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| 1. Mark your confusion by highlighting or underlining anything you don’t understand. Show evidence of a close reading (questions, connections, predictions, reactions, summarizing, clarifying, challenging, etc.).
2. Write a 1-page response. Possible Writer’s Notebook questions:
* How does it impact you to know about the existing American gender wage gap?
* How much difference do you think individuals can make? Do you think issues like the gender wage gap are culturally set? Or do you think they can be changed by individual choices?
* What do you think about 24/7 Wall Street’s methods for determining “the worst state for women”?
* Select any passage and respond to it.
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**Gender Wage Gape Continues to Persist as a National Issue**

Laura Finaley, *The Daily Cardinal, University of Wisconsin-Madison,* October 14, 2014

Evidently, only men are supposed to ask for raises. Women who do will only annoy their bosses and instead should simply have faith in the system and hope for good karma. This is what Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella recently stated. Although he later apologized for his “inarticulate” response, the fact remains that his initial answer serves to mask the tremendous gender wage gap that still exists. It also reinforces dangerous beliefs about workplace communication, which research has found already differs in ways that generally disadvantage female workers.

It is very clear that women’s wages still lag behind men’s in most every industry. In 2013, the American Association of University Women (AAUW) found that full-time, year-round female workers earned 78 percent of what their male counterparts earned. In the technology industry, women earn, on average, $6,358 less than their male counterparts, and women with at least one child earn $11,247 less than all other workers, according to a study by the American Institute for Economic Research. The AAUW found that female engineers made 88 percent of their male counterparts’ salaries, while women in the financial services industry earn $14,067 a year less than men, according to the AIER.

Although there are many factors that explain the gender wage gap, one of them involves exactly what Nadella denounced: negotiating salary and raises. Linda Babcock and Sara Laschever reported in their 2007 book, “Women Don’t Ask: The High Cost of Avoiding Negotiation— and Positive Strategies for Change” that men are eight times more likely than women to negotiate their salary.

Another factor that likely impacts the wages women receive from the start of their employment as well as through raises is the way that we are taught to communicate. According to linguistics scholar Deborah Tannen, women are taught to seek praise, to apologize for issues that are not their fault and to vent about problems rather than immediately begin “solving” them. While Tannen emphasizes that these are differences and not necessarily disadvantages, when workplaces continue to be dominated by male leaders, as is the case with the tech, finance, and engineering fields, these stylistic differences may indeed result in challenges for female workers. If male bosses see women venting, or hear a woman constantly say she’s sorry, the impression they may have is that she is less capable than her male counterpart. If female workers constantly need praise whereas males simply do the work, it may be perceived as excessive neediness. Again, the problem is not that females’ communication styles are bad, but that they are used in the context of a male-dominated setting and thus may not be understood appropriately. The disadvantages will only worsen if women are discouraged from asking their bosses for raises.

As the National Women’s Law Center points out, closing the wage gap would significantly improve the finances of not just women but families as well. They found that if women made an additional $11,608 per year, it would be enough to pay the median cost of rent and utilities for 13 months, with $400 to spare, to feed a family of four for 13 months with $300 to spare, or to pay 18 months of full-time childcare costs for a four-year old with more than $300 to spare.

So, Satya Nadella, it is essential that women learn to communicate with their bosses and to successfully negotiate their salary and raises!

**The 10 Worst States for Women**

Excerpted from *USA Today*, October 19, 2014

Based on recently released Census Bureau data, women made up almost half of the workforce last year. Yet, even working full-time and year-round, they were paid only 79 cents for every dollar men made. The wage gap varies considerably between states. Women receive 86 cents for every dollar men make in New York, for example, while in Louisiana, women are paid just 66% of what men earn.

Income inequality is only one of the challenges women face. Across the nation, women are less likely to serve in leadership roles both in the private and public sectors. Health outcomes among female populations also vary considerably between states.

In all of the worst-rated states, women were less likely than their male peers to hold private-sector management positions. In two of the worst states — South Dakota and Utah — women held fewer than one in three management jobs. According to Ariane Hegewisch, study director at the Institute for Women's Policy Research, women are discriminated not just in base pay, but also lack career opportunities available to men. "A lot of [the wage gap] is also promotions, recruitments and networking," Hegewisch said. Perceptions of performance can also be affected by gender, meaning "the more the pay is related to performance and bonuses, the bigger the wage gap."

Women in the worst-rated states were also less likely to have leadership roles in government compared to women in the rest of the country.

To determine the worst states for women, 24/7 Wall St. developed on a methodology based on the Center for American Progress' 2013 report, "The State of Women in America." We divided a range of variables into three major categories: economy, leadership and health. Data in the economy category came from the U.S. Census Bureau and included male and female median earnings, the percentage of children enrolled in state pre-kindergarten, state spending per child enrolled in pre-kindergarten and education attainment rates. The leadership category included data on the percentage of women in management occupations from the Census. It also includes the share of state and federal legislators who are women, and states that currently have female governors. The health section incorporated Census data on the percentage of women who were uninsured as well as life expectancy. Infant and maternal mortality rates came from the Kaiser Family Foundation. Data on the expansion of Medicaid, as policies towards maternity leave, sick days and time off from work came from the National Partnership for Women and Families.

State rankings on each of these measures were averaged to determine a score for each category. Possible scores ranged from 1 (best) to 50 (worst). The three category scores were averaged to create an indexed value that furnished our final ranking.

These are the worst states for women:

1. Utah
2. Wyoming
3. Idaho
4. Mississippi
5. North Dakota
6. Montana
7. South Dakota
8. Indiana
9. Alabama
10. Kansas