LECTURE 4: RANDOM VARIABLES

ECON 480 - ECONOMETRICS - FALL 2018

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Random Variables



RANDOM VARIABLES

EXPERIMENTS

 An experiment is any procedure that can (in principle) be repeated infinitely and has a well-defined set of outcomes

Example Flip a coin 10 times





RANDOM VARIABLES

• A random variable (RV) takes on values that are unknown in advance, but determined by an experiment

ExampleThe number of Heads from 10 coin flips





RANDOM VARIABLES

- A random variable (RV) takes on values that are unknown in advance, but determined by an experiment
- A R.V. is a numerical summary of a random outcome

Example

The number of Heads from 10 coin flips





RANDOM VARIABLES: NOTATION

• Random variable X takes on individual values (X_i) from a set of possible values

Example

Let X be the number of Heads from 10 coin flips. $x_i \in \{0, 1, 2, ..., 10\}$



RANDOM VARIABLES: NOTATION

- Random variable X takes on individual values (X_i) from a set of possible values
- $\cdot\,$ Often capital letters to denote RV's

Example

Let X be the number of Heads from 10 coin flips. $x_i \in \{0, 1, 2, ..., 10\}$



· A discrete random variable takes on a finite/countable set of possible values

Example

Let X be the number of times your computer crashes this semester, $x_i \in \{0, 1, 2, 3, 4\}$





DISCRETE RANDOM VARIABLES: PROBABILITY DISTRIBUTION

• The probability distribution of a R.V. fully lists all the possible values of X and their associated probabilities

| $P(X=x_i)$ |
|------------|
| 0.80 |
| 0.10 |
| 0.06 |
| 0.03 |
| 0.01 |
| |



• The probability distribution function (pdf) summarizes the possible outcomes of *X* and their probabilities

$$f_X = p_i, i = 1, 2, ..., k$$



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- Notation: f_X is the pdf of X:

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$$f_X = p_i, i = 1, 2, ..., k$$

· For any real number x_i , $f(x_i)$ is the probability that $X = x_i$



DISCRETE RANDOM VARIABLES: PDF EXAMPLE

| Xį | $P(X=x_i)$ |
|----|------------|
| 0 | 0.80 |
| 1 | 0.10 |
| 2 | 0.06 |
| 3 | 0.03 |
| 4 | 0.01 |
| | |



DISCRETE RANDOM VARIABLES: PDF EXAMPLE

Example

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|----|------------|
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| 2 | 0.06 |
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| 4 | 0.01 |
| | |

• What is f(0)?



DISCRETE RANDOM VARIABLES: PDF EXAMPLE

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| 0 | 0.80 |
| 1 | 0.10 |
| 2 | 0.06 |
| 3 | 0.03 |
| 4 | 0.01 |
| | |

- What is f(0)?What is f(3)?



DISCRETE RANDOM VARIABLES: PDF GRAPH

```
crashes<-c(0,1,2,3,4)
prob<-c(0.8,0.1,0.06,0.03,0.01)
crashes<-data.frame(crashes, prob)

crashes.pdf<-ggplot(crashes, aes(x=crashes, y=prob))+
   geom_bar(stat="identity", fill="#0072B2")+xlab("Crashes")+ylab("Probability")
crashes.pdf</pre>
```



• The *cumulative* density function (cdf) describes the probability that X will be at most (less than or equal to) a given value x_i

| Xi | f(x) | F(X) |
|----|------|------|
| 0 | 0.80 | 0.80 |
| 1 | 0.10 | 0.90 |
| 2 | 0.06 | 0.96 |
| 3 | 0.03 | 0.99 |
| 4 | 0.01 | 1.00 |



- The *cumulative* density function (cdf) describes the probability that X will be at most (less than or equal to) a given value x_i
- Notation: $F_X = P(X \le x_i)$

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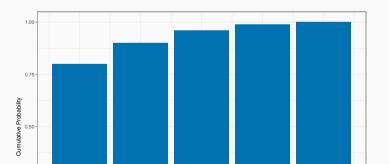




```
crashes$cprob<-(cumsum(crashes$prob))

crashes.cdf<-ggplot(crashes, aes(x=crashes, y=cprob))+
   geom_bar(stat="identity", fill="#0072B2")+xlab("Crashes")+ylab("Cumulative Production Production
```











$$E(X) = p_1 x_1 + p_2 x_2 + \dots + p_k x_k$$



$$E(X) = p_1 x_1 + p_2 x_2 + ... + p_k x_k = \sum_{i=1}^k p_i x_i$$

- A probability-weighted average of X, with each x_i weighted by its associated probability p_i
- Also called the mean or expectation of X, also denoted μ_{X}



EXPECTED VALUE: EXAMPLE

Example

Suppose you lend your friend \$100 at 10% interest. If the loan is repaid, you receive \$110 . Your friend is 99% likely to repay, but there is a default risk of 1% where you get nothing. What is the expected value of repayment?



EXPECTED VALUE: EXAMPLE II

Example

Let X be a random variable that is described by the following pdf:

| Xi | $P(X=x_i)$ |
|----|------------|
| 1 | 0.50 |
| 2 | 0.25 |
| 3 | 0.10 |
| 4 | 0.05 |
| | |

• What is E(X)?



VARIANCE OF A RANDOM VARIABLE

• The variance of a random variable X, denoted var(X) or σ_X^2 is:

$$\sigma_X^2 = \sum_{i=1}^n (x_i - \mu_X)^2 p_i$$



VARIANCE OF A RANDOM VARIABLE

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VARIANCE OF A RANDOM VARIABLE

• The variance of a random variable X, denoted var(X) or σ_X^2 is:

$$\sigma_X^2 = \sum_{i=1}^n (x_i - \mu_X)^2 p_i = E[(X - \mu_X)^2]$$

- This is the expected value of the squared deviations from the mean
 - $\boldsymbol{\cdot}\,$ i.e. the probability-weighted average of the squared deviations



STANDARD DEVIATION OF A RANDOM VARIABLE

· The standard deviation of a random variable X, denoted sd(X) or σ_X is:

$$\sigma_{X} = \sqrt{\sigma_{X}^{2}}$$



STANDARD DEVIATION: EXAMPLE

Example What is the standard deviation of computer crashes?

| | Number of Computer Crashes | | | | |
|------------|----------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| Xi | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| $P(X=x_i)$ | 0.80 | 0.10 | 0.06 | 0.03 | 0.01 |



STANDARD DEVIATION: EXAMPLE

Example

What is the standard deviation of computer crashes?

| | Number of Computer Crashes | | | | |
|------------|----------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| Xi | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| $P(X=x_i)$ | 0.80 | 0.10 | 0.06 | 0.03 | 0.01 |

• First, calculate the mean:

$$E(X) = 0(0.80) + 1(0.10) + 2(0.06) + 3(0.03) + 4(0.01)$$
$$= 0 + 0.1 + 0.12 + 0.09 + 0.04$$
$$= 0.35$$



STANDARD DEVIATION: EXAMPLE II

Example What is the standard deviation of computer crashes?



STANDARD DEVIATION: EXAMPLE II

Example

What is the standard deviation of computer crashes?

• Next, find the deviations from the mean and square them:

| | Number of Crashes $(E(X) = 0.35)$ | | | | | |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|---------|--|
| Xi | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |
| $P(X = x_i)$ | 0.80 | 0.10 | 0.06 | 0.03 | 0.01 | |
| $(x_i - E(X))$ | -0.35 | 0.65 | 1.65 | 2.65 | 3.65 | |
| $(x_i - E(X)$ | 0.1225 | 0.4225 | 2.7225 | 7.0225 | 13.3225 | |



Example

What is the standard deviation of computer crashes?

· Next, find the deviations from the mean and square them:

| | Number of clashes $(E(\lambda) = 0.33)$ | | | | |
|----------------|---|------|------|------|------|
| Xi | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| $P(X = x_i)$ | 0.80 | 0.10 | 0.06 | 0.03 | 0.01 |
| $(x_i - E(X))$ | -0.35 | 0.65 | 1.65 | 2.65 | 3.65 |

Number of Craches (E(V) - 0.3E)

0.1225 0.4225 2.7225 · Take the expectation of the squared deviations to get variance

$$\begin{split} \sigma_{\chi}^2 &= 0.1225(0.80) + 0.4225(0.10) + 2.7225(0.06) + 7.0225(0.03) + 13.3225(0.01) \\ &= 0.098 + 0.04225 + 0.16335 + 0.210675 + 0.133225 \\ &= 0.6475 \end{split}$$

7.0225

13.3225



STANDARD DEVIATION: EXAMPLE III

Example

What is the standard deviation of computer crashes?

· To get standard deviation, σ , take the square root:

$$\sigma = \sqrt{\sigma^2}$$

$$= \sqrt{0.6475}$$

$$= 0.8047$$



· Continuous random variables can take on an uncountable (infinite) number of values





- · Continuous random variables can take on an uncountable (infinite) number of values
- \cdot So many values that the probability of any specific value is infinitely small o 0.



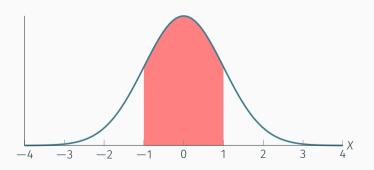


- · Continuous random variables can take on an uncountable (infinite) number of values
- \cdot So many values that the probability of any specific value is infinitely small o 0.
- · Instead, we focus on a range of values it might take on





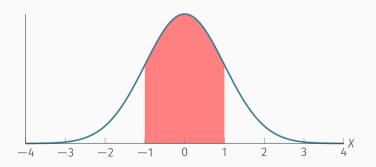
• The probability density function (pdf) of a continuous variable represents the probability between two values as the area under a curve



HOOD

 $P(-1 \le X \le 1)$: area under the curve between -1 and 1.

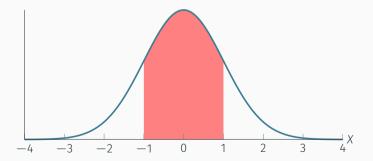
- The probability density function (pdf) of a continuous variable represents the probability between two values as the area under a curve
- · The total area under the curve is 1



HOOL

 $P(-1 \le X \le 1)$: area under the curve between -1 and 1.

- The probability *density* function (pdf) of a continuous variable represents the probability between two values as the area under a curve
- · The total area under the curve is 1
- Since P(a) = 0 and P(b) = 0, $P(a < X < b) = P(a \le X \le b)$

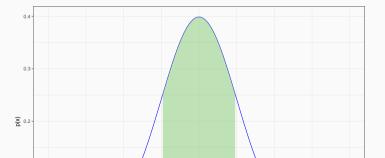




 $P(-1 \le X \le 1)$: area under the curve between -1 and 1.

FYI using calculus:

$$P(a \le X \le b) = \int_a^b f(x) dx$$





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$$P(a \le X \le b) = \int_a^b f(x) dx$$

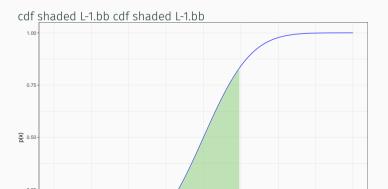
• These functions are complicated: we have software or (old fashioned!) probability tables to calculate





• The *cumulative* density function (cdf) describes the area under the pdf for all values less than or equal to (i.e. to the left of) a given value, *k*

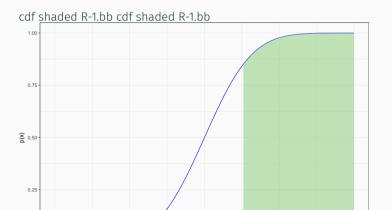
$$P(X \le k)$$





• Note: to find the probability of values *greater* than or equal to (to the right of) a given value k:

$$P(X \ge k) = 1 - P(X \le k)$$





THE NORMAL DISTRIBUTION

• The Gaussian or normal distribution is the most common type of probability distribution, and we make extensive use of it

$$\mathbf{X} \sim \mathbf{N}(\mu, \sigma)$$





THE NORMAL DISTRIBUTION

• The Gaussian or normal distribution is the most common type of probability distribution, and we make extensive use of it

$$X \sim N(\mu, \sigma)$$

- Continuous, symmetric, unimodal, with mean μ and standard deviation σ





THE NORMAL PDF

• The pdf of $X \sim N(\mu, \sigma)$ is

$$P(X = k) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi\sigma^2}} e^{-\frac{1}{2}\left(\frac{(k-\mu)}{\sigma}\right)^2}$$

```
# Find probability that a student earns at least an 80 if
#the average grade is a 75 and standard deviation is 10
#lower.tail is TRUE if calculating area to LEFT of 80,
#FALSE if to the RIGHT
pnorm(80, mean=72, sd=10, lower.tail=FALSE)
```



THE NORMAL PDF

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 \cdot Do not try and learn this, we have software and (previously tables) to calculate pdfs and cdfs

```
# Find probability that a student earns at least an 80 if
#the average grade is a 75 and standard deviation is 10
#lower.tail is TRUE if calculating area to LEFT of 80,
#FALSE if to the RIGHT
pnorm(80, mean=72, sd=10, lower.tail=FALSE)
```

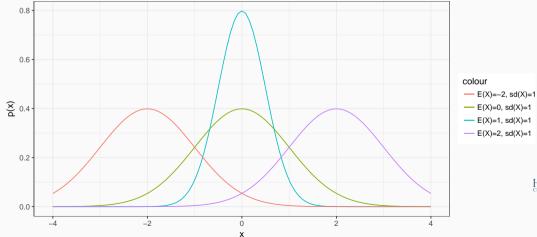


[1] 0.2118554

THE EFFECTS OF PARAMETER CHANGES I

 \cdot The pdf moves left/right based on μ

pdf mu changes-1.bb pdf mu changes-1.bb

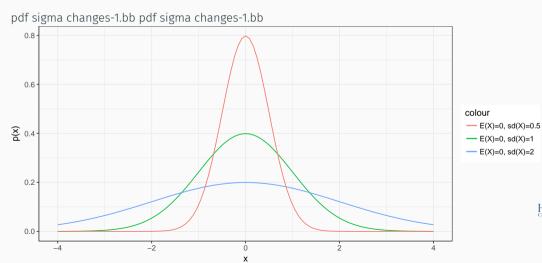




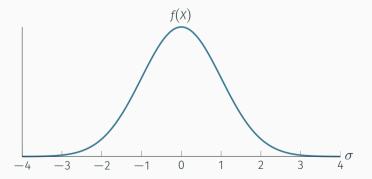
-E(X)=0, sd(X)=1E(X)=1, sd(X)=1

THE EFFECTS OF PARAMETER CHANGES II

- The pdf gets fatter/skinnier based on σ



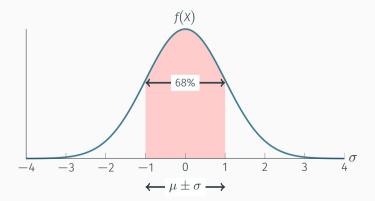
• The 68-95-99.7% (empirical) rule: for a normal distribution:





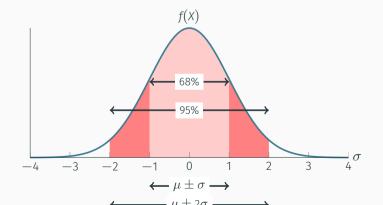
• The 68-95-99.7% (empirical) rule: for a normal distribution:

•
$$P(\mu - 1\sigma \le X \le \mu + 1\sigma) \approx 68\%$$



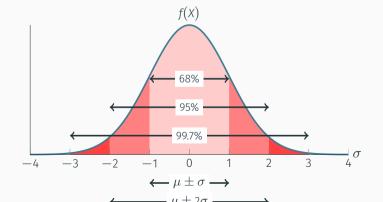


- The 68-95-99.7% (empirical) rule: for a normal distribution:
 - $P(\mu 1\sigma \le X \le \mu + 1\sigma) \approx 68\%$
 - $\cdot \ \textit{P}(\mu 2\sigma \leq \textit{X} \leq \mu + 2\sigma) \approx 95\%$





- The 68-95-99.7% (empirical) rule: for a normal distribution:
 - $P(\mu 1\sigma \le X \le \mu + 1\sigma) \approx 68\%$
 - $P(\mu 2\sigma \le X \le \mu + 2\sigma) \approx 95\%$
 - $P(\mu 3\sigma \le X \le \mu + 3\sigma) \approx 99.7\%$





THE STANDARD NORMAL DISTRIBUTION

• We standardize a variable by calculating its Z-score and converting to the standard normal distribution

$$Z = \frac{x - \mu}{\sigma}$$



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· Z is the number of standard deviations a value is above/below of its mean



THE STANDARD NORMAL DISTRIBUTION

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$$Z = \frac{x - \mu}{\sigma}$$

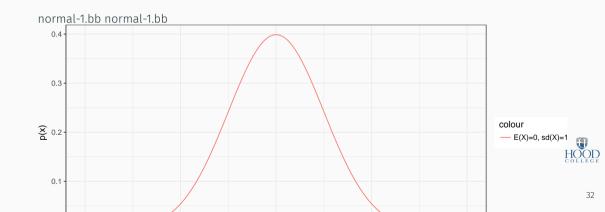
- · Z is the number of standard deviations a value is above/below of its mean
- · Can compare distributions of variables with very different units!



THE STANDARD NORMAL DISTRIBUTION II

• The standard normal distribution has mean 0 and standard deviation 1

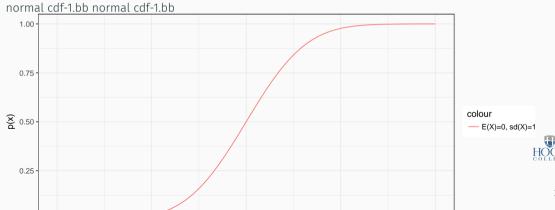
$$Z \sim N(0,1)$$



THE STANDARD NORMAL CDF

Standard normal cdf:

$$\Phi(k) = P(Z \le k)$$



STANDARDIZING VARIABLES: EXAMPLE

Example

On August 8, 2011, the Dow dropped 634.8 points, sending shock waves through the financial community. Assume that during mid-2011 to mid-2012 the daily change for the Dow is normally distributed, with the mean daily change of 1.87 points and a standard deviation of 155.28 points. What is the *Z*-score?



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• Convert to *Z*-score:

$$Z = \frac{X - \mu}{\sigma}$$



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• Convert to *Z*-score:

$$Z = \frac{X - \mu}{\sigma} = \frac{634.8 - 1.87}{155.28}$$



Example

On August 8, 2011, the Dow dropped 634.8 points, sending shock waves through the financial community. Assume that during mid-2011 to mid-2012 the daily change for the Dow is normally distributed, with the mean daily change of 1.87 points and a standard deviation of 155.28 points. What is the *Z*-score?

• Convert to *Z*-score:

$$Z = \frac{X - \mu}{\sigma} = \frac{634.8 - 1.87}{155.28} = -4.1$$

• This is 4.1 standard deviations (σ) beneath the mean.



STANDARDIZING VARIABLES: EXAMPLE II

Example

In the last quarter of 2015, a group of 64 mutual funds had a mean return of 2.4% with a standard deviation of 5.6%. These returns can be approximated by a normal distribution.



STANDARDIZING VARIABLES: EXAMPLE II

Example

In the last quarter of 2015, a group of 64 mutual funds had a mean return of 2.4% with a standard deviation of 5.6%. These returns can be approximated by a normal distribution.

• What percent of the funds would you expect to be earning between -3.2% and 8.0% returns?



STANDARDIZING VARIABLES: EXAMPLE III

• Convert to standard normal to find Z-scores for 8 and -3.2.



STANDARDIZING VARIABLES: EXAMPLE III

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$$P(-3.2 < X < 8)$$



STANDARDIZING VARIABLES: EXAMPLE III

• Convert to standard normal to find Z-scores for 8 and -3.2.

$$P(-3.2 < X < 8)$$

$$P(\frac{-3.2 - 2.4}{5.6} < \frac{X - 2.4}{5.6} < \frac{8 - 2.4}{5.6})$$



• Convert to standard normal to find Z-scores for 8 and -3.2.

$$P(-3.2 < X < 8)$$

$$P(\frac{-3.2 - 2.4}{5.6} < \frac{X - 2.4}{5.6} < \frac{8 - 2.4}{5.6})$$

P(-1 < Z < 1)



• Convert to standard normal to find Z-scores for 8 and -3.2.

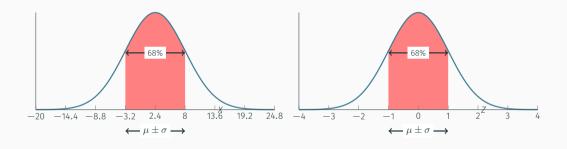
$$P(-3.2 < X < 8)$$

$$P(\frac{-3.2-2.4}{5.6} < \frac{X-2.4}{5.6} < \frac{8-2.4}{5.6})$$

$$P(-1 < Z < 1)$$

$$\cdot P(X \pm 1\sigma) = 0.68$$







Example

In the last quarter of 2015, a group of 64 mutual funds had a mean return of 2.4% with a standard deviation of 5.6%. These returns can be approximated by a normal distribution.

• What percent of the funds would you expect to be earning between -3.2% and 8.0% returns?



Example

In the last quarter of 2015, a group of 64 mutual funds had a mean return of 2.4% with a standard deviation of 5.6%. These returns can be approximated by a normal distribution.

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Example

In the last quarter of 2015, a group of 64 mutual funds had a mean return of 2.4% with a standard deviation of 5.6%. These returns can be approximated by a normal distribution.

- · What percent of the funds would you expect to be earning between -3.2% and 8.0% returns?
- · What percent of the funds would you expect to be earning 2.4% or less?



Example

In the last quarter of 2015, a group of 64 mutual funds had a mean return of 2.4% with a standard deviation of 5.6%. These returns can be approximated by a normal distribution.

- · What percent of the funds would you expect to be earning between -3.2% and 8.0% returns?
- · What percent of the funds would you expect to be earning 2.4% or less?
- · What percent of the funds would you expect to be earning between -8.8% and 13.6%?



Example

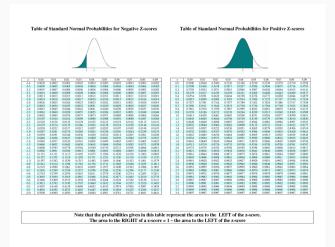
In the last quarter of 2015, a group of 64 mutual funds had a mean return of 2.4% with a standard deviation of 5.6%. These returns can be approximated by a normal distribution.

- · What percent of the funds would you expect to be earning between -3.2% and 8.0% returns?
- · What percent of the funds would you expect to be earning 2.4% or less?
- What percent of the funds would you expect to be earning between -8.8% and 13.6%?
- What percent of the funds would you expect to be earning returns greater than 13.6%?



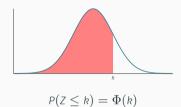
FINDING Z-Score Probabilities

• How do we actually find the probabilities for Z—scores?

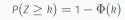


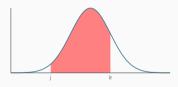


FINDING Z-Score Probabilities II









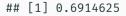
$$P(j \ge Z \ge k) = \Phi(k) - \Phi(j)$$



• Let the distribution of grades be normal, with mean 75 and standard deviation 10.

```
pnorm(80, mean=75, sd=10, lower.tail=FALSE)
## [1] 0.3085375
```

```
pnorm(80, mean=75, sd=10, lower.tail=TRUE)
```





- · Let the distribution of grades be normal, with mean 75 and standard deviation 10.
- Note: lower.tail=TRUE if calculating area to LEFT of value k, =FALSE if to the RIGHT

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```

```
## [1] 0.3085375
```

```
pnorm(80, mean=75, sd=10, lower.tail=TRUE)
```

```
## [1] 0.6914625
```



- · Let the distribution of grades be normal, with mean 75 and standard deviation 10.
- Note: lower.tail=TRUE if calculating area to LEFT of value k, =FALSE if to the RIGHT
- · Probability a student gets at least an 80:

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• Probability a student gets at most an 80:

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```

```
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```



• Probability a student gets between a 65 and 85:

```
## [1] 0.6826895
```

