

Handout for January 2021 Newsletter Education Economics in FRED®

Purpose.

1. Create a plot of changes in employment levels.
2. Customize the units of the series.
3. Describe and discuss patterns in the evolution of employment levels over time.

Pedagogical Rationale. This assignment requires that you first look for data and plot them into a graph. Next, you will change the units of the data. Lastly, you will describe and discuss patterns in the evolution of the data series. These tasks will develop your proficiency in searching for, transforming, and interpreting data.

Grading. Your grade will be determined by (a) how precisely you complete the search and transformation data tasks and (b) how accurately you interpret the data.

Steps to Search for and Transform the Data.

1. Access <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/> and browse data by “Release.” Search for “Employment Situation.”
2. Select “Current Population Survey (Household Data)” and click on “Table A-4. Employment status of the civilian population 25 years and over by educational attainment.”
3. Select “Monthly, Seasonally Adjusted.”
4. From the table, select:
 - “Less than a high school diploma: Employed.”
 - “High school graduates, no college: Employed.”
 - “Some college or associate degree: Employed.”
 - “Bachelor's degree and higher: Employed.”
5. Click on “Add to Graph.”
6. Change the date range by typing “2020-02-01” as the start date of the graph and “2020-12-01” as the end date of the graph
7. Click on EDIT GRAPH and select EDIT LINE 1.
8. Change the units by selecting “Percent Change from Year Ago” and click on “Copy to all.”
9. Select the FORMAT tab and choose “Graph type: Bar.”

Writing Prompts. Answer the following questions:

1. The shaded area in the graph represents the COVID-19 recession. (At the time of this writing, the recession’s end date is undecided.) Between February and December 2020, which population group experienced the largest losses in employment?
2. Between February and December 2020, which population group experienced the smallest losses in employment?
3. What type of relationship between educational attainment and employment is shown in this graph? Is it a direct or an inverse relationship? Explain your answer.