students facing the heady challenges of their first or second year of high school in addition to holding down a job. Sixteen- and 17-year olds average nearly four days per week and 18- and 19-year olds, predominately seniors in high school, average just over four days per week.

Students who are working to help support their family work the most days per week (4.3) during the school year. Those who are working to save for a car also average more than four days per week. At the opposite end of the spectrum, students who are working because their parents insist work the fewest number of days per week during the school year.

Schedule for the Week - 35 Hours of School, 23 Hours of Work

By choice, by circumstance or by necessity, young people today balance many responsibilities today, from school and extracurricular activities to jobs and helping to raise siblings. Many of these activities were traditionally reserved for adults, but the demands of the day require kids to grow-up sooner. **One-quarter of the teens work more than 30 hours per week during the school year. Five percent work full-time, 40 or more hours per week.**

The students surveyed work an average of 23 hours per week during the school year. With students averaging four working days per week during the school year, this means students work about 6 hours per day on the days they work during the school year. Taking a seven-hour school day into account, this does not leave much time for schoolwork or extracurricular activities.

Boys work slightly more during the school year, averaging 24 hours per week compared to 22 hours per week for girls. The same difference between the genders exists during the summer hours as well. Older students also work more hours per week during the school year. While students under-16 work an average of 16 hours per week, those who are 16- or 17-years old work 22 hours per week and those who are 18 and older work 24 hours per week on average.

Demographics

There were 659 respondents to the survey. Of the 659 respondents, 58 percent are female and 42 percent are male. Boys are underrepresented in the sample, but the size of each sample still allows for an adequate statistical analysis.

The sample is also not entirely representative according to race. Compared to national racial demographics compiled by the U.S. Census Bureau, Asian, Blacks, Hispanics and Native Americans are all over represented, leaving Whites grossly underrepresented. This has been taken into account by conducting analyses of responses based on race. When a significant difference based on race was evident, the results were included.

The average age of the respondents is 17. The majority of respondents are 18- or 19-years old. Another 42 percent are 16- or 17-years old. Only six percent of those who responded to the survey are under-16. The vast majority of respondents are in high school. Only four percent of the pool is in middle school and none of the respondents are in elementary school.

Methodology

Surveys were distributed through local Junior Achievement offices to classes of students that were randomly selected. All students are participants in Junior Achievement programs. These students do not choose to be part of the programs but are automatically enrolled in the programs as an entire class based on the choice of their teacher. They are a representative cross-section of average American students.

The surveys were completed and returned to the Junior Achievement National Headquarters and Service Center where they

were entered into a pre-designed Access Database. The database was then forwarded to an independent contractor charged with evaluating the results of the survey using standard statistical methods.

Margin of Error

The margin of error for the entire sample is +/- 3.9%. In such cases where a smaller segment of the sample was used for analysis, the margin of error for that particular query is listed along with the analysis.

Mean Calculating Figures

The multiple choice answers to some questions were provided as ranges. In such circumstances, each range was assigned a mean "calculating figure" to make the calculation of averages possible. Such ranges and their corresponding mean calculating figures are detailed in each major section in which they are used.

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