Section 4: Supporting Details
Lab Activity 17: Supporting Details

Objective:
To identify the topic, main idea, and supporting major and minor details in a textbook passage.

🌟 Step 1: Read the following passage from a sociology textbook, and answer the questions. Then return to the Lab Manual in your textbook to answer the questions.

Gender inequality is not some accidental, hit-or-miss affair. Rather, the institutions of each society work together to maintain the group's particular forms of inequality. Customs, often venerated through our history, both justify and maintain these arrangements. In the United States, gender inequality is evident in education, health care, and the workplace.

**Gender Inequality in Education.** Gender inequality in education is not readily apparent. More women than men go to college, and they earn 56 percent of all bachelor's degrees and 57 percent of all master's degrees. A closer look, however, reveals gender tracking, which reinforces male-female distinctions. Here are two extremes: Men earn 83 percent of bachelor's degrees in the "masculine" field of engineering, while women are awarded 88 percent of bachelor's degrees in the "feminine" field of library "science". Because socialization gives men and women different orientations to life, they enter college with gender-linked aspirations. It is their socialization—not some presumed innate characteristics—that channels men and women into different educational paths.


1. The topic of the passage is
   - a. the glass ceiling
   - b. women in education
   - c. women in the United States
   - d. gender inequality in the United States

2. The thesis statement of the passage is
   - a. In early U.S. society, the second-class status of women was taken for granted.
   - b. Gender inequality in the United States is evident in education, health care, and the workplace.
   - c. In the early United States, a husband and wife were legally one person—him.
   - d. Because power yields privilege, women have had a prolonged struggle to receive some privileges guarded by men.

3. According to the section "Gender Inequality in Education," what percentage of women earn master's degrees?
   - a. 56 percent
4. The term gender tracking refers to  
   a. ways in which women are studied by sociologists for statistical purposes  
   b. ways in which men are studied by sociologists for statistical purposes  
   c. ways in which women are encouraged by feminists to break through barriers  
   d. ways in which men are encouraged to seek degrees in "masculine" fields and women are reinforced to pursue "feminine" fields

Gender Inequality in Health Care. Medical researchers were perplexed. Reports were coming in from all over the country: Women were twice as likely as men to die after coronary bypass surgery. To solve this sociological puzzle, researchers measured the amount of time that surgeons kept patients on the heart-lung machine while they operated. They were surprised to learn that women spent less time on the machine than men. This indicated that the operation was not more difficult to perform on women.

As the researchers probed, a surprising answer unfolded—unintended sexual discrimination. Physicians had not taken the chest pains of their women patients as seriously as they took the complaints of their men patients. They were ten times more likely to give men exercise stress tests and radioactive heart scans. They also sent men to surgery on the basis of abnormal stress tests, but waited until women showed clear-cut symptoms of coronary heart disease before sending them to surgery. Having surgery after the disease is further along reduces the chances of survival.

Surgical sexism is apparent when men doctors recommend total hysterectomy (removal of both the uterus and the ovaries) when no cancer was present. The men doctors explained that the uterus and ovaries are "potentially disease producing." They also said that they are unnecessary after the childbearing years, so why not remove them?

Surgical sexism is reinforced by another powerful motive—greed. Surgeons make money by performing this surgery. But they have to "sell" the operation to women. To "convince" a woman to have this surgery, the doctor tells her, unfortunately, the examination has turned up fibroids in her uterus—and they might turn into cancer. This statement is often sufficient, for it frightens women, who picture themselves dying from cancer. To clinch the sale, the surgeon withholds the rest of the truth—that the fibroids probably will not turn into cancer and that she has several nonsurgical alternatives.


5. When studying why more women than men died from coronary bypass surgery, researchers discovered that
   a. the surgery was not as successful because women's coronary arteries are smaller
b. women spent more time on the heart-lung machine, thus becoming too dependent on the technology

c. fewer women were given exercise stress tests, radioactive heart scans, and early surgery than men because physicians took their chest pains less seriously

d. women have less optimism and desire to recover because of their lower salaries and extensive responsibilities at work

Gender Inequality in the Workplace. One of the chief characteristics of the U.S. work force is a steady growth in the numbers of women who work outside the home. Chances are you are going to work after you complete college. How would you like to earn an extra million dollars on your job? Is this hard to do? All you have to do is be born a male and graduate from college The pay gap is so great that U.S. women who work full time average only 70 percent of what men are paid.

What keeps women from breaking through the glass ceiling, the mostly invisible barrier that keeps women from reaching the executive suite? Researchers have identified a “pipeline” that leads to the top—the marketing, sales, and production positions that directly affect the corporate bottom line. Stereotyped as better at “support,” women tend to be steered into human resources or public relations. There, successful projects are not appreciated the same way as those that bring in corporate profits—and bonuses for their managers.

Sociologist Christine Williams interviewed men and women who worked as nurses, elementary school teachers, librarians, and social workers. She found that instead of bumping into a glass ceiling, the men in these traditionally women’s occupations had climbed aboard a glass escalator. That is, compared with women, the men were accelerated into higher-level positions, given more desirable work assignments, and paid higher salaries. The motor that drives the glass escalator is gender—the stereotype that because someone is male, he is more capable.


6. Which detail supporting the idea of gender inequality in the workplace is the glass escalator?
   - a. The invisible barrier that keeps women from reaching higher-level positions, more desirable work assignments, and higher salaries
   - b. The way men are accelerated into higher-level positions, given more desirable work assignments, and paid higher salaries
   - c. The process of encouraging men into masculine careers and women into feminine careers
   - d. The unwelcome sexual attention at work or school that hinders work or peace of mind

7. Indicate the major detail heading that belongs in the blank.

   a. Gender tracking occurs when women are pushed toward “feminine” fields and men toward “masculine” fields.
b. Gender stratification occurs in work and pay.

8. Indicate the minor detail that belongs in the blank.

Gender Inequality in Health Care

a. Women are more likely to die of a heart attack than men because they are not given immediate treatment or attention to their health complaints.

b. ____________.

9. Indicate the minor detail that belongs in the blank.

Gender Inequality in the Workplace

a. ____________.

b. Glass ceiling occurs when women can see the top of their field but are prevented from moving up.

c. Glass escalator occurs when males are promoted quickly.

d. Sexual harassment occurs when unwelcome sexual attention affects a person's work or creates a hostile work environment.