

④ University of Miami economist Michael French, one of the report's authors, told me that so far as he and his collaborators could tell, no studies had previously explored the long-term link between high school GPA and adult pay. Rather, researchers studying the influence of high school performance on future earnings have tended to look at things such as how many years of education students complete and what sorts of classes they take. He cautioned that while his paper's findings show a strong correlation between grades and pay, it doesn't prove a causal link. But it's not difficult to think of ways pay and grades might relate. A student's high school GPA is a good predictor of whether he will finish college, and generally, more education leads to more pay. The ability to slog through high school biology and Spanish class also may well just be a good indicator of intrinsic motivation.

⑤ In any event, between this paper and work from Yale showing that high school popularity apparently has no influence on adult pay, the nerds appear to have social science firmly on the side of their life decisions. And the next time your snot-nosed teen refuses to do his homework, you can now show him why he should, *in one graph*.