

Random Variable Reference

Discrete Random Variables

Bernoulli Random Variable

Notation: $X \sim \text{Bern}(p)$

Description: A boolean variable that is 1 with probability p

Parameters: p , the probability that $X = 1$.

Support: x is either 0 or 1

PMF equation:
$$P(X = x) = \begin{cases} p & \text{if } x = 1 \\ 1 - p & \text{if } x = 0 \end{cases}$$

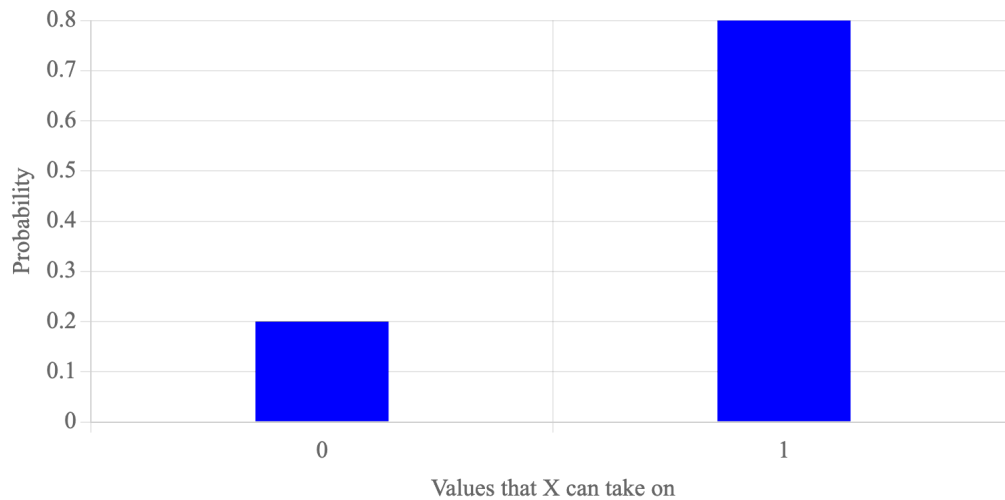
PMF (smooth): $P(X = x) = p^x(1 - p)^{1-x}$

Expectation: $E[X] = p$

Variance: $\text{Var}(X) = p(1 - p)$

PMF graph:

Parameter p :



Binomial Random Variable

Notation: $X \sim \text{Bin}(n, p)$

Description: Number of "successes" in n identical, independent experiments each with probability of success p .

Parameters: $n \in \{0, 1, \dots\}$, the number of experiments.

$p \in [0, 1]$, the probability that a single experiment gives a "success".

Support: $x \in \{0, 1, \dots, n\}$

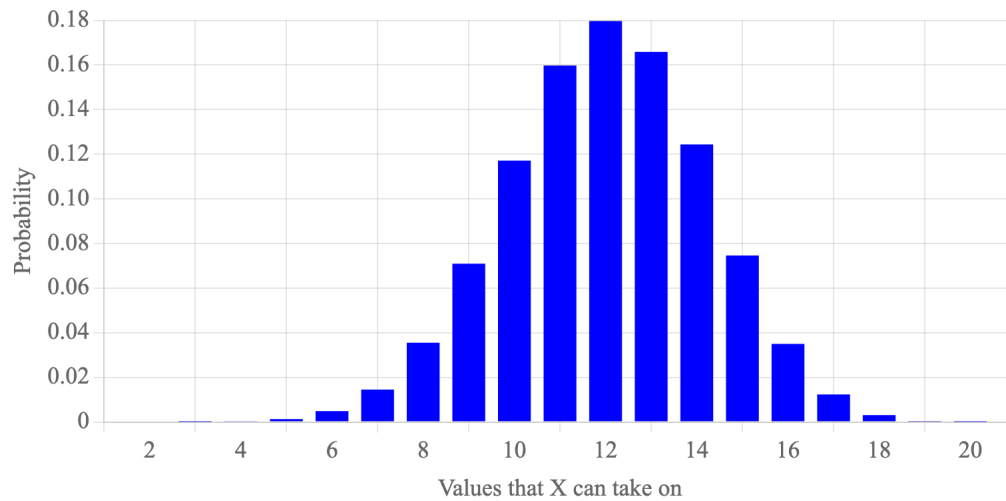
PMF equation: $P(X = x) = \binom{n}{x} p^x (1 - p)^{n-x}$

Expectation: $E[X] = n \cdot p$

Variance: $\text{Var}(X) = n \cdot p \cdot (1 - p)$

PMF graph:

Parameter n : Parameter p :



Poisson Random Variable

Notation: $X \sim \text{Poi}(\lambda)$

Description: Number of events in a fixed time frame if (a) the events occur with a constant mean rate and (b) they occur independently of time since last event.

Parameters: $\lambda \in \{0, 1, \dots\}$, the constant average rate.

Support: $x \in \{0, 1, \dots\}$

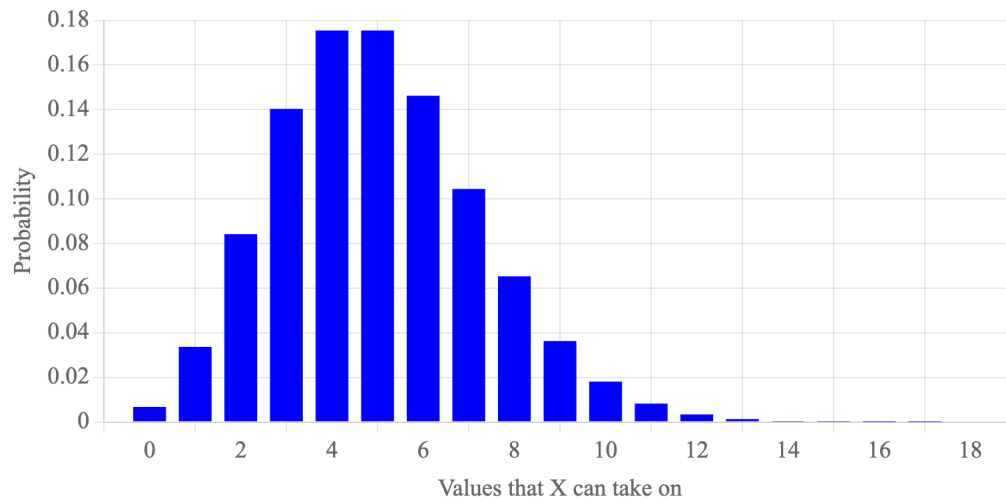
PMF equation: $P(X = x) = \frac{\lambda^x e^{-\lambda}}{x!}$

Expectation: $E[X] = \lambda$

Variance: $\text{Var}(X) = \lambda$

PMF graph:

Parameter λ :



Geometric Random Variable

Notation: $X \sim \text{Geo}(p)$

Description: Number of experiments until a success. Assumes independent experiments each with probability of success p .

Parameters: $p \in [0, 1]$, the probability that a single experiment gives a "success".

Support: $x \in \{1, \dots, \infty\}$

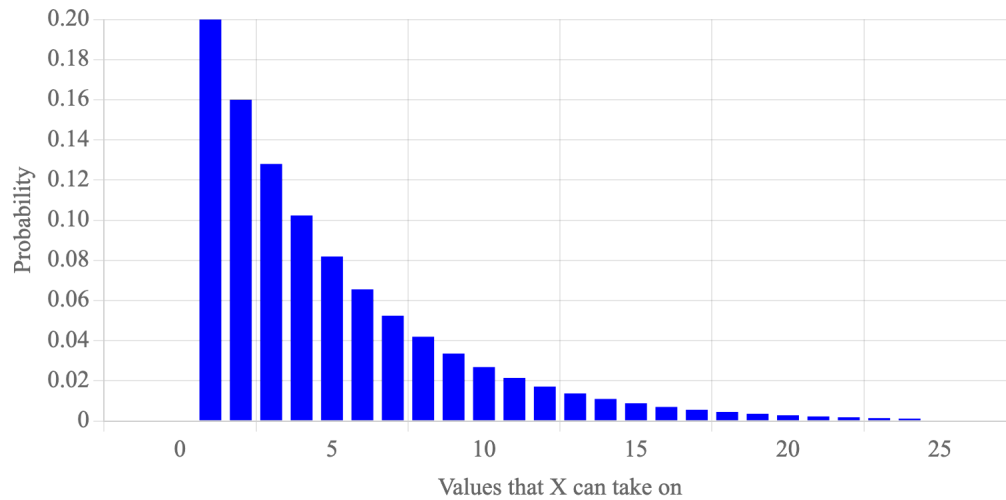
PMF equation: $P(X = x) = (1 - p)^{x-1}p$

Expectation: $E[X] = \frac{1}{p}$

Variance: $\text{Var}(X) = \frac{1-p}{p^2}$

PMF graph:

Parameter p :



Negative Binomial Random Variable

Notation: $X \sim \text{NegBin}(r, p)$

Description: Number of experiments until r successes. Assumes each experiment is independent with probability of success p .

Parameters: $r > 0$, the number of success we are waiting for.

$p \in [0, 1]$, the probability that a single experiment gives a "success".

Support: $x \in \{r, \dots, \infty\}$

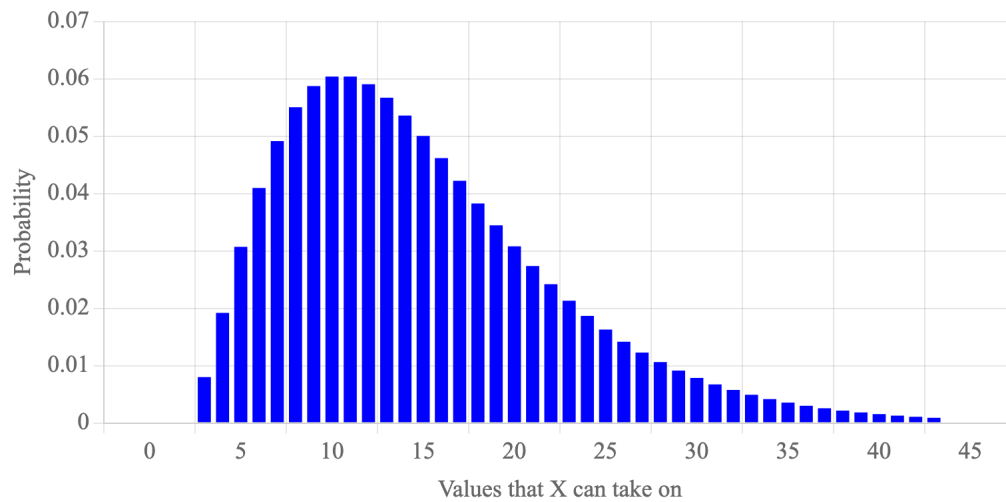
PMF equation: $P(X = x) = \binom{x-1}{r-1} p^r (1-p)^{x-r}$

Expectation: $E[X] = \frac{r}{p}$

Variance: $\text{Var}(X) = \frac{r(1-p)}{p^2}$

PMF graph:

Parameter r : Parameter p :



Continuous Random Variables

Uniform Random Variable

Notation: $X \sim \text{Uni}(\alpha, \beta)$

Description: A continuous random variable that takes on values, with equal likelihood, between α and β

Parameters: $\alpha \in \mathbb{R}$, the minimum value of the variable.
 $\beta \in \mathbb{R}$, $\beta > \alpha$, the maximum value of the variable.

Support: $x \in [\alpha, \beta]$

PDF equation: $f(x) = \begin{cases} \frac{1}{\beta - \alpha} & \text{for } x \in [\alpha, \beta] \\ 0 & \text{else} \end{cases}$

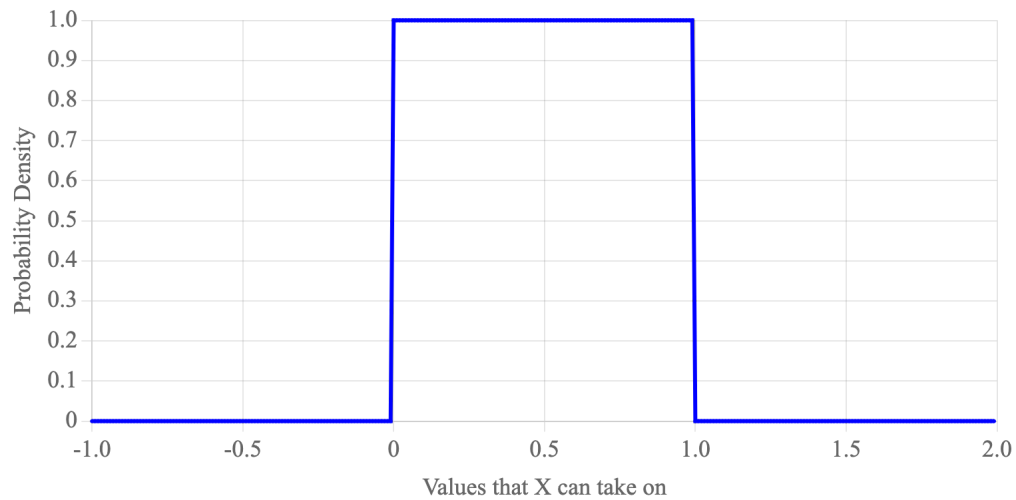
CDF equation: $F(x) = \begin{cases} \frac{x - \alpha}{\beta - \alpha} & \text{for } x \in [\alpha, \beta] \\ 0 & \text{for } x < \alpha \\ 1 & \text{for } x > \beta \end{cases}$

Expectation: $E[X] = \frac{1}{2}(\alpha + \beta)$

Variance: $\text{Var}(X) = \frac{1}{12}(\beta - \alpha)^2$

PDF graph:

Parameter α : Parameter β :



Exponential Random Variable

Notation: $X \sim \text{Exp}(\lambda)$

Description: Time until next events if (a) the events occur with a constant mean rate and (b) they occur independently of time since last event.

Parameters: $\lambda \in \{0, 1, \dots\}$, the constant average rate.

Support: $x \in \mathbb{R}^+$

PDF equation: $f(x) = \lambda e^{-\lambda x}$

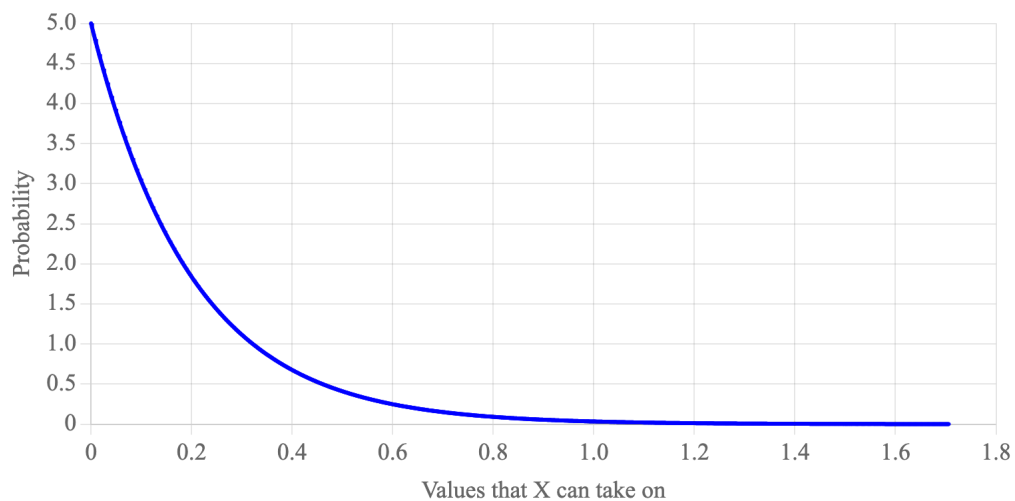
CDF equation: $F(x) = 1 - e^{-\lambda x}$

Expectation: $E[X] = 1/\lambda$

Variance: $\text{Var}(X) = 1/\lambda^2$

PDF graph:

Parameter λ :



Normal (aka Gaussian) Random Variable

Notation: $X \sim N(\mu, \sigma^2)$

Description: A common, naturally occurring distribution.

Parameters: $\mu \in \mathbb{R}$, the mean.
 $\sigma^2 \in \mathbb{R}$, the variance.

Support: $x \in \mathbb{R}$

PDF equation: $f(x) = \frac{1}{\sigma\sqrt{2\pi}} e^{-\frac{1}{2}\left(\frac{x-\mu}{\sigma}\right)^2}$

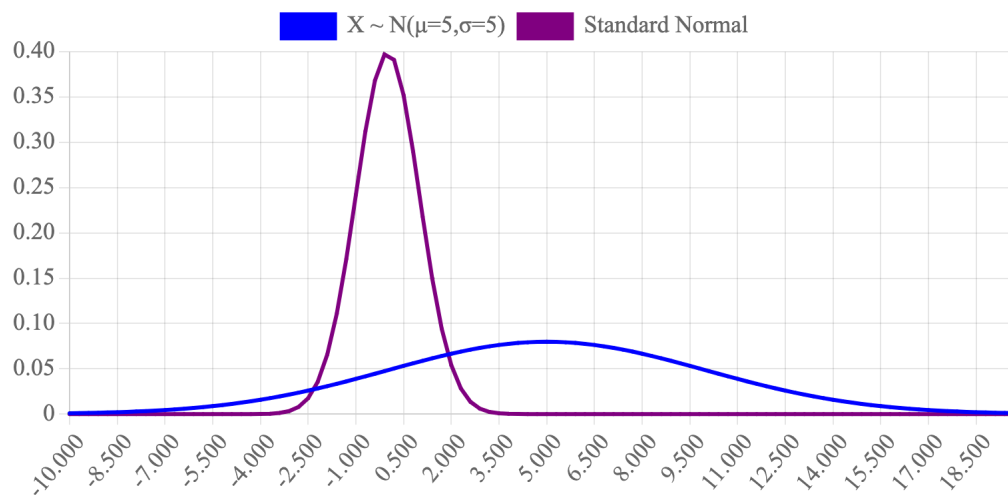
CDF equation: $F(x) = \Phi\left(\frac{x-\mu}{\sigma}\right)$ Where Φ is the CDF of the standard normal

Expectation: $E[X] = \mu$

Variance: $\text{Var}(X) = \sigma^2$

PDF graph:

Parameter μ : Parameter σ :



Beta Random Variable

Notation: $X \sim \text{Beta}(a, b)$

Description: A belief distribution over the value of a probability p from a Binomial distribution after observing $a - 1$ successes and $b - 1$ fails.

Parameters: $a > 0$, the number successes + 1
 $b > 0$, the number of fails + 1

Support: $x \in [0, 1]$

PDF equation: $f(x) = B \cdot x^{a-1} \cdot (1-x)^{b-1}$

CDF equation: No closed form

Expectation: $E[X] = \frac{a}{a+b}$

Variance: $\text{Var}(X) = \frac{ab}{(a+b)^2(a+b+1)}$

PDF graph:

Parameter a : Parameter b :

