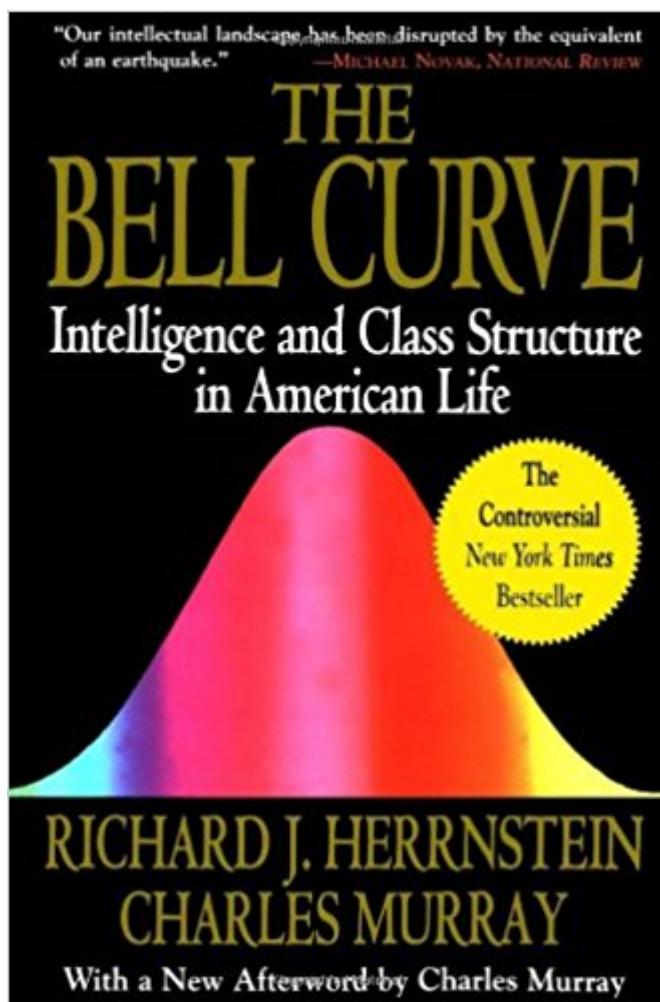


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# Bell Curve: Intelligence And Class Structure In American Life (A Free Press Paperbacks Book)



## **Synopsis**

The controversial book linking intelligence to class and race in modern society, and what public policy can do to mitigate socioeconomic differences in IQ, birth rate, crime, fertility, welfare, and poverty.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Michael Novak National Review Our intellectual landscape has been disrupted by the equivalent of an earthquake. David Brooks The Wall Street Journal Has already kicked up more reaction than any social?science book this decade. Peter Brimelow Forbes Long-awaited...massive, meticulous, minutely detailed, clear. Like Darwin's Origin of Species -- the intellectual event with which it is being seriously compared -- The Bell Curve offers a new synthesis of research...and a hypothesis of far-reaching explanatory power. Milton Friedman This brilliant, original, objective, and lucidly written book will force you to rethink your biases and prejudices about the role that individual difference in intelligence plays in our economy, our policy, and our society. Chester E. Finn, Jr. Commentary The Bell Curve's implications will be as profound for the beginning of the new century as Michael Harrington's discovery of "the other America" was for the final part of the old. Richard Herrnstein's bequest to us is a work of great value. Charles Murray's contribution goes on. Prof. Thomas J. Bouchard Contemporary Psychology [The authors] have been cast as racists and elitists and The Bell Curve has been dismissed as pseudoscience....The book's message cannot be dismissed so easily. Herrnstein and Murray have written one of the most provocative social science books

published in many years....This is a superbly written and exceedingly well documented book. Christopher Caldwell American Spectator The Bell Curve is a comprehensive treatment of its subject, never mean-spirited or gloating. It gives a fair hearing to those who dissent scientifically from its propositions -- in fact, it bends over backward to be fair....Among the dozens of hostile articles that have thus far appeared, none has successfully refuted any of its science. Malcolm W. Browne The New York Times Book Review Mr. Murray and Mr. Herrnstein write that "for the last 30 years, the concept of intelligence has been a pariah in the world of ideas," and that the time has come to rehabilitate rational discourse on the subject. It is hard to imagine a democratic society doing otherwise. Prof. Eugene D. Genovese National Review Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray might not feel at home with Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Lani Guinier, but they should....They have all [made] brave attempts to force a national debate on urgent matters that will not go away. And they have met the same fate. Once again, academia and the mass media are straining every muscle to suppress debate. Prof. Earl Hunt American Scientist The first reactions to The Bell Curve were expressions of public outrage. In the second round of reaction, some commentators suggested that Herrnstein and Murray were merely bringing up facts that were well known in the scientific community, but perhaps best not discussed in public. A Papua New Guinea language has a term for this, Mokita. It means "truth that we all know, but agree not to talk about." ...There are fascinating questions here for those interested in the interactions between sociology, economics, anthropology and cognitive science. We do not have the answers yet. We may need them soon, for policy makers who rely on Mokita are flying blind.

Richard J. Herrnstein held the Edger Pierce Chair in Psychology at Harvard University until his death in 1994.

The subtitle is "Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life." Although you would not glean as much from the vicious attacks that have been leveled against this book since its publishing, the major thesis is that intelligence is highly correlated with success in America. This applies not only to financial success but also educational success, marital success, and happiness in general. This is only a commonsense observation. People who can figure out how to deal with life's problems are happier. As I write this I am having a fight with Social Security to receive my pension and a fight with the bank to get a deposit credited to my account. Fighting this kind of bureaucratic battle takes intelligence. People without the ability to argue their case, write a letter, and call their Congressman lose out. This same kind of intelligence, needless to say, is valuable to employers and leads to

success at work. One of the observations is that as American society has become more mobile, like kinds of people tend to group together. There are enclaves of high income, highly intelligent people in Boston, New York, San Francisco and Washington DC. Lesser enclaves exist in the three cities area of North Carolina, Austin Texas, Madison Wisconsin and other university towns. More than that, the upper strata congregate very predictably in certain neighborhoods, comfortably separated from the minorities and other hoi polloi in their neighborhoods. This results in what the authors call "cognitive stratification." Young, mobile and affluent people seek each other's company and marry each other. The society is naturally separating itself by intelligence. A topic that Murray in particular addresses elsewhere is that even though the cognitive elite have the wherewithal to raise families, they don't. Those that don't, do. The result is that the world is getting dumber, summed up quite well in Richard Lynn's "Dysgenics: Genetic Deterioration in Modern Populations." The discussion of race which has made this book infamous does no more than reiterate what psychometricians have consistently discovered since intelligence first started to be measured a century ago. Black Americans, on average, score one standard deviation lower on IQ tests than whites: averages of 85 versus 100. What they also find, but which does not excite controversy, is that Ashkenazi Jews average 115, Americans of Northeast Asian descent average about 107, American Indians average about 90, and Hispanic Americans about the same. It is worth a paragraph to describe what intelligence is. Intelligence tests measure the ability to cope in a modern society. They are designed to be independent of culture. Some of them are even independent of language. They produce highly reproducible results. "There are a wide range of intelligence tests available, and all of them will yield pretty much the same results for a given individual. In practical terms, a one standard deviation difference in population averages means that only one person in six in the lower population has an intelligence at or exceeding the average of the higher group. Only one white person in six is as smart as the average Ashkenazi Jew, and only one black and six is as intelligent as the average white. The bell curve explicitly predicts that there will be extraordinarily smart, and extraordinarily dumb people in every population. This is only common sense." We see exceptional Blacks such as Paul Robison, Clarence Thomas and Thomas Sowell who far exceed almost all of their white peers. On the other hand, you run across some dumb Jews. But not very many. Intelligence is highly correlated with success in school, income, health and happiness. This deserves a side note on statistics. A high correlation in the social sciences is not extraordinarily high. In round numbers, intelligence explains about 25% of the difference in levels of success. Other factors, such as personality, good looks, a stable family, being born rich, and so on certainly play a part. Statistically, however, none of these are as important as intelligence. As I write this review in

2016 the question of intelligence is even more pertinent. Technology is eliminating routine jobs at an alarming pace. Typists and grocery check out clerks are becoming a thing of the past. The target now seems to be drivers, paralegals and others who do fairly routine work. It is simply easier and more accurate to have machines often computers do the work than to pay people. At the same time, as noted in Lynn's book above, the intelligence of nativeborn Americans is declining. The problem is compounded by the fact that America is bringing in large numbers of immigrants from the populations with lower intelligence. Murray and Herrnstein did not offer a very optimistic conclusion or a realistic way out of this problem. There does not appear to be one. It has only gotten worse since their publication. In hindsight, the United States appears to be worse off for not having paid attention to this book when it came out, just as it did not pay attention to the Moynahan and Coleman reports in the 1960s. As things collapse as I write this, during the Clinton Trump election campaign, it appears that the chickens are coming home to roost.

I like the analytical style the authors use to explain politically inconvenient findings. Their core message is hard to deny, even if the political solutions they offer don't all in my opinion automatically follow from their findings.

Excellent Book. Equally thought provoking and frightening. I'd make it a required reading for any higher education schools, to be incorporated into courses dealing with issues of social policy.

This is an important look at society. I had read this book in the 1990's when it came out and needed to reread it. This was (and is) considered a very controversial book, racist etc, largely, in my experience, deemed that by people who have not read it only about it. "The Bell Curve" to me is, to me, an important and extensively documented look at the realities of society.

One of the most fundamental facts about human society - the inequality in intelligence - is studied with unprecedented depth and courage. A great example, how political and other correctness should be overcome - the truth is above it all.

The first section of this book is written for lay persons. It confirms what we have all observed and thought but have repressed because it was politically incorrect to say. It raises an interesting question, what do we do with the brain drain on small communities and professions that do not

require a college degree yet benefit from intelligent practitioners. I have not finished the book, so I don't know if it offers any solutions. Having retired to a small rural Maine community, I see evidence of this trend for the capable to get educated and go elsewhere for work. Yet the community benefits because there are still lots of intelligent crafts people in the community. I wonder what the future holds for such isolated or poverty stricken areas.

Lots of great information. Goes into incredible detail but is a bit dry. I do recommend reading it. It goes into great detail on how IQ is based on genetics society, and environment. Ignore the people who say it is racist it is not. It goes into great detail on studies about IQ, and the effectiveness of different educational programs. There is a lot in this book.

Seems to be very well researched. A very long book, with a clever system designed to appeal to all readers. Three choices:1 You can read the summary of each chapter to get the content without the research that back up the conclusions.2 You can read the book in its entirety, as you would if you were taking it as a college class3 You can read the entire book plus added content that is offered for depth of understanding. It is a real tome, I am reading the summaries which total about 30 pages total. I am reading some of the text when I have problem with the conclusions. It is a lot of book for the money.

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