

8 Work and equality

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Reading

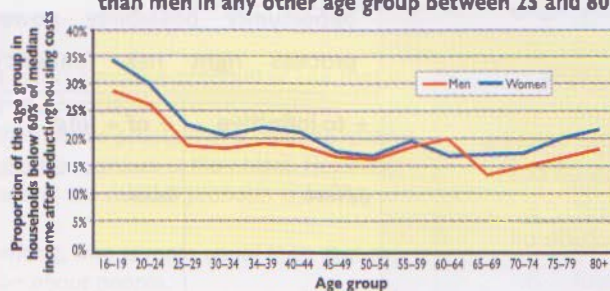
1 Understanding figures and tables

Although much of the information you read in your academic studies will be in the form of continuous text, some of it will be in other forms, such as tables, maps, formulae, and so on. It is important to develop skills in understanding these other sources of information.

1.1 Your group has been asked to prepare a presentation on the topic *Employment and inequality in the UK*. You have researched the topic and found four relevant sources online. For each source (A–D) answer the questions (1–4). In pairs, compare your answers.

- 1 Is there any information above the figure/table (e.g. the title)? Is there any information below the figure/table (e.g. the source, other notes)?
- 2 Are there different colours in the figure? What do they indicate?
- 3 What information is given on the X and Y axes (of a graph) or in the row and column headings (of a table)?
- 4 What observations can you make that are of relevance to the topic of your presentation?

Men aged 60 to 64 are more likely to be in low income than men in any other age group between 25 and 80



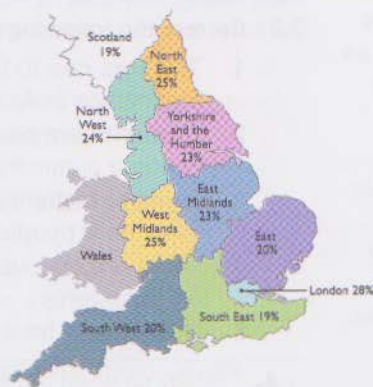
Source: Households Below Average Income, DWP, UK; the data is average for 2006/07 to 2008/09; updated 2010

A

Age group	Proportion not working	
	Men	Women
18 to 24	39%	42%
25 to 34	15%	29%
35 to 49	13%	24%
50 to retirement	28%	30%

Source: www.poverty.co.uk

B

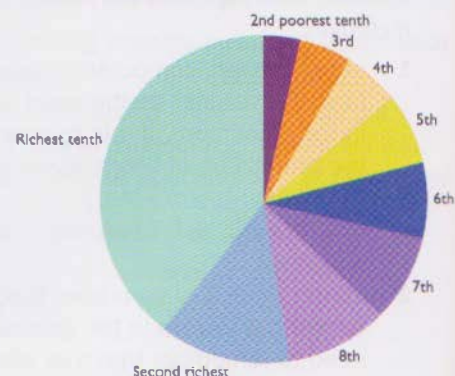


Proportion of the population in households below 60% of median income after deducting housing costs.

Source: Households Below Average Income, DWP, UK; Average for 2006/07 to 2008/09; Updated Aug 2010

C

Four-fifths of the total increase in incomes over the last decade has gone to those with above-average incomes and two-fifths has gone to those in the richest tenth




Source: Households Below Average Income, DWP; the data is the difference in real incomes between 1996/99 and 2008/09; Great Britain; updated Aug 2010

D

1.2 In pairs, give a short presentation of no more than two minutes using the information from Sources A–D.

- Student A, use Sources A and B to talk about age and gender issues.
- Student B, use Sources C and D to talk about the distribution of income across regions and society.
- Individually, make notes to prepare for your presentation.
- Present the information to your partner.

 **Focus on your subject** What are the main types of figure used in your subject? Look in a number of textbooks or journal articles to find out if you don't already know.

2 Scanning for information

2.1 You are going to read a text with the title *Gender Bias and the Glass Ceiling*. Before you read, look at the following scenario. In small groups, discuss the questions.

Janice, a 35-year-old African American at a business consulting firm, is concerned because her career is not progressing as rapidly as she had hoped. Janice works hard and has received excellent performance ratings every year, but she has noticed that there are very few women in upper management positions in her company. Janice wonders whether she will ever be promoted.

Kail, R. V. and Cavanaugh, J. C. (2010) *Human development: A life span view* (5th edn.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Cengage Advantage Books.

- 1 What reasons can you suggest for Janice's slow progress?
- 2 What advice would you give to Janice?

2.2 Look at the following statements made in the text. Scan the text to find out whether the writer says they apply mainly to women (W) or to men (M).

- 1 They are unusual in high status jobs. W
- 2 They comprise about a quarter of all CEOs. _____
- 3 Fewer serve in the highest ranks of major corporations. _____
- 4 They face gender discrimination in the workplace. _____
- 5 They have stricter job performance standards applied to them. _____
- 6 They are largely blind to the existence of the glass ceiling. _____
- 7 They are more readily promoted to upper-tier grades. _____
- 8 They are more democratic and interpersonally oriented. _____
- 9 They earn less in the same occupation. _____
- 10 They should negotiate salary more effectively. _____

Gender Bias and the Glass Ceiling

Even though the majority of women work outside the home, women in high status jobs are unusual (Mitchell, 2000); in 2006 only about 23% of all CEOs – and only 10 of the Fortune 500 companies – were headed by women. Not until 1981 was a woman, Sandra Day O'Connor, appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court; it took another 12 years before a second woman, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, was appointed. As Janice noticed, few women serve in the highest ranks of major corporations, and women are substantially outnumbered at the senior faculty level of most universities and colleges.

Why are there so few women in such positions? The most important reason is gender discrimination: denying a job to someone solely on the basis of whether the person is a man or a woman. Lovoy (2001) points out that gender discrimination is pervasive in the workplace. Despite some progress over the past two decades, sex discrimination is still common: women are being kept out of high status jobs by the men at the top (Barnes, 2005; Reid, Miller, & Kerr, 2004).

Research in the United States and Britain also confirms that women are forced to work harder than men (Gorman & Krnec, 2007). Neither differences in job characteristics nor family obligations account for this difference; the results clearly point to stricter job performance standards being applied to women.

Women themselves refer to a glass ceiling: the level to which they may rise in an organization but beyond which they may not go. The glass ceiling is a major barrier for women (Maume, 2004), and the greatest barrier facing them is at the boundary between lower-tier and upper-tier grades. Men are largely blind to the existence of the glass ceiling (Heppner, 2007). Women like Janice tend to move to the top of the lower tier and remain there, whereas men are more readily promoted to the upper tier even when other factors (e.g. personal attributes, qualifications, job performance) are controlled (Lovoy, 2001).

The glass ceiling is pervasive across workplace settings (Heppner, 2007), including private corporations (Lyness & Thompson, 1997), government agencies (Reid et al., 2004), and nonprofit organizations (Shaiko, 1996). The glass ceiling has also been used to account for why African Americans and Asian Americans do not advance as much in their careers as do European American men (Hwang, 2007; Johnson, 2000; Phelps & Constantine, 2001). It also provides a framework for understanding limitations to women's careers in many countries around the world (Mugadza, 2005; Zafarullah, 2000).

What can be done to begin eliminating the glass ceiling? Mitchell (2000) suggests that companies must begin to value the competencies women develop, such as being more democratic and interpersonally oriented than men, and to assist men in feeling more comfortable with their female colleagues. Mentoring is also an important aspect. Lovoy (2001) adds that companies must be more proactive in promoting diversity, provide better and more detailed feedback about performance and where employees stand regarding promotion, and establish ombuds offices (company offices where employees can complain about working conditions or their supervisor without retribution) that help women deal with difficulties on the job.

In addition to discrimination in hiring and promotion, women are also subject to pay discrimination. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2007a), in only 13 of the hundreds of occupations they track did women earn at least 95% of men in the same occupations. On average, women are paid about 81% of what men are paid on an annual basis.

Several solutions to this problem have been promoted. One of these is pay equity: equalizing pay across occupations that are determined to be equivalent in importance but differ in the gender distribution of the people doing the jobs. Determining which male-dominated occupations should be considered equivalent to which female-dominated occupations for pay purposes is difficult and controversial. In their comprehensive look at pay inequity, Dey and Hill (2007) suggested several actions to address the problem: encouraging women to negotiate salary more effectively, rethinking the use of hours worked as the primary measure of productivity, creating more work options for working mothers, and ending gender discrimination in the workplace.

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- 2.3** The text focuses mainly on the situation in the United States. In small groups, discuss how this compares with the situation in your country. What evidence do you have (e.g. your own experience, experience of people you know, information from the media) to support your views?

→ -ing nouns

G&V 3, p121

3 Taking notes

- 3.1 a You are preparing for a tutorial on *Discrimination in the workplace*. You have been asked to give a short talk on the question *Why are there fewer women than men in higher-status jobs?* Read the text again in more detail and make notes in the following table.

The problem: Fewer women than men in higher-status jobs (at least in US context)

Reasons:

	Gender discrimination	Glass ceiling	Pay discrimination
What is it? (Give definition)			
Info/examples			
Possible solutions			

- b In pairs, compare your notes and if necessary add more detail to them.
- c Use the notes to explain either the *glass ceiling* or *pay discrimination*. Define the term, saying why it is a problem and what solutions have been suggested.

4 Understanding the significance of references

References are used in academic texts to provide evidence or support for the claims made by the writer.

- 4.1 In pairs, discuss what kind of evidence or support might be found in the following references taken from the text. For example, Mitchell (2000) (lines 1–2):



Mitchell (2000) provides evidence that there are few women in high-status jobs. For example, companies might have been surveyed to find out whether high-ranking jobs are filled by men or women. It doesn't actually say where the figures come from.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1 Mitchell, 2000 (lines 1–2) | 6 Heppner, 2007 (line 21) |
| 2 Barnes, 2005 (lines 9–11) | 7 Lyness & Thompson, 1997 (lines 21–22) |
| 3 Gorman & Krnec, 2007 (lines 12–13) | 8 Reid et al., 2004 (line 22) |
| 4 Maume, 2004 (line 16) | 9 Shaiko, 1996 (line 22) |
| 5 Lovoy, 2001 (lines 19–20) | 10 Hwang et al., 2007 (lines 23–24) |

5 Vocabulary in context: avoiding repetition

5.1 It can be good style to avoid repeating words and phrases. Which words in the text have a similar meaning to the words in bold? The first letter is given to help you. Look back at the text to check your answers.


- ... and only 10 of the Fortune 500 **companies** ... (line 2)
c**orporations** (line 5)
- ... **gender** discrimination is **pervasive** in the workplace ... (line 9)
s_____ (line 10) ; c_____ (line 10)
- Neither differences in **job characteristics** nor family obligations ... (line 13)
o_____ (line 36) ; a_____ (line 20)
- ... and **establish** ombuds offices ... (line 32)
c_____ (line 45)
- ... deal with **difficulties on the job**. (lines 33–34)
_____ w_____ (lines 45–46)
- Several solutions to this problem have been **promoted**. (line 38)
s_____ (line 43)



Study tip When you have produced a first draft of a piece of writing, check it carefully for unnecessary repetition of words and phrases. Try to replace some of the repetitions you find with words or phrases with the same meaning.

Listening and speaking

6 Taking part in tutorials and joining in discussions

6.1  8.1 Listen to three students talking about their experience of university tutorials in different subjects. As you listen, make notes in the following table.

	Anna (Linguistics)	Greg (Chemistry)	Matt (Business Studies)
1 What happens during their tutorials?			
2 What are they expected to do before and during tutorials?			
3 What problems do they face in tutorials?			