Chart 2-2. The gap between the unemployment rates of those without a high school diploma and those who have completed college is wider today than it was in 1970

In March 2005, the unemployment rate for persons 25 to 64 years old without a high school diploma was 9.0 percent, while the jobless rate for college graduates was 2.3 percent. This compares with unemployment rates of 4.6 and 1.3 percent, respectively, in 1970.

The unemployment rate for high school dropouts trended upward until the early 1980s. Although there has been some long-term improvement since then, the rate remains considerably higher than in 1970.

In contrast, the jobless rate for college graduates has held fairly steady on a long-term basis.