



WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE: 1940-2010

TEACHER VERSION

Subject Level:

High School History

Grade Level:

9-12

Approx. Time Required:

60-120 minutes

Learning Objectives:

- Students will be able to analyze and compare data in graphs to understand the differences in education, earnings, and workforce statistics for men and for women between 1940 and 2010.
- Students will be able to make connections between historical movements of the 20th century and changes in women's levels of education, earnings, and workforce participation.

Activity Description

Students will examine graphs on education, earnings, and workforce participation for men and women between 1940 and 2010. Specifically, students will study a graph of the percentages of managers who were women from 1940 to 2009 to understand the connection between the increase in these percentages and the feminist movement of the 1960s.

Suggested Grade Level:

9-12

Approximate Time Required:

60-120 minutes

Learning Objectives:

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Topics:

- Earnings
- Educational attainment
- Post-World War II America
- Women in the workforce

Skills Taught:

- Analyzing visual data
 - Making inferences
 - Using data to support conclusions
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Materials Required

- The student version of this activity, 18 pages
- Teacher computer with Internet access and a projector to display web sites

Activity Items

The following items are part of this activity. Items, their sources, and any relevant instructions for viewing them online appear at the end of this teacher version.

- Item 1: Percentage of Men and Women With a Bachelor's Degree or More, Ages 25 and Older: 1940-2010
- Item 2: Percentage of Men and Women With a Bachelor's Degree or More, Ages 25 to 29: 1940-2010
- Item 3: Percentage of Managers Who Are Women: 1940-2009
- Item 4: Median Earnings of Full-Time, Year-Round Workers by Sex: 1960-2009
- Item 5: Ratio of Women's-to-Men's Median Earnings for Full-Time, Year-Round Workers: 1960-2009
- Item 6: Number of Full-Time, Year-Round Workers With Earnings by Sex: 1967-2009
- Item 7: Usual Hours Worked by Sex: 1975-2010
- Item 8: Percentage of Women-Owned Businesses: 1997, 2002, and 2007
- Item 9: Percentage of Employees in Women-Owned Firms: 1997, 2002, and 2007
- Item 10: Percentage of Firms by Sales/Receipts Levels by Sex of Owner: 2007
- Item 11: Industries With Relatively High and Low Women Ownership: 2007
- Item 12: Educational Attainment of Owners of Respondent Firms by Sex: 2007
- Item 13: Average Hours Worked Per Week by Owners of Respondent Firms by Sex: 2007
- Item 14: Ratio of Women's to Men's Median Earnings in Selected Occupations for Full-Time, Year-Round Workers: 2007-2009
- Item 15: Major Occupation Groups by Percentage of Mothers of Preschoolers Opting Out of the Labor Force: 2009

For more information to help you introduce your students to the U.S. Census Bureau, read "[Census Bureau 101 for Students](#)." This information sheet can be printed and passed out to your students as well.

Standards Addressed

See charts below. For more information, read *"Overview of Education Standards and Guidelines Addressed in Statistics in Schools Activities."*

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects

Standard	Strand	Cluster
<p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.7 Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text.</p>	RH 9-10 - History/ Social Studies	Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
<p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.</p>	RH 11-12 - History/ Social Studies	Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

UCLA National Standards for History: U.S. History Content Standards

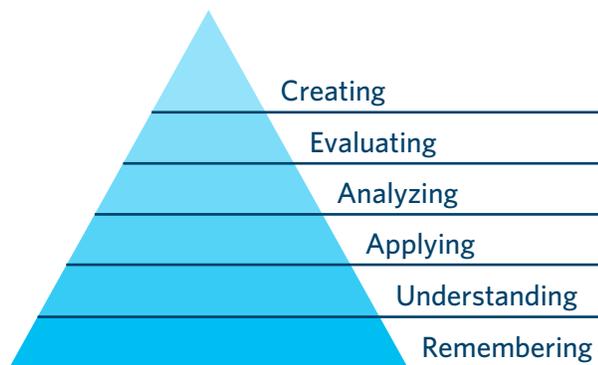
Era	Standard
9 - Postwar United States (1945 to Early 1970s)	Standard 4: The struggle for racial and gender equality and for the extension of civil liberties

UCLA National Standards for History: Historical Thinking Standards

Standard	Description
Standard 1: Chronological Thinking	Reconstruct patterns of historical succession and duration. Students will analyze census data from 1940 through 2010 to identify differences in education, earnings, and workforce statistics for men and for women.
Standard 2: Historical Comprehension	Utilize visual and mathematical data. Students will examine graphs on education, earnings, and workforce participation for men and women between 1940 and 2010.
Standard 3: Historical Analysis and Interpretation	Draw comparisons across eras and regions in order to define enduring issues. Students will analyze 1940-2010 data on education, earnings, and workforce participation to identify inequalities between men and women.

Bloom’s Taxonomy

Students will **analyze** and compare education, earnings, and workforce statistics for men and for women from 1940 to 2010.



Teacher Notes

Before the Activity

Students should have a basic understanding of the following ideas and concepts:

- Historical events of the 1940s, including World War II
- The feminist movement of the 1960s

Teachers should ask students, “How would a 20-year-old woman’s educational and employment opportunities be different in 1940 versus today?”

Teachers should then show students all or part of “Women in the Workforce” (www.c-span.org/video/?300929-6/women-workforce), a 53-minute C-SPAN program from 2011 that was part of a five-day series about the American workforce by Washington Journal, and encourage students to take notes. The video features Dr. Robert Groves, former Census Bureau director.

Teachers should be aware that this activity is designed to be teacher-led, meaning that teachers complete the activity with students as a class and pause after each question to discuss students’ answers.

During the Activity

Teachers should monitor students as they work.

After the Activity

Teachers should address any questions students had for question 12.

Extension Ideas

- Teachers could ask students to select a woman from Forbes’ current list of “The World’s 100 Most Powerful Women” and to write a one-page summary explaining how she became so successful.
- Teachers could ask students to interview women in the workforce, such as family members or friends, asking, for example, “What advice would you have for women who are just now entering the workforce about how to succeed?”

Student Activity

Click [here](#) to download a printable version for students.

Activity Items

The following items are part of this activity and appear at the end of this student version.

- Item 1: Percentage of Men and Women With a Bachelor's Degree or More, Ages 25 and Older: 1940-2010
- Item 2: Percentage of Men and Women With a Bachelor's Degree or More, Ages 25 to 29: 1940-2010
- Item 3: Percentage of Managers Who Are Women: 1940-2009
- Item 4: Median Earnings of Full-Time, Year-Round Workers by Sex: 1960-2009
- Item 5: Ratio of Women's-to-Men's Median Earnings for Full-Time, Year-Round Workers: 1960-2009
- Item 6: Number of Full-Time, Year-Round Workers With Earnings by Sex: 1967-2009
- Item 7: Usual Hours Worked by Sex: 1975-2010
- Item 8: Percentage of Women-Owned Businesses: 1997, 2002, and 2007
- Item 9: Percentage of Employees in Women-Owned Firms: 1997, 2002, and 2007
- Item 10: Percentage of Firms by Sales/Receipts Levels by Sex of Owner: 2007
- Item 11: Industries With Relatively High and Low Women Ownership: 2007
- Item 12: Educational Attainment of Owners of Respondent Firms by Sex: 2007
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- Item 15: Major Occupation Groups by Percentage of Mothers of Preschoolers Opting Out of the Labor Force: 2009

Student Learning Objectives

- I will be able to analyze and compare data in graphs to understand the differences in education, earnings, and workforce statistics for men and for women between 1940 and 2010.
- I will be able to make connections between historical movements of the 20th century and changes in women's levels of education, earnings, and workforce participation.

1. Looking closely at **Items 1–15**, record at least three observations and ask two questions about any of the data.

Student observations and questions will vary but should cite specific information from the graphs.

2. Based on the items and what you learned in the C-SPAN segment before this activity, are you surprised by these data? Why or why not? What are your opinions of the trends in the data? Support your answers with specific information.

Student answers will vary, but student opinions could include that it is unfair that women earned less than men from 1960 through 2009.

3. What major event of the 1940s resulted in more women joining the workforce, and how did this result change the perception of what women could do around that time? Explain.

Industrial mobilization in support of the United States' entrance into World War II led to more women joining the workforce, which showed that women could work effectively outside of the home in what was considered a "man's job." More women worked outside the home after the war than before the war, but most jobs outside the home were still filled by men.

4. Look at **Item 1: Percentage of Men and Women With a Bachelor's Degree or More, Ages 25 and Older: 1940–2010**. What trends and differences do you notice?

Between 1940 and 2010, the percentages of people earning bachelor's degrees increased. Before 2010, men earned bachelor's degrees at higher rates than did women; in 1940 and 2010, the rates for men and women were just about equal.

5. Now look at **Item 2: Percentage of Men and Women With a Bachelor's Degree or More, Ages 25 to 29: 1940–2010**. What do you notice?

Student answers will vary but could include that, between 1990 and 2000, women in this age group started earning bachelor's degrees at higher rates than did their male peers.

6. Next, look at **Item 3: Percentage of Managers Who Are Women: 1940–2009**. During which period of time did the percentage of female managers increase the most sharply? What historical movement could explain this change?

1970 to 1990, because of the feminist movement of the 1960s.

Teachers could provide examples to help students understand what was happening at the time: In 1963, singer Lesley Gore released a hit song called "You Don't Own Me," which focuses on the idea that men can't control women. That same year, Betty Friedan published "The Feminine Mystique," which examines feminism.

7. Still looking at **Item 3**, during which time period did the percentage of female managers appear to level out, and why do you think this happened?

The percentages appear to level out between 1990 and 2009. Student explanations will vary but could include that there continued to be more men than women in the workforce.

8. Based on your understanding of the trends for female managers in the workplace from 1940 to 2009, predict how the same data from 2009 to today would look (an increase, a decrease, or no change). Explain using data from the graph.

Student answers will vary but should be supported by specific data.

9. Looking at **Item 4: Median Earnings of Full-Time, Year-Round Workers by Sex: 1960-2009**, what was the status of earnings for men versus for women in 2009?

Women earned less than men: \$36,300 versus \$47,100.

10. Thinking back to the C-SPAN segment, what did you learn about the difference in earnings between men and women in 2011?

Student answers will vary but should focus on the fact that women, on average, made less than men.

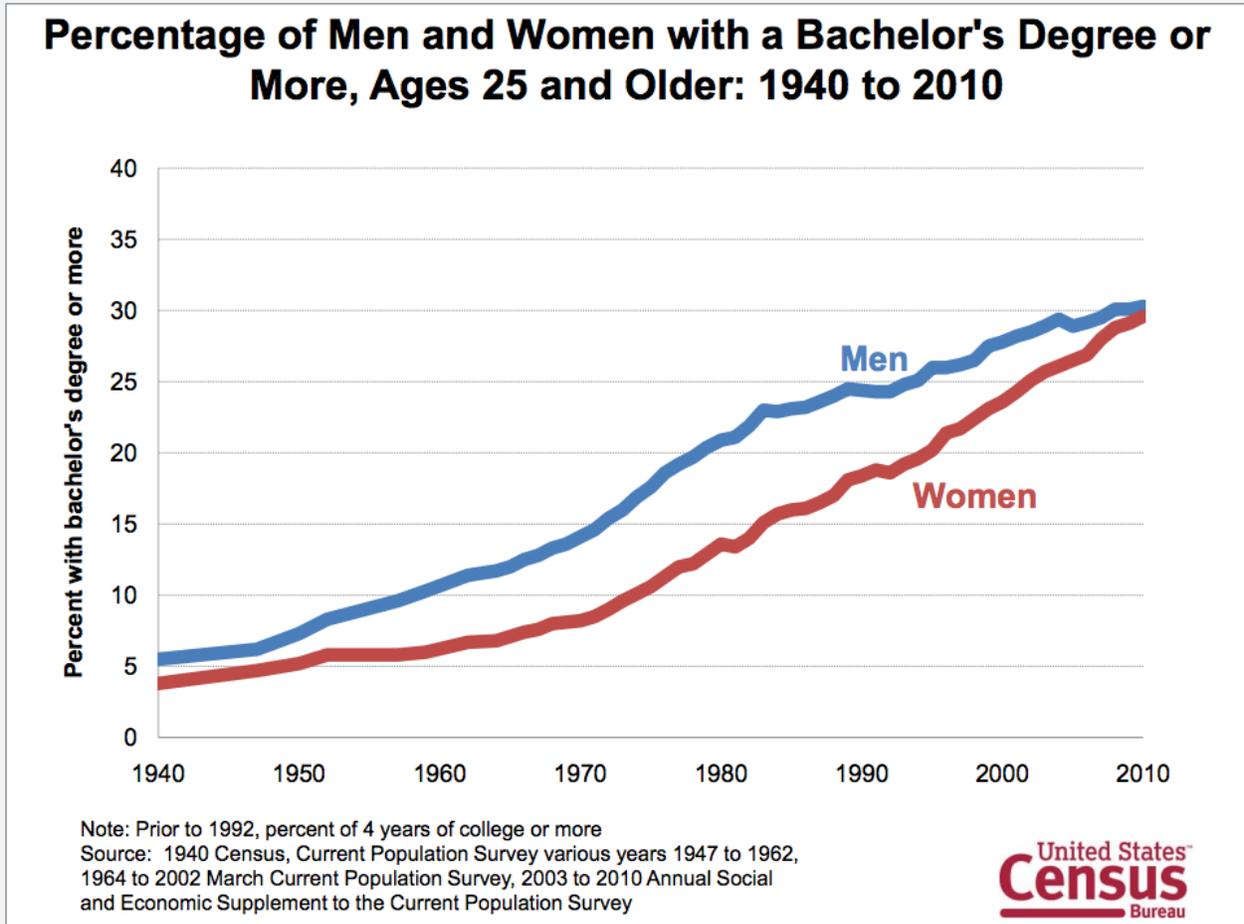
11. Look at **Item 11: Industries With Relatively High and Low Women Ownership: 2007**. Which industry had the most female owners? What about the least? Why would it be important for women to have careers in industries that are dominated by men?

The health care and social assistance industry had the most female owners, and the construction industry had the least. Student answers for the last question will vary but could include: Women should break into men-dominated industries because many careers in those industries (e.g., STEM) pay well. Women who emerge as leaders in these fields can help defy the stereotype that only men can do those types of jobs.

12. Find any graph from **Items 1-15** that interests you — and that has not been discussed specifically as part of this activity — and write your observations and questions about the data.

Student observations and questions will vary depending on the graph chosen.

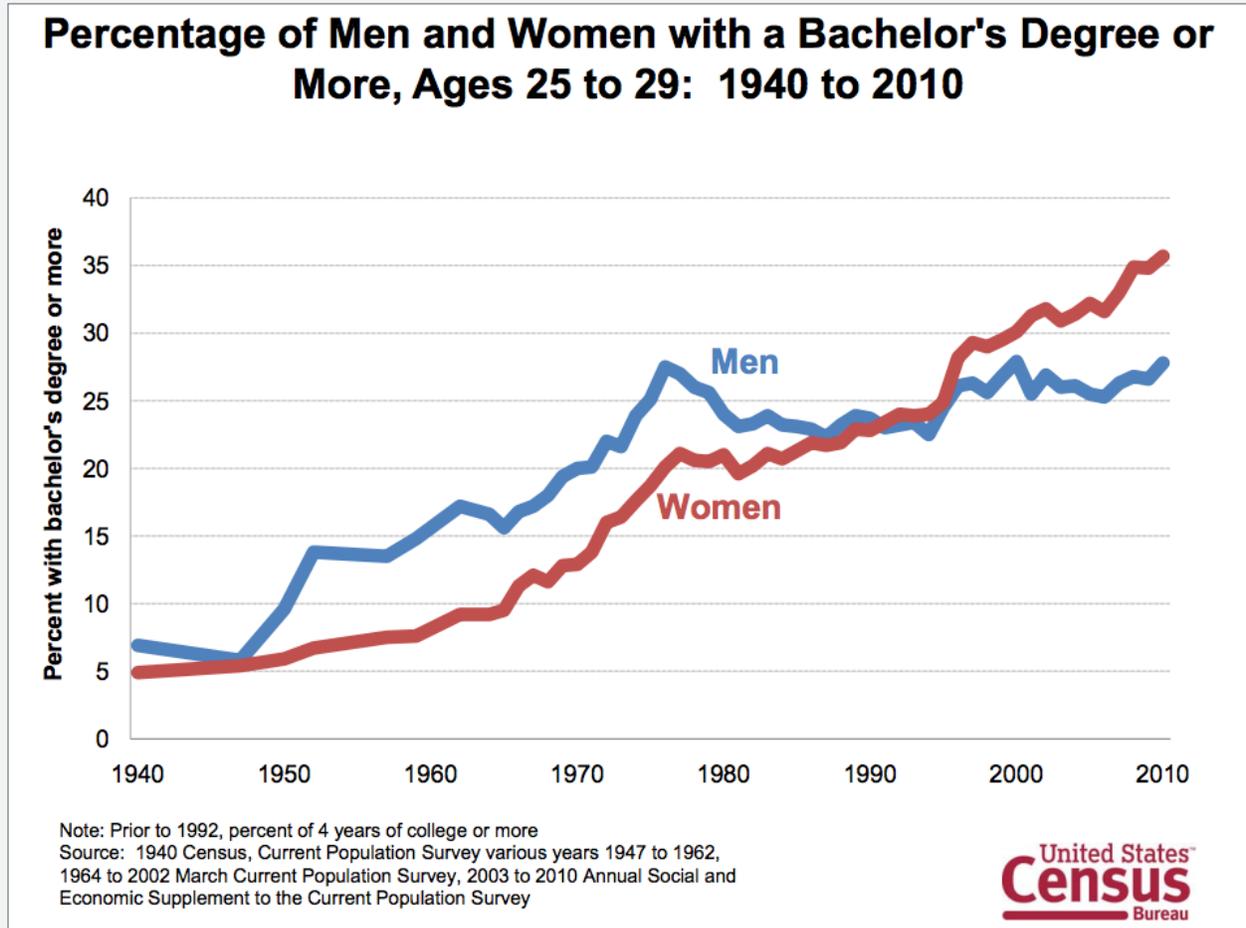
Item 1: Percentage of Men and Women With a Bachelor's Degree or More, Ages 25 and Older: 1940-2010



www.census.gov/newsroom/pdf/women_workforce_slides.pdf

To view the graph online, click on the link above and go to Page 9.

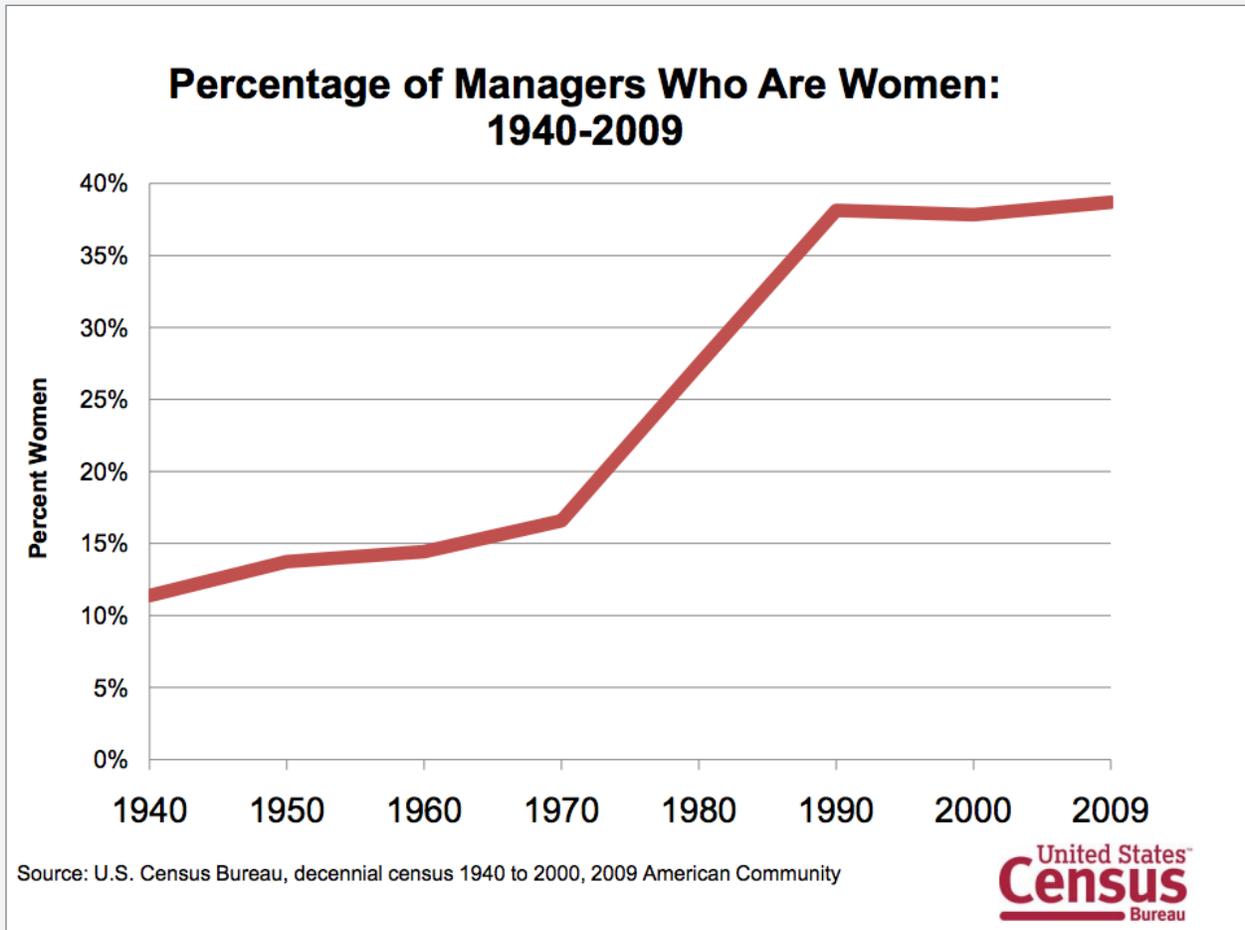
Item 2: Percentage of Men and Women With a Bachelor's Degree or More, Ages 25 to 29: 1940-2010



www.census.gov/newsroom/pdf/women_workforce_slides.pdf

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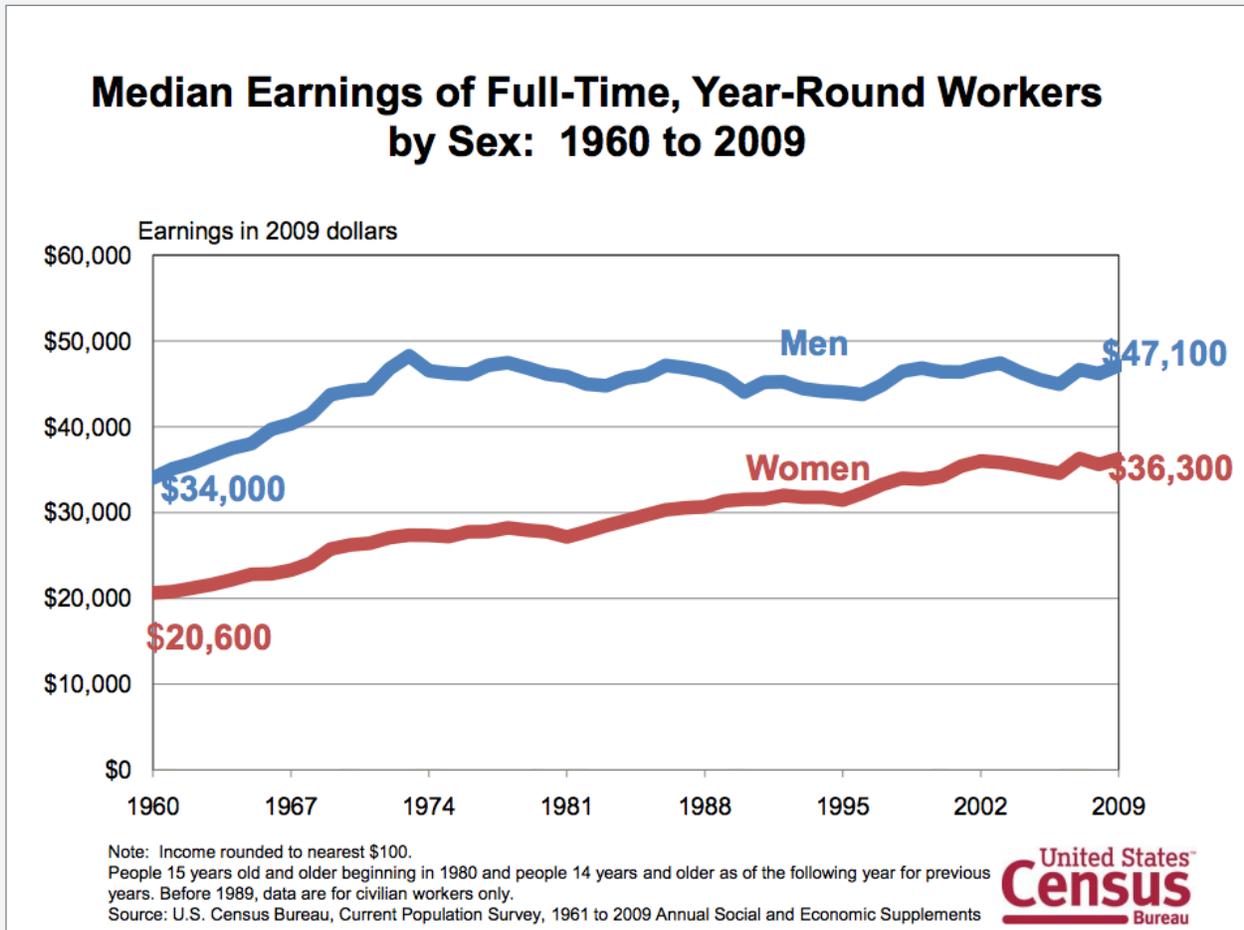
Item 3: Percentage of Managers Who Are Women: 1940-2009



www.census.gov/newsroom/pdf/women_workforce_slides.pdf

To view the graph online, click on the link above and go to Page 11.

Item 4: Median Earnings of Full-Time, Year-Round Workers by Sex: 1960-2009

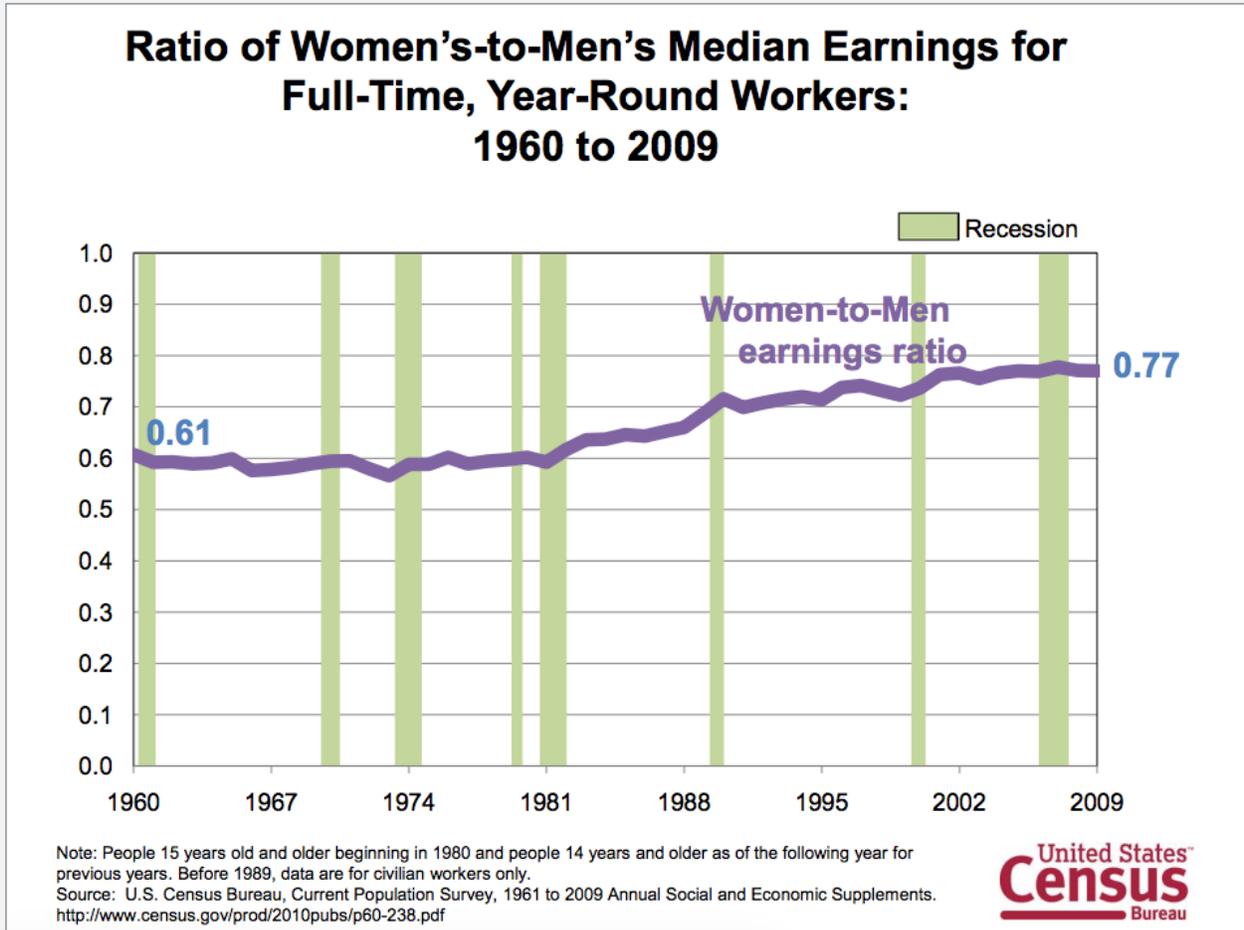


Note: This item compares all jobs, not like jobs. Since women dominated lower-paying fields, such as nursing, retail, and education, the overall wages of women were lower than those of men.

www.census.gov/newsroom/pdf/women_workforce_slides.pdf

To view the graph online, click on the link above and go to Page 4.

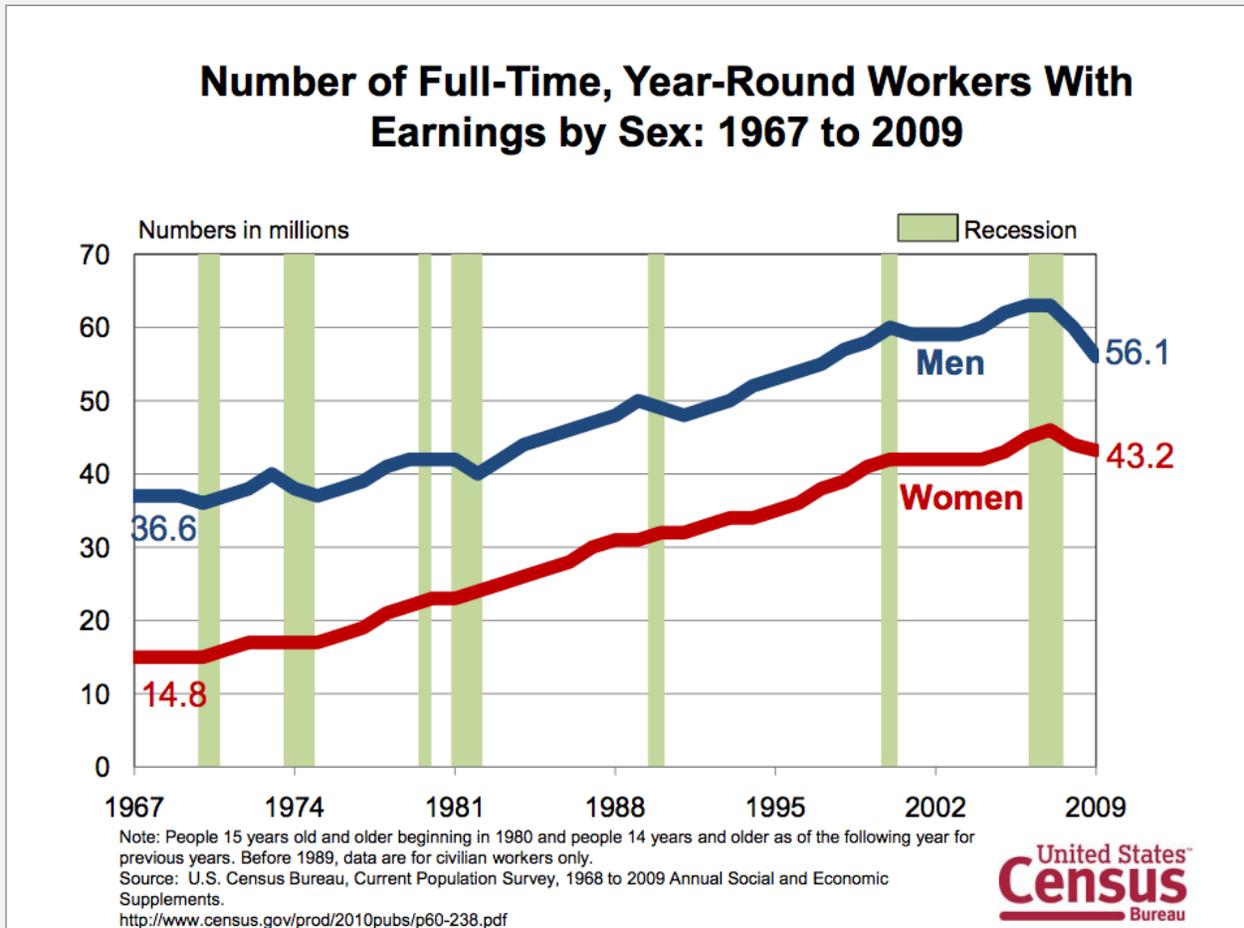
Item 5: Ratio of Women's-to-Men's Median Earnings for Full-Time, Year-Round Workers: 1960-2009



www.census.gov/newsroom/pdf/women_workforce_slides.pdf

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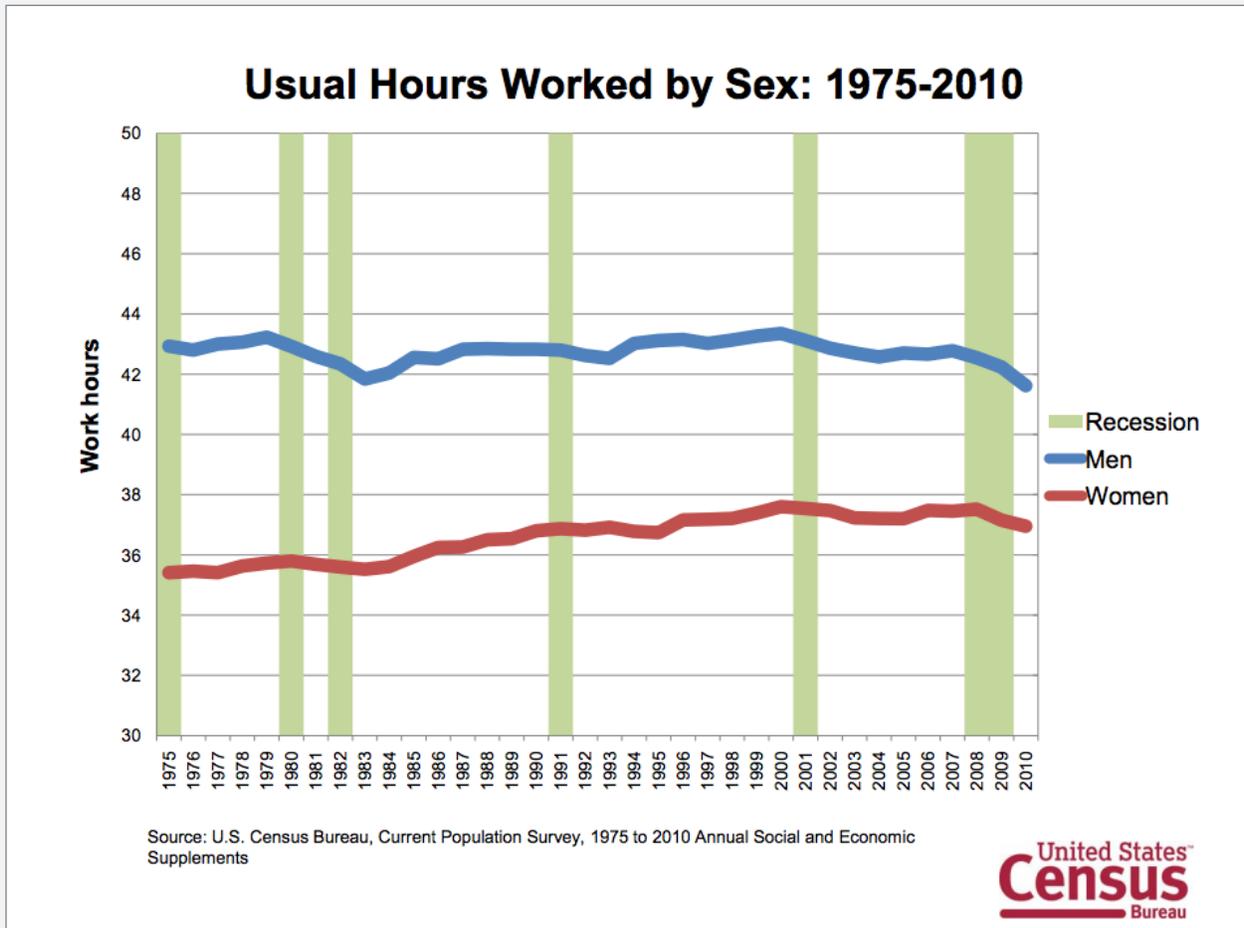
Item 6: Number of Full-Time, Year-Round Workers With Earnings by Sex: 1967-2009



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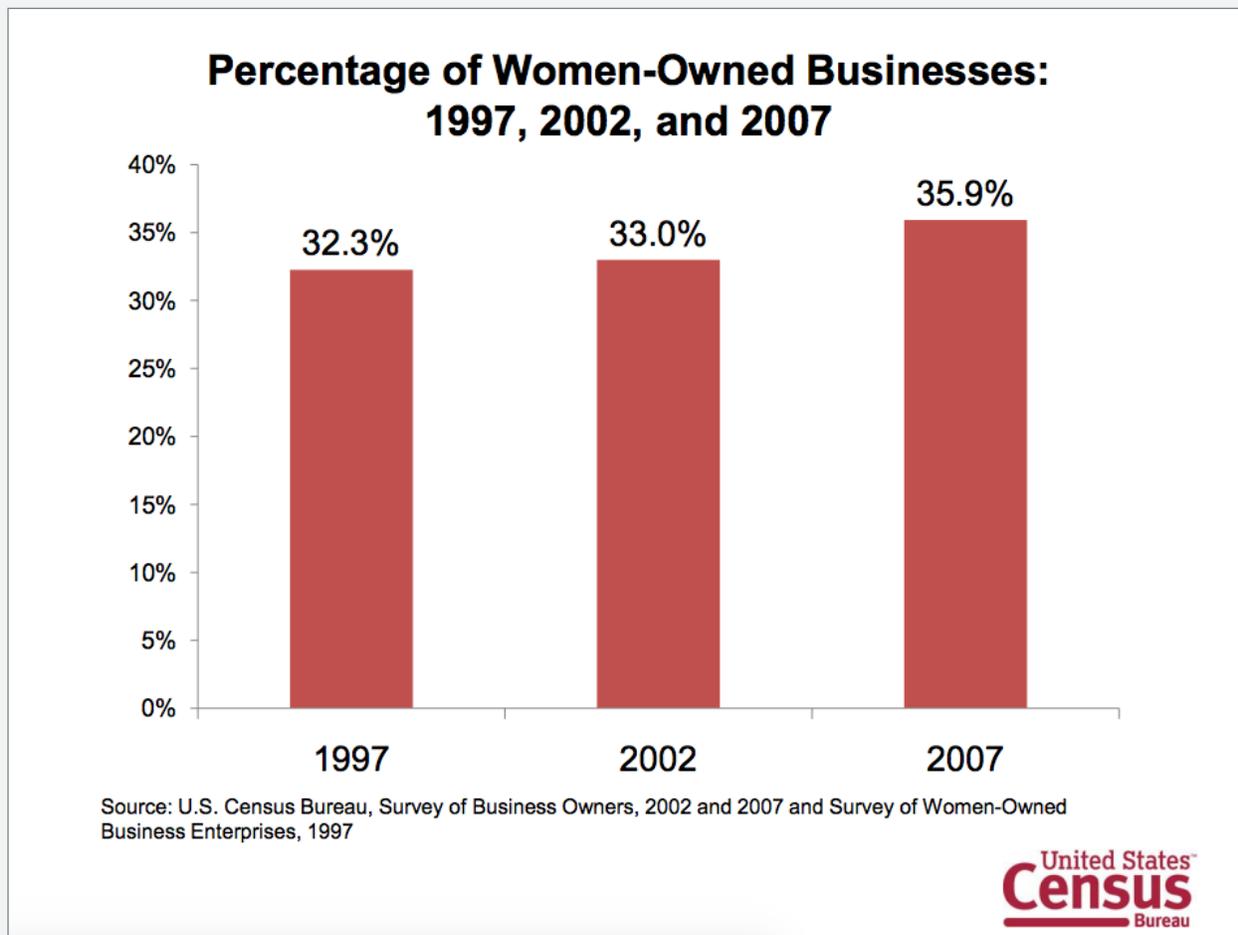
Item 7: Usual Hours Worked by Sex: 1975-2010



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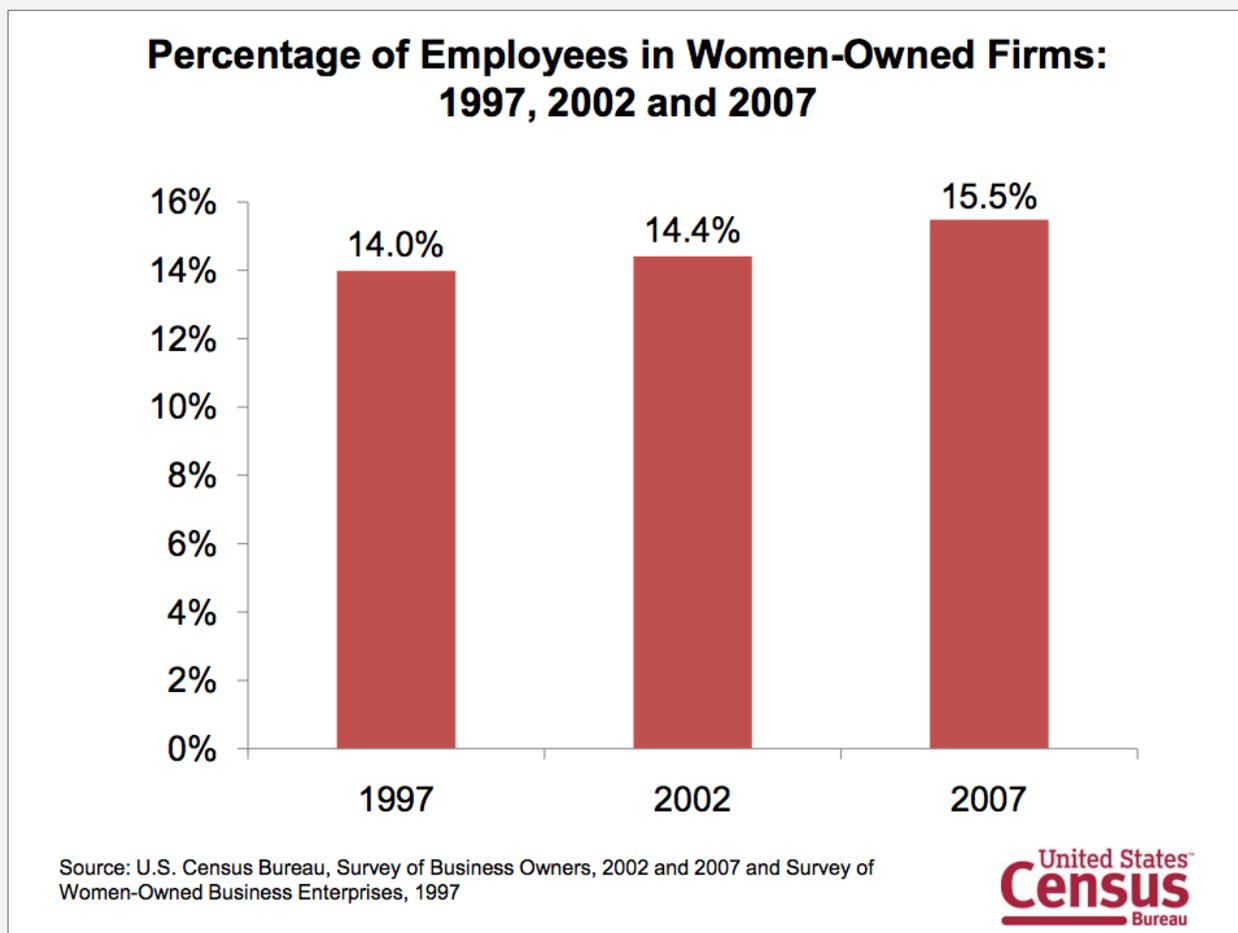
Item 8: Percentage of Women-Owned Businesses: 1997, 2002, and 2007



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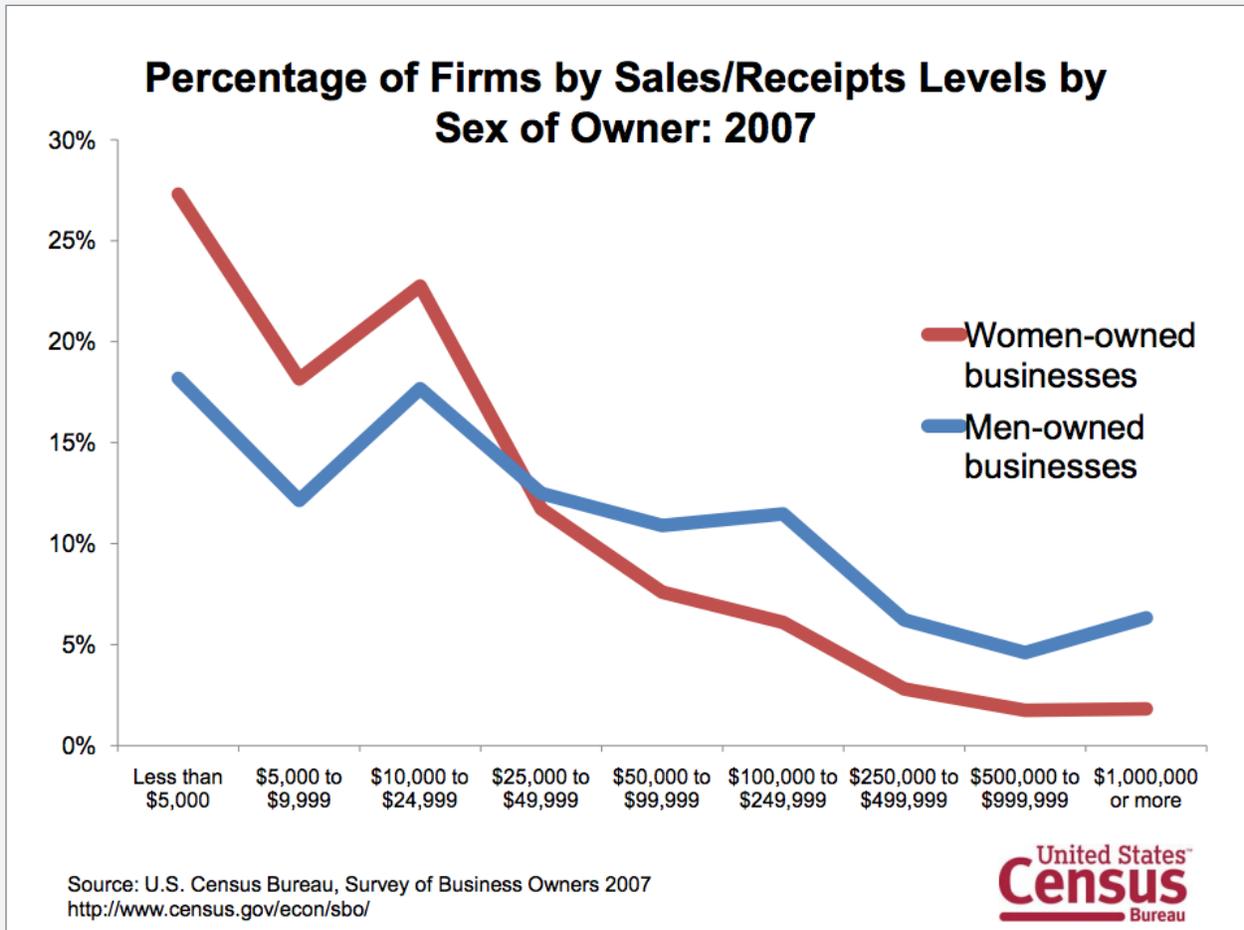
Item 9: Percentage of Employees in Women-Owned Firms: 1997, 2002, and 2007



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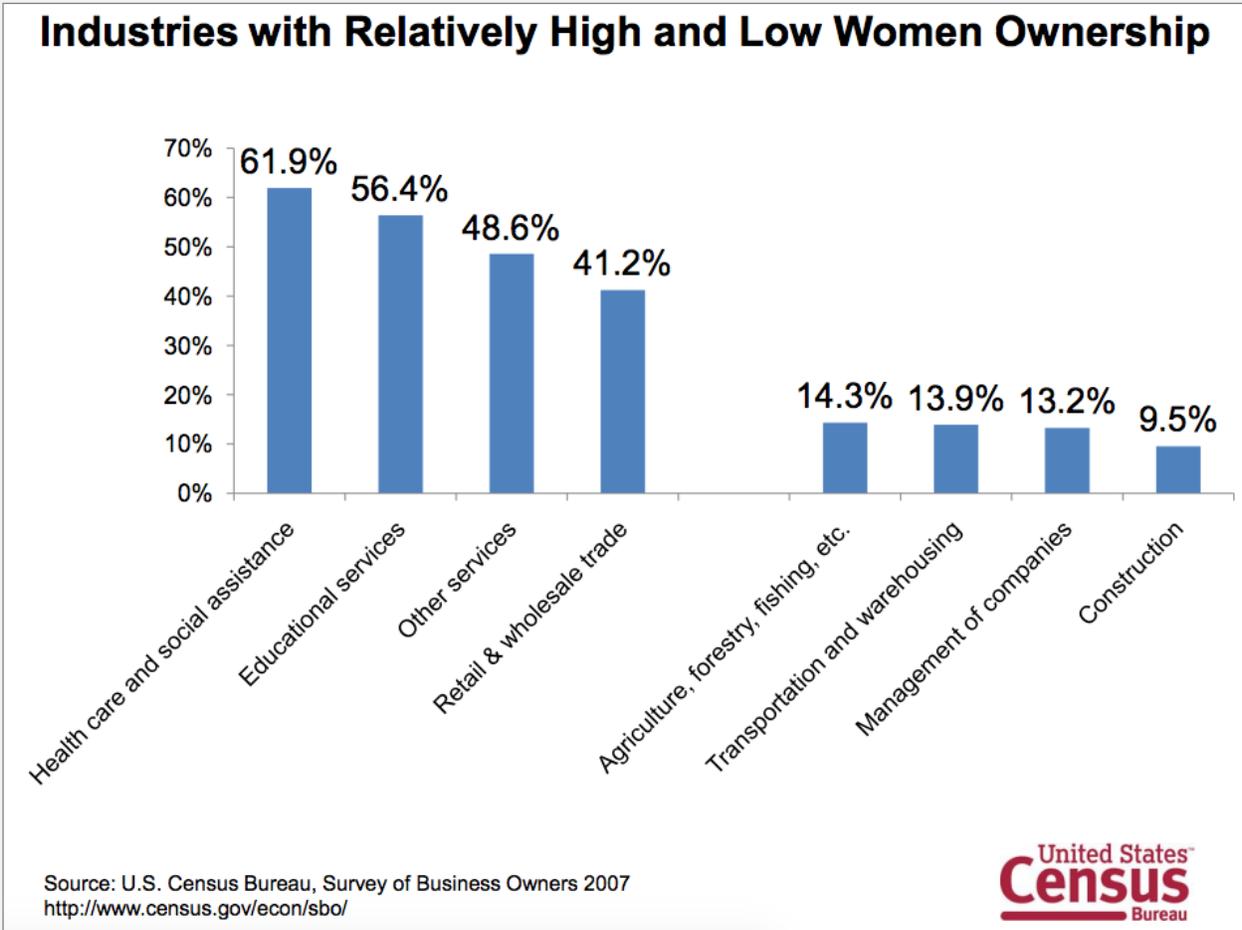
Item 10: Percentage of Firms by Sales/Receipts Levels by Sex of Owner: 2007



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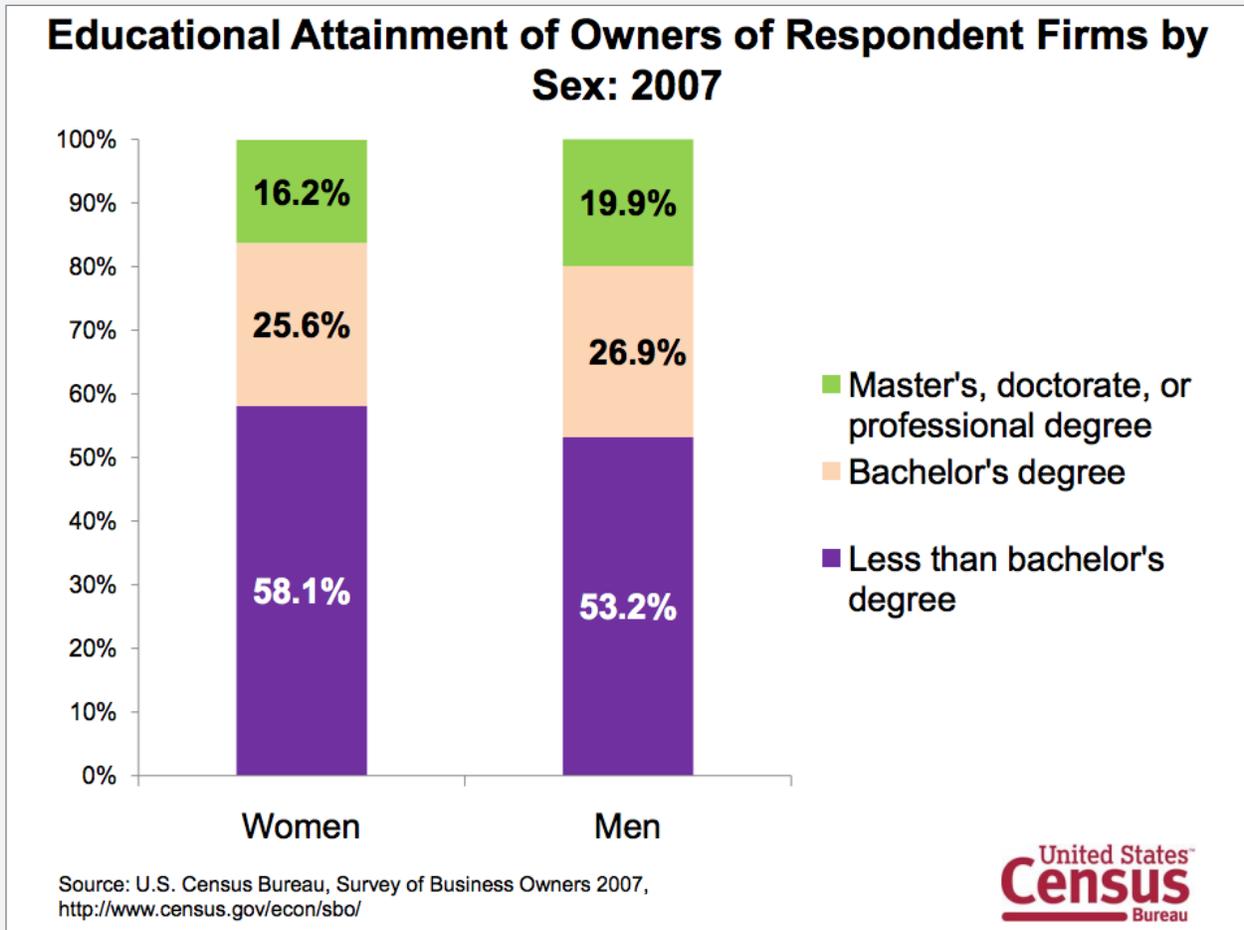
Item 11: Industries With Relatively High and Low Women Ownership: 2007



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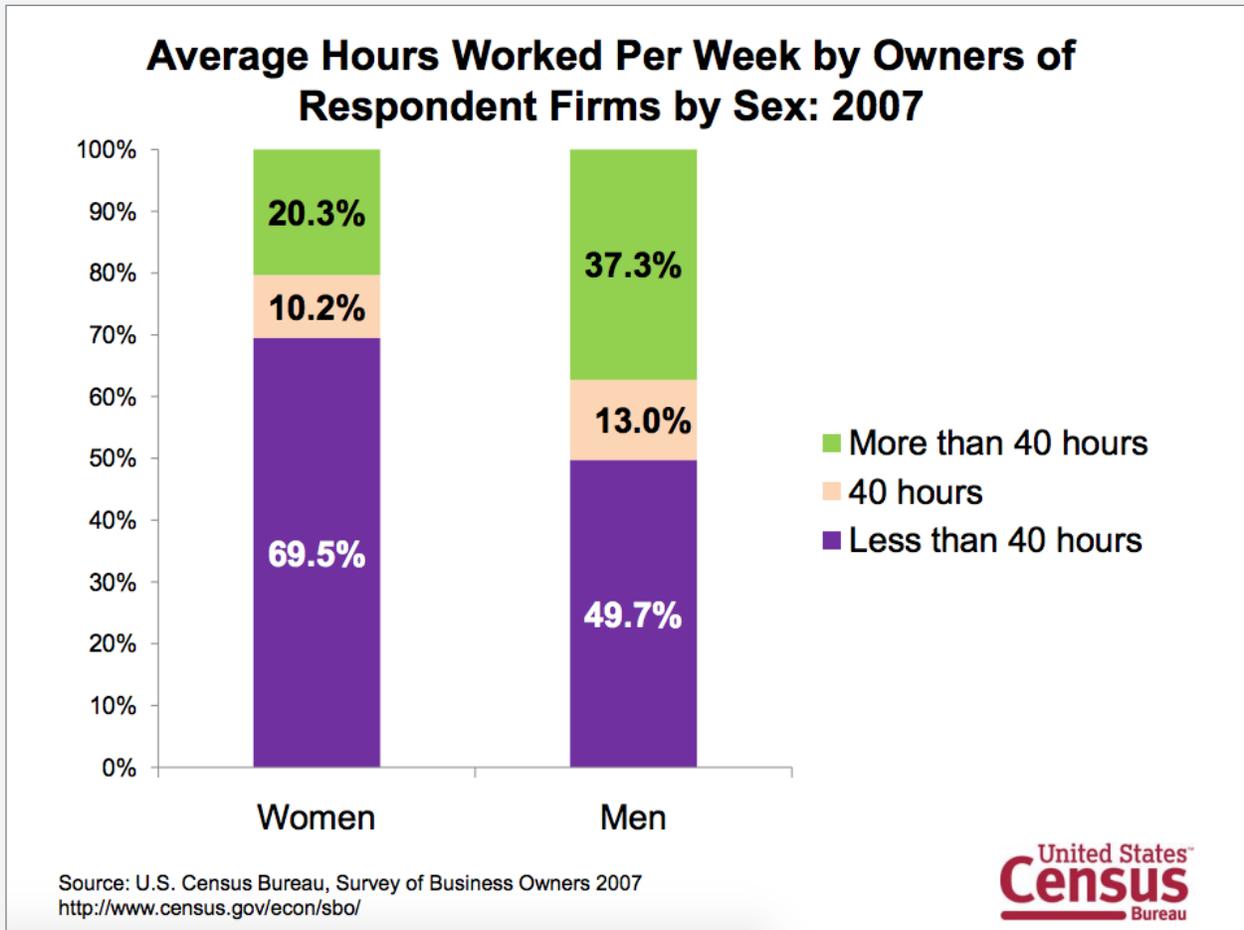
Item 12: Educational Attainment of Owners of Respondent Firms by Sex: 2007



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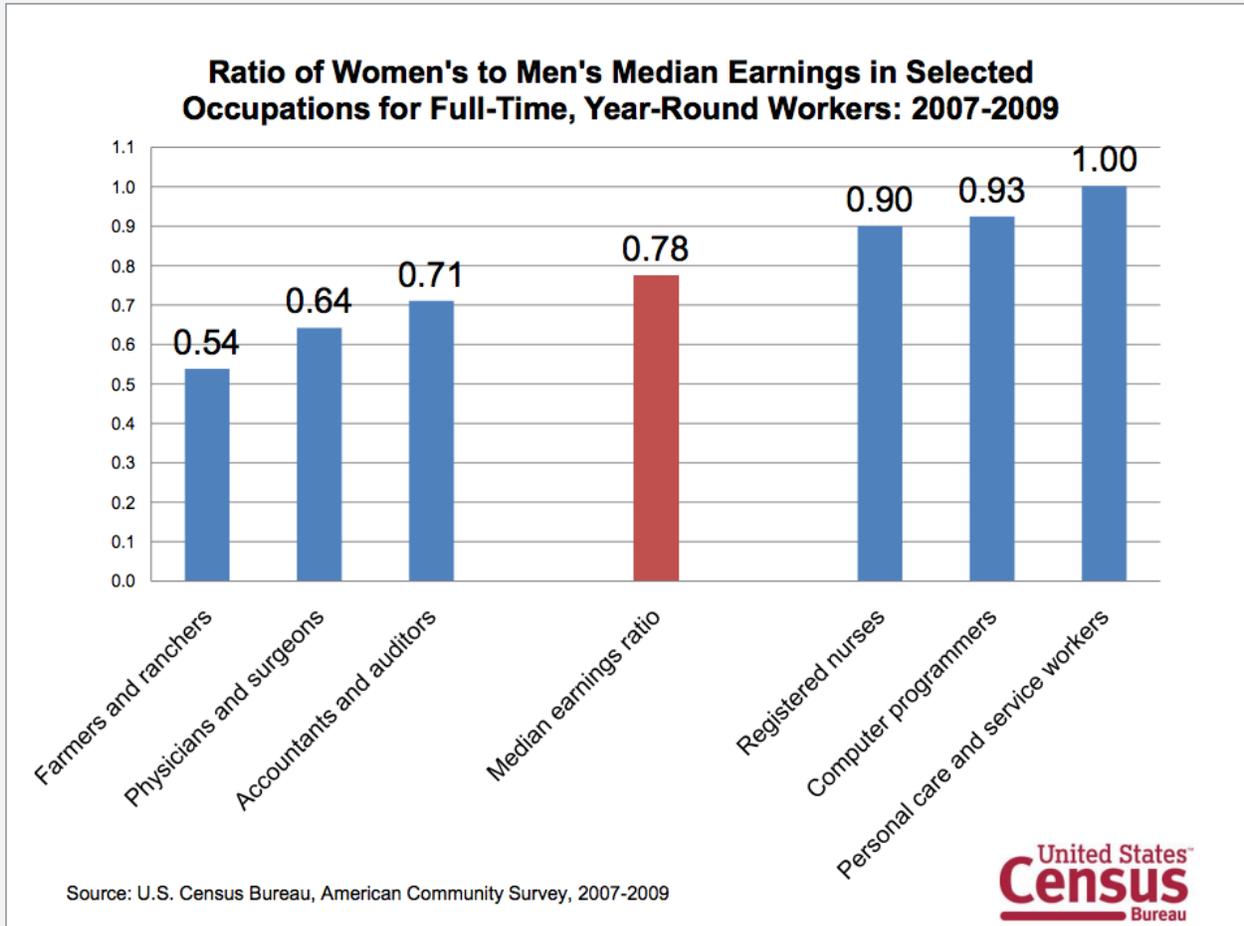
Item 13: Average Hours Worked Per Week by Owners of Respondent Firms by Sex: 2007



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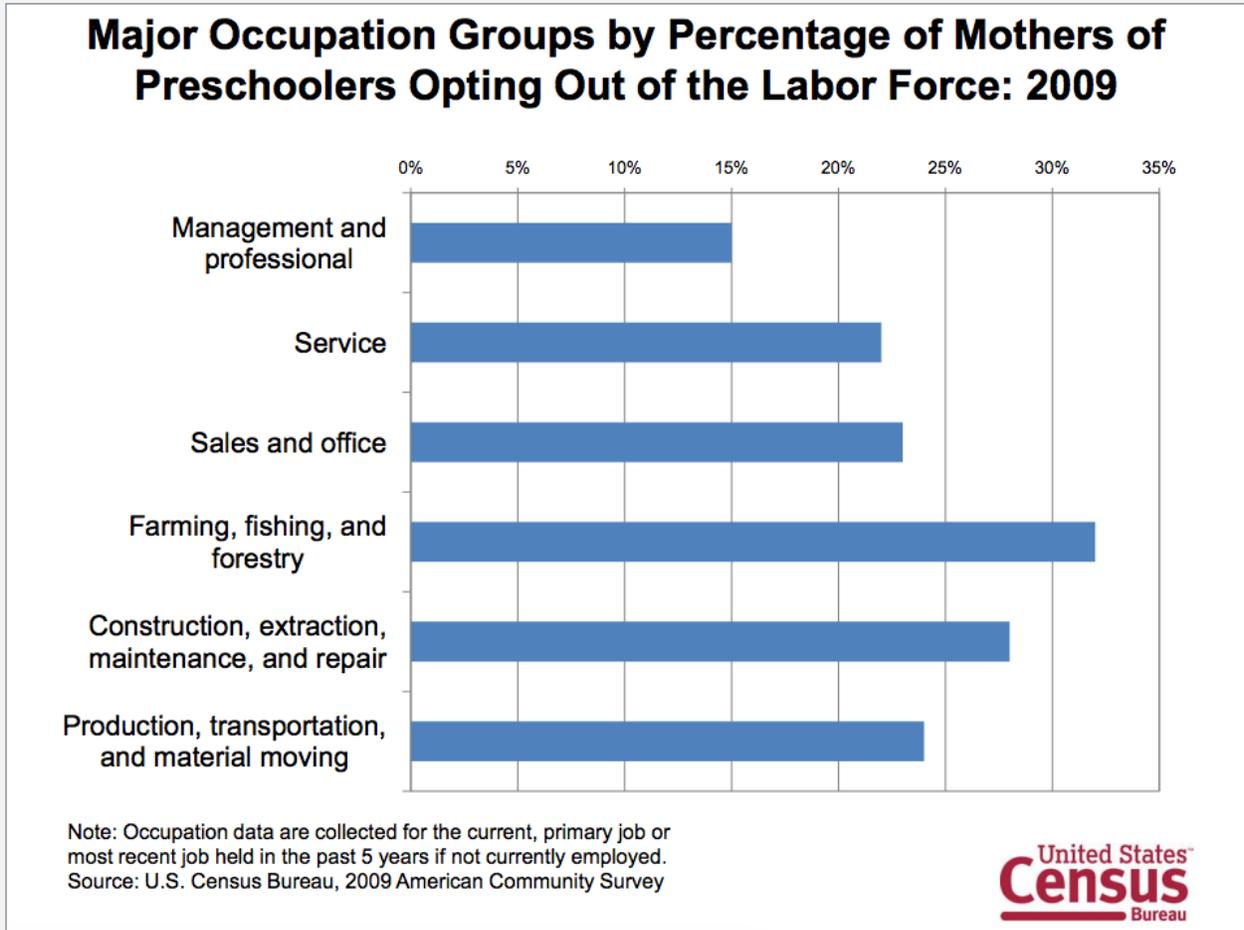
Item 14: Ratio of Women's to Men's Median Earnings in Selected Occupations for Full-Time, Year-Round Workers: 2007-2009



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Item 15: Major Occupation Groups by Percentage of Mothers of Preschoolers Opting Out of the Labor Force: 2009



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