

I'm not a bot



Science Mathematics probability theory, a branch of mathematics concerned with the analysis of random phenomena. The outcome of a random event cannot be determined before it occurs, but it may be any one of several possible outcomes. The actual outcome is considered to be determined by chance.The word probability has several meanings in ordinary conversation. Two of these are particularly important for the development and applications of the mathematical theory of probability. One is the interpretation of probabilities as relative frequencies, for which simple games involving coins, cards, dice, and roulette wheels provide examples. The distinctive feature of games of chance is that the outcome of a given trial cannot be predicted with certainty, although the collective results of a large number of trials display some regularity. For example, the statement that the probability of heads in tossing a coin equals one-half, according to the relative frequency interpretation, implies that in a large number of tosses the relative frequency with which heads actually occur will be approximately one-half, although it contains no implication concerning the outcome of any given toss. There are many similar examples involving groups of people, molecules of a gas, genes, and so on. Accurate statements about life expectancy for persons of a certain age describe the collective experience of a large number of individuals but do not purport to say what will happen to any particular person. Similarly, predictions about the chance of a genetic disease occurring in a child of parents having a known genetic makeup are statements about relative frequencies of occurrence in a large number of cases but not predictions about a given individual.(Read Steven Pinkers Britannica entry on rationality.)This article contains a description of the important mathematical concepts of probability theory, illustrated by some of the applications that have stimulated their development. For a fuller historical treatment, see probability and statistics. Since applications inevitably involve simplifying assumptions that focus on some features of a problem at the expense of others, it is advantageous to begin by thinking about simple experiments, such as tossing a coin or rolling dice, and later to see how these apparently frivolous investigations relate to important scientific questions. The fundamental ingredient of probability theory is an experiment that can be repeated, at least hypothetically, under essentially identical conditions and that may lead to different outcomes on different trials. The set of all possible outcomes of an experiment is called a sample space. The experiment of tossing a coin once results in a sample space with two possible outcomes, heads and tails. Tossing two dice has a sample space with 36 possible outcomes, each of which can be identified with an ordered pair (i, j), where i and j assume one of the values 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and denote the faces showing on the individual dice. It is important to think of the dice as identifiable (say by a difference in colour), so that the outcome (1, 2) is different from (2, 1). An event is a well-defined subset of the sample space. For example, the event the sum of the faces showing on the two dice equals six consists of the five outcomes (1, 5), (2, 4), (3, 3), (4, 2), and (5, 1). A third example is to draw n balls from an urn containing balls of various colours. A generic outcome to this experiment is an n-tuple, where the ith entry specifies the colour of the ball drawn on the ith draw, and the simplicity of the sample space depends on the number of colours. A particular candidate for an electric fan may be identified with a particular colour, those favouring a different candidate may be identified with a different colour, and so on. Probability theory provides the basis for learning about the contents of the urn from the sample of balls drawn from the urn; an application is to learn about the electoral preferences of a population on the basis of a sample drawn from that population. Another application of simple urn models is to use clinical trials designed to determine whether a new treatment for a disease, a new drug, or a new surgical procedure is better than a standard treatment. In the simple case in which treatment can be regarded as either success or failure, the goal of the clinical trial is to discover whether the new treatment more frequently leads to success than does the standard treatment. Patients with the disease can be identified with balls in an urn. The red balls are those patients who are cured by the new treatment, and the black balls are those not cured. Usually there is a control group, who receive the standard treatment. They are represented by a second urn with a possibly different fraction of red balls. The goal of the experiment of drawing some number of balls from each urn is to discover on the basis of the sample which urn has the larger fraction of red balls. A variation of this idea can be used to test the efficacy of a new vaccine. Perhaps the largest and most famous example was the test of the Salk vaccine for poliomyelitis conducted in 1954. It was organized by the U.S. Public Health Service and involved almost two million children. Its success has led to the almost complete elimination of polio as a health problem in the industrialized parts of the world. Strictly speaking, these applications are problems of statistics, for which the foundations are provided by probability theory. In contrast to the experiments described above, many experiments have infinitely many possible outcomes. For example, one can toss a coin until heads appears for the first time. The number of possible tosses is n = 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 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[tured along the border of the Mongol Empire.](#) By doing this, Kublai hopes to bolster his popularity and depend on the cooperation of his Chinese subjects to ensure that his army receives more resources.[5]June 13 King Henry II becomes the first Abbasid ruler in Cairo (after his escape during the siege of Baghdad). He is sent with an army by Sultan Baibars to recover Baghdad, but is killed in a Mongol ambush near Anbar (modern Iraq), on November 28. The Abbasid caliphs continue as religious figureheads for the Mamluks in Egypt until the 16th century.[6]June 12 King Henry III of England obtains a papal bull to absolve himself from his oath to maintain the Provisions of Oxford. He flees to France, where he is captured by Philip IV of France and imprisoned at Vincennes. His wife Eleanor flees to Poitiers, where she is also captured by French forces. In April 1209, Pope Innocent III excommunicates Philip IV and calls for a crusade against him. FitzThomas are defeated by a Gaelic army led by King Finghin Mac Carthaigh.[John FitzGerald](#) is killed during the fighting [8]February – The Japanese Bun' era ends and the Kch era begins during the reign of the 13-year-old Emperor Kameyama (until 1264). Early Following disputes, northern academics from the University of Cambridge in England set up a University of Northampton by royal charter but it is suppressed by the Crown in 1265[9]The earliest extant Chinese illustration of "Pascal's Triangle" is from Yang Hui's (or Qiangshun's) book Xianjie Juzhang Shuaofa, published this year.May 25 Pope Alexander IV dies after a pontificate of 6-years at Viterbo. He is succeeded by Urban IV as the 182nd pope of the Catholic Church.August 29 Urban IV offers the crown of Sicily to Charles of Anjou, youngest son of King Louis VIII of France, hoping to strengthen his position.Wurmsbach Abbey (located in Bollingen) is established by Count Rudolf V of Rapperswil in Switzerland.February 1 Walter de Stapledon, English bishop of Exeter (d. 1326)February 11 Otto III, Duke of Bavaria, king of Hungary and Croatia (d. 1312)February 28 Margaret of Scotland, queen consort of Norway (d. 1283)March 1 Hugh Despenser the Elder, English chief adviser (d. 1326)July 25 Arthur II, Breton nobleman (House of Dreux) (d. 1312)October 9 Denis I ("the Good King"), king of Portugal (d. 1325)Abu Abdallah ibn al-Hakim, Andalusian vizier and poet (d. 1309)November 'Ala' al-Dawla Simnani, Persian Sufi mystic and writer (d. 1336)Albertino Mussato, Paduan statesman, poet and chronicler (d. 1329)Constantine Palaiologos, Byzantine prince and general, son of Michael VIII (d. 1306)Daniel of Moscow (Aleksandrovich), Russian prince (d. 1330)Zangpo Pal, Tibetan religious leader (d. 1323)Elizabeth of Sicily, queen consort of Hungary (House of Anjou) (d. 1303)Konoe no Muneaki, Japanese nobleman (kugyō) and regent (d. 1296)Pier Saccone Tarlati di Pietramala, Italian nobleman and condottiero (d. 1356)Wadysław i okietek ("Elbow-Hand"), king of Poland (d. 1333)Februare 28 Heinrich III ("the Lion") of Saxony, German duke and Holy Roman Emperor (died 1327)January 12 Chhatrapati Sambhuji Maharaj, Maratha warrior chieftain who founded the Maratha Empire (died 1689)September 12 John FitzGerald is killed during the fighting [8]February – The Japanese Bun' era ends and the Kch era begins during the reign of the 13-year-old Emperor Kameyama (until 1264).

Early Following disputes, northern academics from the University of Cambridge in England set up a University of Northampton by royal charter but it is suppressed by the Crown in 1265[9]The earliest extant Chinese illustration of "Pascal's Triangle" is from Yang Hui's (or Qiangshun's) book Xianjie Juzhang Shuaofa, published this year.May 25 Pope Alexander IV dies after a pontificate of 6-years at Viterbo. He is succeeded by Urban IV as the 182nd pope of the Catholic Church.August 29 Urban IV offers the crown of Sicily to Charles of Anjou, youngest son of King Louis VIII of France, hoping to strengthen his position.Wurmsbach Abbey (located in Bollingen) is established by Count Rudolf V of Rapperswil in Switzerland.February 1 Walter de Stapledon, English bishop of Exeter (d. 1326)February 11 Otto III, Duke of Bavaria, king of Hungary and Croatia (d. 1312)February 28 Margaret of Scotland, queen consort of Norway (d. 1283)March 1 Hugh Despenser the Elder, English chief adviser (d. 1326)July 25 Arthur II, Breton nobleman (House of Dreux) (d. 1312)October 9 Denis I ("the Good King"), king of Portugal (d. 1325)Abu Abdallah ibn al-Hakim, Andalusian vizier and poet (d. 1309)November 'Ala' al-Dawla Simnani, Persian Sufi mystic and writer (d. 1336)Albertino Mussato, Paduan statesman, poet and chronicler (d. 1329)Constantine Palaiologos, Byzantine prince and general, son of Michael VIII (d. 1306)Daniel of Moscow (Aleksandrovich), Russian prince (d. 1330)Zangpo Pal, Tibetan religious leader (d. 1323)Elizabeth of Sicily, queen consort of Hungary (House of Anjou) (d. 1303)Konoe no Muneaki, Japanese nobleman (kugyō) and regent (d. 1296)Pier Saccone Tarlati di Pietramala, Italian nobleman and condottiero (d. 1356)Wadysław i okietek ("Elbow-Hand"), king of Poland (d. 1333)Februar

the new treatment more frequently leads to success than does the standard treatment. Patients with the disease can be identified with balls in an urn. The red balls are those patients who are cured by the new treatment, the black balls are those not cured. Usually there is a control group, who receive the standard treatment. They are represented by a second urn, with a possibly different fraction of red balls. The goal of the experiment of drawing some number of balls from each urn is to discover, on the basis of the sample which urn has the larger fraction of red balls. A variation of this idea can be used to test the efficacy of a new vaccine. Perhaps the largest and most famous example was the test of the Salk vaccine for poliomyelitis conducted in 1954. It was organized by the U.S. Public Health Service and involved almost two million children. Its success has led to the almost complete elimination of polio as a health problem in the industrialized parts of the world. Strictly speaking, these applications are problems of statistics, for which the foundations are provided by probability theory. In contrast to the experiments described above, many experiments have infinitely many possible outcomes. For example, one can toss a coin until heads appears for the first time. The number of possible tosses is $n = 1, 2, \dots$. Another example is to twirl a spinner. For an idealized spinner made from a straight line segment having no width and pivoted at its centre, the set of possible outcomes is the set of all angles that the final position of the spinner makes with some fixed direction, equivalently all real numbers in $[0, 2\pi)$. Many measurements in the natural and social sciences, such as volume, voltage, temperature, reaction time, marginal income, and so on, are made on continuous scales and at least in theory involve infinitely many possible values. If the repeated measurements on different subjects or at different times on the same subject can lead to different outcomes, probability theory is a possible tool to study this variability. Because of their comparative simplicity, experiments with finite sample spaces are discussed first. In the early development of probability theory, mathematicians considered only those experiments for which it seemed reasonable, based on considerations of symmetry, to suppose that all outcomes of the experiment were equally likely. Then in a large number of trials all outcomes should occur with approximately the same frequency. The probability of an event is defined to be the ratio of the number of cases favourable to the event, i.e., the number of outcomes in the subset of the sample space defining the event to the total number of cases. Thus, the 36 possible outcomes in the throw of two dice are assumed equally likely, and the probability of obtaining six is the number of favourable cases, 5, divided by 36, or $5/36$. Now suppose that a coin is tossed n times, and consider the probability of the event heads does not occur in the n tosses. An outcome of the experiment is an n -tuple, the k th entry of which identifies the result of the k th toss. Since there are two possible outcomes for each toss, the number of elements in the sample space is 2^n . Of these, only one outcome corresponds to having no heads, so the required probability is $1/2^n$. It is only slightly more difficult to determine the probability of at most one head. In addition to the single case in which no head occurs, there are n cases in which exactly one head occurs, because it can occur on the first, second, ..., or n th toss. Hence, there are $n + 1$ cases favourable to obtaining at most one head, and the desired probability is $(n + 1)/2^n$. Probability theory is a branch of mathematics focusing on the analysis of random phenomena. It is an important skill for data scientists using data affected by chance. With randomness existing everywhere, the use of probability theory allows for the analysis of chance events. The aim is to determine the likelihood of an event occurring, often using a numerical scale of between 0 and 1, with the number 0 indicating impossibility and 1 indicating certainty. A classic example of this is a coin toss, where there can be two possible options: heads or tails. Here the possibility of flipping a head or a tail on a single toss is 50%. When conducting your own experiment you may find that the outcomes can vary. But if you continue flipping the coin, the outcome grows closer to 50/50. Probability plays a vital role in many areas of scientific research. Researchers can integrate uncertainty into their research models as a way of describing their findings. This allows for a predictive distribution of findings tied to what may have been observed in the past. Randomness and uncertainty are popular themes tied to probability. In Nassim Taleb's bestselling books *The Black Swan* and *Fooled By Randomness*, the claim is made that rare events typically hold more importance than common ones because their effect size is not as restricted. Also, because of their rarity, results are unlikely to be determined. Taleb popularized what he calls a black swan event, one that is rare, has a catastrophic impact when it does occur and can be explained in hindsight in a way that leads many to believe that it was actually predictable. Probability is commonly used by data scientists to model situations where experiments, conducted during similar circumstances, yield different results (as in the case of throwing dice or a coin). It also has many practical uses in the business world. Take for example the insurance industry, where actuarial records chart life expectancy of individuals of a certain age. Instead of predicting what will happen to any one individual, the aim is to capture a collective result encompassing a large number of people. Similar approaches have been taken in genetic science, where assessing the likelihood of a genetic disease is tied to frequency of occurrence as opposed to predictions about a specific individual. Another common application of probability is also commonly applied in clinical trials where new disease treatments, drugs or surgical treatments are being sought. In assessing whether a treatment can be deemed a success or failure, the clinical trial aims to determine whether the new treatment is more successful than a prevailing treatment standard. An example here is testing the efficacy of a new vaccine, such as the poliomyelitis testing done for the Salk vaccine in 1954 involving almost two million children. Organized by the U.S. Public Health Service, the vaccine nearly eliminated polio as a health problem in the industrialized world. There are three types of probability commonly used to gather statistical inference data. These are: Also known as the axiomatic method, this type of probability involves a set of axioms (rules) attached to it. For example, you could have a rule that the probability must be greater than 0.5% in order for it to be valid. This involves looking at the occurrence ratio of a singular event in comparison to the total number of outcomes. This type of probability is often used after data from an experiment has been gathered to compare a subset of data to the total amount of collected data. When using the subjective approach, probability is the likelihood of something happening based on one's experiences or personal judgment. Here there are no formal calculations for subjective probability for it is based on one's beliefs, judgment and personal reasoning. By way of example, during a sporting event, fans of one team share who they are rooting for. This is based on facts or opinions they personally hold regarding the game, the two teams playing and the odds of the team winning. Probability theory is a tool employed by researchers, businesses, investment analysts and countless others for risk management and scenario analysis. Take epidemiology, which is the science of disease distribution. Researchers in this field study disease frequency, assessing how the probability differs across groups of people. A present-day example of this is the use of probability by epidemiologists to assess the cause-effect relationship between exposure and illness to the coronavirus. Probability theory is often used to unlock key factors denoting the relationship between exposures and health risks. The aim here is to quantify uncertainty. This knowledge can fuel a course of action based on best outcomes for those affected by various diseases. Actuaries who are often employed in the insurance industry make primary use of probability, statistics and other data science tools to calculate the probability of uncertain future events occurring over a period of time. They then apply other data concepts to determine the amount of money that needs to be set aside to pay for future losses. Then there's the small-business world where owners cannot always turn to their hunches and instincts to run a successful company. In today's competitive business environment, probability analysis can provide entrepreneurs with key metrics pointing the way to the most profitable and productive paths. This analysis offers a controlled way to anticipate potential results. For example, if a business enterprise expects to receive between \$500,000 and \$750,000 in revenue each month, the graph will begin with \$500,000 at the low end and \$750,000 at the high end. For a typical probability distribution, the graph will resemble a bell curve, where the least likely outcomes fall nearer the extreme ends of the range and the most likely nearer to the midpoint of the extremes. A weather forecast serves as another example of probability theory. The probability for precipitation or severe weather is tied to a specific geographic location. As a result, forecasting can be viewed as the combination of the chance of a weather occurrence and the coverage of that event. According to an information statement of the American Meteorological Society: A probability forecast includes a numerical expression of uncertainty about the quantity or event being forecast. Ideally, all elements (temperature, wind, precipitation, etc.) of a weather forecast would include information that accurately quantifies the inherent uncertainty. Surveys have consistently indicated that users desire information about uncertainty or confidence of weather forecasts. The widespread dissemination and effective communication of forecast uncertainty information is likely to yield substantial economic and social benefits, because users can make decisions that explicitly account for this uncertainty. For data scientists, there are a number of advantages and disadvantages with probability that need to be considered. The classical method of probability is used when all probable outcomes have an equal likelihood of happening and every outcome is known in advance. The coin toss example above uses the classical approach to probability. The classical approach offers a simple approach to real-world examples that is easy to digest for those not possessing a math or science background. With respect to limitations, the classical approach is unable to handle projects where an infinite number of possible outcomes exist. It's also ineffective in scenarios where each outcome is not equally likely, as in the case of tossing a weighted die. These limitations affect the ability of this approach to handling more complicated tasks. Unlike the classical approach, relative frequency offers the advantage of being able to handle scenarios where outcomes have different theoretical probability (or likelihood) of occurring. This approach can also manage a probability situation where possible outcomes are unknown. Although you can use relative frequency probability in more diverse situations and settings than classical probability, it has several limitations. The first limitation to relative frequency involves the problem of infinite repetitions. This is where experiments possessing an infinite number of times cannot be analyzed with this theory. So while a large number of trials can be conducted, that number can't be infinite. Problems that benefit from subjective probability are those that require some level of belief to make possible. For example, a candidate who may be down in the polls may use subjective probability to make a case for staying in the race. Subjective probability also benefits from what is known as the reference class problem. In a reference class problem, assigning a probability to a certain event might require that event to be classified. That classification can be subjective, and thus changing the classification can change the probability of the event. For example, if you want to determine the probability of a person contracting an infectious disease like COVID-19, we need to begin with assessing which classes of people are relevant to the problem. It's here where various reference classes can be established. A broad class such as all U.S. residents could be used. Or it could be narrowed down to, say, all residents of the states of X, Y and Z, where 80% of the deaths are occurring. In other words, depending on the reference class chosen, different probabilities will emerge. Probability allows data scientists to assess the certainty of outcomes of a particular study or experiment. An experiment is a planned study that is executed under controlled conditions. When a result is not already predetermined, the experiment is referred to as a chance experiment. Conducting a coin toss twice is an example of a chance experiment. Today's data scientists need to have an understanding of the foundational concepts of probability theory including key concepts involving probability distribution, statistical significance, hypothesis testing and regression. Learn more about statistics concepts that data scientists use regularly: Probability distribution is only one of them. Job opportunities for computer scientists are projected to increase 22% from 2020 to 2030, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). As organizations seek out new solutions for capturing and analyzing huge amounts of data, data scientists will be in high demand across a wide swath of sectors and industries worldwide, with a median salary of \$126.8K per year. Many of these job opportunities will require a master's degree in computer science or a related field. Check out online masters in data science programs and find the best degree for your career goals. Last updated: April 2022 Share copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format for any purpose, even commercially. Adapt remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially. The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms. Attribution You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use. 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