

Study Guide 15-1

For use with textbook pages 413–419

Sources of Stress

Key Terms

stress a person's reaction to his or her inability to cope with a certain tense event or situation (page 413)

stressor a stress-producing event or situation (page 414)

stress reaction the body's response to a stressor (page 414)

distress stress that stems from acute anxiety or pressure (page 414)

eustress positive stress, which results from motivating strivings and challenges (page 414)

conflict situation when a person must choose between two or more options that tend to result from opposing motives (page 414)

Drawing From Experience

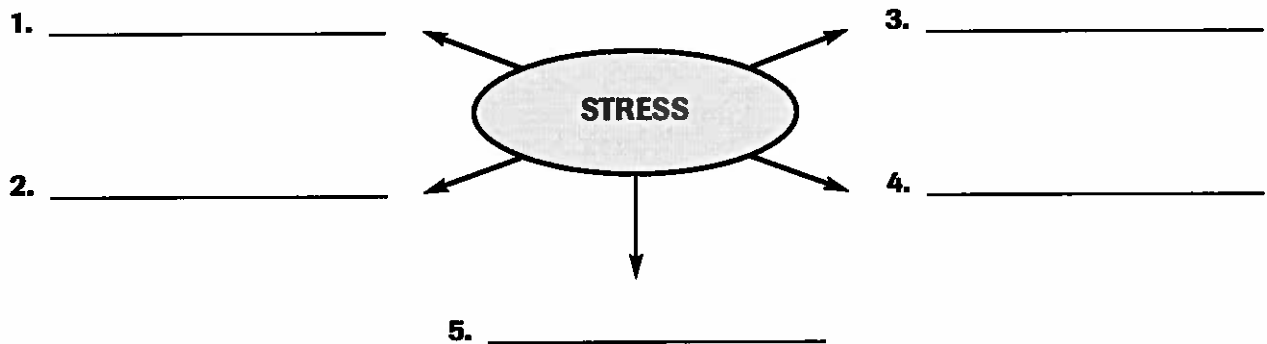
Have you ever had to decide between two options, when both options were bad? How did this situation make you feel? Have you ever stressed out over something that didn't seem to bother a friend at all?

In this section, you will learn about the nature of stress. You will also learn about some of the sources of stress in your life.

Organizing Your Thoughts

Use the diagram below to help you take notes as you read the summaries that follow. Think about the components or parts that make up stress. List each component in the diagram.

Components of Stress



Read to Learn

Introduction (page 413)

Stress has several definitions. To some psychologists, stress is an event that produces tension. Others describe it as a physical or psychological *response* to such an event. Still others believe it to be a person's *perception* of the event. This chapter defines **stress** as the feeling of tension that comes from our reaction to our inability to cope with a situation.

6. Have you ever felt stress? What does it feel like?

Components of Stress (page 414)

A **stressor** is an event or situation that causes stress. An event that is a stressor for one person may not be for another. For example, traveling in an airplane may be a stressor for someone who has never flown, but not for a flight attendant. Stress is a person's reaction to a stressor. A **stress reaction** is the body's physical response to a stressor.

Stress may seem like a bad thing. However, there are two types of stress. Negative stress, or **distress**, comes from extreme tension or pressure. It can harm mind and body. Positive stress, or **eustress**, comes from striving to meet life's challenges. Stress is a normal part of life. It goes hand in hand with working toward a goal or facing any challenge. In fact, stress can spur us on to greater achievements. For example, the stress of playing in the big game can motivate athletes to high performance. We cannot escape stress. We can learn to cope with it, though, so that it makes life interesting rather than overwhelming.

Another part of stress is how a person perceives and evaluates a situation. This is called the cognitive model of stress. We size up a situation and decide if it is stressful. For example, if we perceive a situation as dangerous, we react with stress.

7. Give an example of a time when someone might experience eustress.

Conflict Situations (page 414)

In our daily lives, we often have to decide between two or more options. For example, should you go to a movie with friends or study for the test? These choices result from opposing motives: the desire to be with your friends versus the desire to do well in school. Such choices are **conflict situations**. There are four types.

In an *approach-approach conflict*, a person must choose between two attractive options. Suppose two excellent colleges accept you. You must decide which to attend. This type of conflict does not produce much stress and is usually easy to resolve.

An *avoidance-avoidance conflict* requires a choice between two unattractive options. For example, suppose you have been looking for a job for a long time. You find one that does not pay well. Should you accept it or continue looking? Both options are frustrating, so this kind of conflict produces a great deal of stress.

Say you really want to do something, but are afraid to. This is an *approach-avoidance conflict*. For example, you may want to ask for a raise, but are afraid you will be fired if you ask. The amount of stress in this type of conflict depends on how strong your desire is and how fearful the threat is.

In the *double approach-avoidance conflict*, you must choose between options that each have attractive and unattractive aspects. For example, you are unable to decide whether to go to the beach or visit your grandmother. The beach would be exciting but expensive. Visiting your grandmother would be inexpensive but not very exciting.

The amount of stress you feel depends on how you size up the situation. *Primary appraisal* is your first evaluation of the situation. Suppose your teacher announces a pop quiz. You may feel neutral about it. You think you know the material and the teacher doesn't give hard quizzes. You may feel positive about it. You know the material so well that you look forward to a good grade. Or, you may see the situation as negative. You have not studied in a long time. This appraisal will cause you stress. A *secondary appraisal* involves deciding how to deal with the situation. You would size up the situation and choose a coping strategy. You will learn more about this later.

8. Give an example of an approach-avoidance conflict you have faced.

Environmental Stressors (page 416)

Some things in your environment cause stress. For example, constant noise around you can be stressful. Also, crowding can be stressful. Most people feel tense when others get too close. Yet crowding can make people feel better if the situation is pleasant to them. For example, being in a crowd at a baseball game can increase the excitement if you enjoy baseball games.

Major changes in your life, such as a new job or moving, can cause stress. The stress may come from the separation from family and friends that such events cause. Even positive changes, such as marriage, can be stressful. Thomas Holmes and Richard Rahe tried to determine how much stress different life changes cause. From their research, they developed the Social Readjustment Rating Scale. This scale ranks 43 life events in terms of the stress they cause. The top stressor is the death of a spouse. Getting fired ranks eighth. Moving to a new home ranks 32nd. People who have many of these stressors score high on the rating scale. Some studies have related a high score on this scale to illness. A major life change can also lead to other stressors. For example, marriage may mean a change in financial status and moving to a new home.

In addition to major life changes, you also have small, day-to-day stressors called *hassles*. Hassles may be losing your car keys, being late for school, or getting stuck in traffic. Research has found a connection between hassles and health problems. Perhaps hassles slowly weaken the body's defenses, making it harder to fight off illness. Small, positive events, called *uplifts*, may protect against stress. Uplifts are things that make you feel good.

9. What are some hassles you have experienced in the last week?

**Study
Guide****15-2****Reactions to Stress***For use with textbook pages 420–429***Key Terms****anxiety** a vague, generalized apprehension or feeling that one is in danger (page 422)**anger** the irate reaction likely to result from frustration (page 422)**fear** the usual reaction when a stressor involves real or imagined danger (page 422)**social support** information that leads someone to believe that he or she is cared for, loved, respected, and part of a network of communication and mutual obligation (page 428)**Drawing From Experience**

Have you ever felt so stressed that you just couldn't think? Have you ever been under a lot of pressure over some major event in your life, but then blew up over something really small?

The last section discussed the nature and sources of stress. In this section, you will learn about physical, psychological, and behavioral reactions to stress.

Organizing Your Thoughts

Use the diagram below to help you take notes as you read the summaries that follow. Think about the variety of reactions we have to stress. List three examples of each type of stress reaction.

Physical Reactions	Psychological Reactions	Behavioral Reactions
1.	4.	7.
2.	5.	8.
3.	6.	9.

Read to Learn**Introduction (page 420)**

A person who faces a stressor that is strong or long-lasting will react to it. Some reactions to stress are harmful. Others are helpful. Many are automatic. Just as the body reacts to a cut by producing new tissue, it has ways to heal the wounds of stress—crying, for example. People react differently to stress. Reactions can be physical (our body's reaction), psychological (how we feel

emotionally), or behavioral (how we act). Yet these reactions are not separate from each other. The human body is *holistic*. Everything works together to make up the whole person. Our physical well-being affects how we think and behave. For example, poor mental health can lead to physical illness.

10. When you are very nervous, do you ever laugh? How does the laughter affect how you feel physically?

Fight-or-Flight Response (page 421)

No matter what is causing the stress, the body quickly becomes alert. The adrenal glands produce (a) hormones that speed up energy production and (b) adrenaline, which speeds up heartbeat and breathing to help the body use energy quickly. These responses prepare you for self-defense. This is called the *flight-or-flight response*. In wild animals, this response is needed for survival. It prepares them to either run from danger (flight) or stand and fight. This response prepares humans in the same way to deal with dangerous or stressful situations.

11. Describe how your body feels during times of great stress.

General Adaptation Syndrome (page 421)

Hans Selye identified three stages of the body's stress reaction: alarm, resistance, and exhaustion. He called this the *general adaptation syndrome*. In the *alarm* stage, the body starts its fight-or-flight defenses. The person becomes very alert to things going on around him or her. For example, a hiker comes upon a rattlesnake. He freezes in his tracks and suddenly becomes aware of every sound around him. He tries not to panic.

In the *resistance* stage, the person finds a way to cope with the stressor and ward off strong emotions. For example, after recovering from the initial shock of seeing the snake, the hiker may tell himself to stay calm and wait for the snake to move off.

If the stressful situation continues, the person reaches the stage of *exhaustion*. At this point, the adrenal and other glands involved in the fight-or-flight response have reached their limit. They can no longer supply hormones. The person reaches the breaking point. He or she becomes exhausted and confused.

12. Why is the resistance stage important to dealing with a stressful situation?

Emotional and Cognitive Responses (page 422)

Stress reactions may be emotional or cognitive (involving thought processes). A common emotional response is *anxiety*. This is a feeling that some unclear threat is about to happen. If your boss passes you in the hall without saying hello, you might develop anxiety about the possibility of being fired. *Anger* is the likely response to frustration. *Fear* is the usual response if the stressor involves real danger, such as a fire. Fear directs you to run away, but in severe cases you may panic and be unable to act. Common examples of emotional stress reactions are reacting too strongly to minor hassles, feeling no joy in daily pleasures, and doubting your abilities.

Cognitive reactions include difficulty in concentrating and poor decision making. A student who must give a speech may worry about it but be unable to prepare for it. Another type of cognitive stress reaction is suspicion or distrust of others for no real reason.

Frustration that lasts a long time can lead to burnout. People feel *burned out* when they feel unable to do their job well, physically worn out, and emotionally exhausted. Too much stress may not cause mental illness but can make it more severe.

Post-traumatic stress disorder is a condition in which someone who has experienced a terrible trauma feels the stressful effects long after the event. This disorder is common among combat veterans, survivors of disasters, and victims of violence. The event that caused the disorder overwhelmed the person's ability to cope.

13. If someone were really stressed over an upcoming test, how might she react when she cannot find her car keys to go to the library?

Behavioral Reactions (page 424)

A person's behavior may change as a result of stress. For example, someone may develop nervous habits, such as biting fingernails or pacing. The person may gulp meals or develop a shaky voice. The person's posture may change. Acting aggressively toward family members is another behavioral reaction to stress. Some behavioral reactions are positive. For example, in a tornado some people will risk their lives to help others. Escape is a behavioral reaction that is often the best way to deal with frustration. For example, if you are on a bus stuck in traffic, you may get off and walk to where you are going.

Many people can handle great amounts of stress without major changes in behavior. Others may be seriously affected. They may attempt to escape reality through alcoholism or drug addiction. They may be unable to hold a job, and they may attempt suicide. Stress may also contribute to violent and criminal behavior.

14. Give an example of a nervous habit that you have seen in yourself or someone else.

Physical Reactions (page 425)

Your thoughts and emotions can produce physical changes in your body. For example, some people develop *psychosomatic symptoms* from stress. These are real physical problems caused by stress or tension. For example, stress can cause headaches, stomach aches, and muscle pains. The fight-or-flight response is a physical reaction. If this state of physical arousal continues for too long, the person could develop breathing difficulty, difficulty sleeping, migraine headaches, or other physical problems. Emotional stress is also related to such illnesses as ulcers, high blood pressure, asthma, and heart disease. People in high-stress jobs pay a high price. Air-traffic controllers have the lives of hundreds of people in their hands every day. People in these jobs have more ulcers than people in any other type of job.

Stress can be the direct cause of illness. It also contributes indirectly by hindering the *immune system*. This is your body's natural defense system against infection.

15. Give another example of a job that is so stressful that the people doing it might be at risk for stress-related illnesses.

Factors Influencing Reactions to Stress (page 427)

Some people's personalities make them more likely than other people to get stress-related illnesses. People with extreme "Type A" personalities are always prepared for fight-or-flight. Their bodies are always in a state of stress. Their adrenaline flows constantly. These people are likely to have heart attacks as early as their thirties or forties. Type A people are very competitive. They are often angry and impatient. They often eat fast and do two or three things at once. On the other hand, Type B people are usually relaxed, patient, and not easily angered. These people are at less risk for stress-related illnesses.

Another personality trait that can affect the strength of a stress reaction is a person's ability to express emotion. Some research suggests that people who do not express strong feelings or even admit to having them are more likely to develop cancer. Physical problems are more likely when we do not have control over stressors. Research with rats showed that rats who could avoid a shock by touching their noses to a panel developed fewer ulcers than the rats who had no control over when they would be shocked. Feedback about our performance is also important. We feel less stress if we know how well we did.

In general, people prefer to have stress they can predict rather than stress they cannot predict. People who feel a sense of control over their lives are likely to be physically and psychologically healthier than those who do not.

Social support is information that leads someone to believe that he or she is cared for, loved, respected, and part of a group that helps each other. People with social support are less likely to develop stress-related diseases or the diseases will be milder.

Social groups offer four kinds of support. *Emotional* support involves listening with concern and offering affection. This helps the stressed person's self-confidence. In *appraisal* support, the listener helps the stressed person sort out the sources of stress by asking questions and giving feedback. In *informational* support, the stressed person responds to what he or she has learned from the appraisal support. The person then evaluates how he or she is dealing with the stressors. Finally, *instrumental* support is direct help such as money or a place to live.

16. Think of someone who has a Type A personality. Describe the Type A behaviors you see in this person.

Study Guide 15-3

Coping With Stress

For use with textbook pages 430–435

Key Terms

cognitive appraisal the interpretation of an event that helps to determine its stress impact (page 431)

denial a coping mechanism in which a person decides that the event is not really a stressor (page 431)

intellectualization a coping mechanism in which the person analyzes a situation from an emotionally detached viewpoint (page 431)

progressive relaxation lying down comfortably and tensing and releasing the tension in each major muscle group in turn (page 434)

meditation a focusing of attention with the goal of clearing one's mind and producing an "inner peace" (page 434)

biofeedback the process of learning to control bodily states by monitoring the states to be controlled (page 434)

Drawing From Experience

Think about what you do when you feel stressed. Do your behaviors help reduce the stress? Do you try to solve the problem, or just pretend it isn't there?

The last section described different reactions to stress. In this section, you will learn methods for managing your stress.

Organizing Your Thoughts

Use the diagram below to help you take notes as you read the summaries that follow. Think about ways you can actively reduce stress. Describe how each coping strategy listed below helps to reduce stress.

Coping Strategy	Reduces stress by...
Hardiness	1.
Escape	2.
Timing	3.
Problem Solving	4.
Thinking Style	5.
Progressive Relaxation	6.
Humor	7.

Read to Learn

Introduction (page 430)

Stress can smother your enjoyment of life and make you unhappy. If you focus on the positive, though, stress may be simply a roadblock to overcome. Coping with stress is an attempt to gain control over part of your life. People cope with stress in many ways. There is no one best way. People use the coping styles that work best for them. Some ways of coping are not healthy. Under stress, we may act in ways that harm ourselves or others.

8. Describe a stressful situation you faced. What is a positive side to this situation?

Psychological Coping Strategies (page 431)

Cognitive appraisal is your evaluation of an event that helps determine how stressful it will be for you. For example, if you see the upcoming test as a challenge you can meet, it will not cause you much stress. If you see it as a threat, however, your stress will be high.

Two defensive coping strategies are denial and intellectualization. In denial, you decide that the event is not really stressful. **Intellectualization** is a way of coping in which you size up the situation without getting your emotions involved. Both of these coping strategies can prevent physical reactions to stress. However, in both cases, you are not really dealing with the problem.

By seeing the situation as a challenge and not a threat, you can deal with the stress actively rather than simply defend against it. Active coping strategies involve changing the environment or situation to remove the stressor or reduce the stress you feel.

Hardiness is a personality trait that can act as an active coping strategy. Hardy people feel they have the ability to do something about the situation. They actively try to achieve goals and solve problems, instead of feeling threatened or powerless by them. For example, suppose you must give a speech. You are being hardy if you approach the assignment as a positive experience, believe you can do it well, and prepare for and practice your speech.

You can also actively reduce stress by controlling the number of stressful events you face. Escape is one way to do this. If a social event becomes stressful for you, you can leave. Another way is to control the timing of stressful events, when possible. This way, you can avoid having them hit you all at once. For example, if you are going to have a baby soon, you may want to put off looking for a new home.

Sometimes you can't escape or change the timing of stressful events. For example, you may have an exam on the same day that a big project is due. In cases like this, problem solving, or facing the matter head-on, can be the best

way to cope. Viewing frustrations as problems to be solved turns the situation into a challenge rather than a setback. Problem solving means thinking through the situation in a way that leads to a reasonable decision. For example, you could map out your time so that you worked on the project at some times and studied for the exam at others. You could decide that giving up social activities the weekend before the due date would solve the problem.

Your thinking style can also affect your ability to cope. *Optimists* usually put the best face on any event. If they lose a game, they might say, "I'll do better next week." *Pessimists* always see the dark side. If they fail at something, they might say, "That always happens to me." Research shows that pessimists are more likely to die at a young age.

Using a relaxation technique can help you cope with stress. **Progressive relaxation** is a method for reducing muscle tension. You lie down comfortably. Then you tense and relax each major muscle group in turn. **Meditation** is a mental relaxation method. You focus your mind on something and then let it go. The purpose is to clear your mind and produce an inner peace.

As you learned in Chapter 7, **biofeedback** is a way to bring certain body processes, such as blood pressure and muscle tension, under your conscious control. You are hooked up to a machine that gives feedback on your body's responses. In this way, you can, for example, train yourself to relax.

Keeping a sense of humor will help you get through stressful times. Laughing actually releases tension. Physical exercise is another way. It provides an outlet for the body's fight-or-flight responses. It may even help burn off stress hormones.

Support groups beyond your personal network can also help—Alcoholics Anonymous, Weight Watchers, crisis intervention centers, and so on. You can also seek help from professionals, such as psychologists, doctors, social workers, and ministers.

A situation can be stressful if it is new to you. Training to prepare can ease the stress. For example, if you are nervous about playing tennis at a friend's club, you might take tennis lessons first.

Much of the stress we feel comes from relationships with other people. A good way to manage stress is to develop skill in dealing with others.

9. Suppose your family is moving to another state. What can you do to help deal with the stress of this major life change?

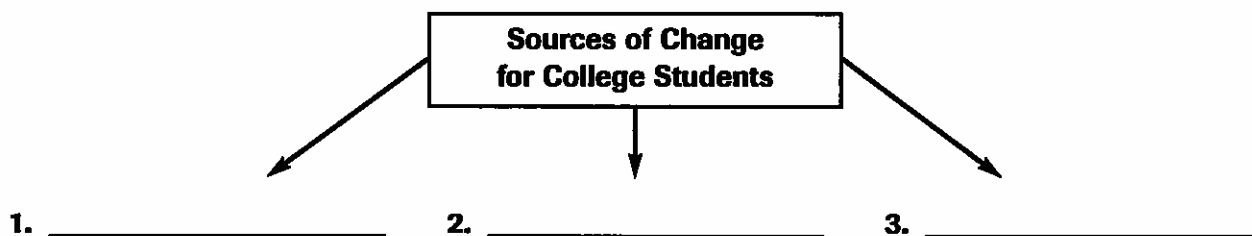
Study Guide 15-4*For use with textbook pages 437–442***Stress in Your Life****Key Terms****autonomy** ability to take care of oneself and make one's own decisions (page 437)**developmental friendship** the partners force one another to reexamine their basic assumptions and perhaps adopt new ideas and beliefs (page 438)**resynthesis** combining old ideas with new ones and reorganizing feelings in order to renew one's identity (page 439)**career** a vocation in which a person works at least a few years (page 440)**comparable worth** the concept that women and men should receive equal pay for jobs calling for comparable skill and responsibility (page 441)**Drawing From Experience**

Have you ever lived apart from your family for a long time? What was it like? If you have never done so, what do you expect it to be like? If you could have any job in the world, what would it be? Why?

In the last section, you learned ways of coping with stress. This section discusses some of the stresses involved in going to college and working in a job.

Organizing Your Thoughts

Use the diagram below to help you take notes as you read the summaries that follow. Think about the kinds of adjustments that students make when they go to college. List three sources of these changes in the diagram below.

**Read to Learn****Introduction (page 437)**

Children grow up and leave home to set up households of their own. This period of life is a major life change for both teens and parents. This life change involves dealing with stress. As you grow up, you gain a sense of **autonomy**.

This is the ability to take care of yourself and make your own decisions. You develop a value system and learn to be responsible. Growing up starts long before you leave home as an independent adult. In the end, growing up means separating from family, both physically and emotionally.

4. Why might separating from family cause stress?

Choosing College (page 437)

For many Americans, college is one of the first big steps toward separation. Going to college can be exciting, but it also takes adjustment. Studies of first-year college students found that many students approach college with unrealistic goals. For example, Bridget wanted to be an astronomer. She liked the idea of being different. Plus, she thought it would be an adventure. She did not realize how many long, hard hours she would have to spend studying math to reach this goal. Keith wanted to be a doctor. But he never thought about what it would be like to watch people sicken and die. These students, like others, based their goals on fantasy. They did not have the experience to make realistic choices. They also did not have the maturity to evaluate their reasons for setting these goals.

College requires adjustment in many ways. First, college may challenge the identity a student built in high school. A top high school student may go to a top college. There, nearly everyone is as bright as she is. Within weeks, her identity as a star student is gone. She may have to struggle to get average grades.

Second, students are likely to find more diversity in college than they ever experienced before. They will meet people of different religions, ethnic backgrounds, family income levels, and attitudes. Suppose you form a close relationship with someone and then discover that the person holds beliefs that you consider immoral. Your choices are to adjust your deeply held belief or give up an important friendship. **Developmental friendships** are relationships in which the individuals force each other to examine their basic beliefs and perhaps adopt new ones.

These friendships can change students a lot, but so can class work. Keith found that he enjoyed his literature and philosophy classes better than his classes for medical school. He soon realized that his interest in medicine was shallow. He wanted to be a doctor because it was a respected profession. It would give him status and a good income. Yet it was not what he really wanted. The self-image Keith had brought to college was completely changed.

Students cope with the stress of going to college in different ways. Some stick to their initial goals and avoid people and situations that might bring doubt to the surface. For example, Troy stuck with his engineering program in spite of his growing interest in social science. He got an engineering degree, but left college with no idea where he was heading. Others avoid facing doubt by going through the motions of attending college without getting emotionally involved.

Still others manage to keep their options open until they have enough information and experience to make a choice. During a period of doubt and

anxiety, the students try to combine the new and old. They may give up their original goal and go in a different direction. Sometimes they retreat and head in different directions several times. Finally, they reorganize their feelings and efforts into a new identity. This is **resynthesis**.

5. If you were to go to college, what field would you choose as your major? Why?
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Working (page 439)

Each person's work experience is different. People work in different settings—offices, stores, schools, mines, trucks, etc. Some jobs have strict time schedules. Others are more flexible. Some people work mostly for the money. Others get personal satisfaction from the work. Each person's personality affects how he or she will react to a job.

Most workers have both economic and personal goals. One study identified five major sources of job satisfaction. (1) *Resources*. People want to have enough help, supplies, and equipment to do the job well. (2) *Financial reward*. People want their jobs to pay well and offer good benefits and security. (3) *Challenge*. People want their jobs to be interesting and to use their special talents. (4) *Relations with coworkers*. People are more satisfied with their jobs if they get along well with their fellow workers. (5) *Comfort*. People want good working conditions—hours, work environment, reasonable closeness to home, and so on.

A career is a job field in which a person works for at least a few years. Some researchers predict that in the future, people will change careers several times in their lifetimes. People live longer now. It is fairly common for someone to retire from one job at age 60 and then start a new career. Many women split their careers by stepping out of the job market to raise children. Then they go back into the workforce in another career. To prepare for this kind of work world, you need many skills and interests. You should develop your skills in dealing with other people. Also, you should look at change as a challenge.

In theory, people in jobs that require about the same amount of training, skill, and responsibility should receive the same pay. This is the idea of **comparable worth**. In practice, however, jobs held mostly by women often pay lower than jobs with similar requirements held mostly by men. Overall, women face a large gap between their income and that of men. Groups like the National Organization for Women have been working to achieve equal pay for equal work. Congress has passed two laws to prevent discrimination and pay inequality. The Equal Pay Act of 1963 makes it illegal to discriminate in pay for jobs that require similar skills and responsibilities. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 makes discrimination illegal in all areas of employment on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, and national origin. This act also set up the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to enforce this law.

6. Name the top three things that you would want in a job.
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