The more money you earn, the more cool things you can buy. Let’s compare the “buying power” of each educational level’s average wage.

If you want to buy a tablet for $529, how many hours would you have to work to pay for it? (For this activity, do not worry about things like sales tax or paycheck withholdings.)

1. Less than high school
   Average wage per hour: $11.31
   Hours needed? [ ]
   Occupation Examples: Retail Salesperson, Agricultural Equipment Operator, Stock Clerk

2. High school diploma or equivalent
   Average wage per hour: $17.03
   Hours needed? [ ]
   Occupation Examples: Correctional Officer, Truck Driver, Food Service Manager

3. Some postsecondary (no degree)
   Average wage per hour: $16.45
   Hours needed? [ ]
   Occupation Examples: Firefighters, Computer User Support Specialist, Dental Assistant

4. Associate degree
   Average wage per hour: $29.33
   Hours needed? [ ]
   Occupation Examples: Registered Nurse, Loan Officer, Web Developer

5. Bachelor’s degree
   Average wage per hour: $29.00
   Hours needed? [ ]
   Occupation Examples: Accountant, Civil Engineer, Middle School Teacher

6. Master’s degree
   Average wage per hour: $31.16
   Hours needed? [ ]
   Occupation Examples: School Counselor, Physician Assistants

7. Doctoral or professional degree
   Average wage per hour: $49.82
   Hours needed? [ ]
   Occupation Examples: Pharmacist, Lawyer

The wages used in this exercise are average hourly wages of all occupations at each level of education. For specific wage data for the example occupations listed and hundreds more, visit www.dlr.sd.gov/lmic.

Please note: The answers are: 1. 46.8 hours 2. 31.1 hours 3. 32.2 hours 4. 18.0 hours 5. 18.2 hours 6. 17.0 hours 7. 10.6 hours