

Article of the Week # 12

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2/2 - 2/6

High School Nerds Make More Money, Says Social Science

By Jordan Weissmann, SLATE.COM

① At this point, I think most of us have come to appreciate that teenage nerdery can pay off handsomely later in life. But in case the money pouring into Silicon Valley or the cultural hegemony of *Game of Thrones* didn't have you convinced, researchers at the University of Miami have now published a study showing that students who earn better grades in high school also make more money as adults.

② The paper, which appears in the *Eastern Economic Journal*, finds that boys who up their GPAs by an extra point can expect to earn 11.85 percent more pay down the road. For girls, an additional grade point is worth a 13.77 percent bonus. This was after controlling for a host of demographic factors as well as a measure of innate smarts. The researchers based their finding on a longitudinal study that tracked thousands of Americans from adolescence through young adulthood. Crucially, the data included actual high school transcript information, not self-reported grades that could have been prone to misrecollection.

③ Here is a basic breakdown of how grades and GPA relate. (While the paper itself doesn't chart the relationship exactly this way, the researchers prepared the data to share with the press.)
*Graph is part of paragraph 3.

Average Adult Earnings by High School GPA

Source: "What You Do in High School Matters: High School GPA, Educational Attainment, and Labor Market Earnings as a Young Adult," *Eastern Economic Journal*, 2014

