

Preparation

Data Handling

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Exploring Data

Preparing Data 2

Building Models

Autumn Semester, 2025

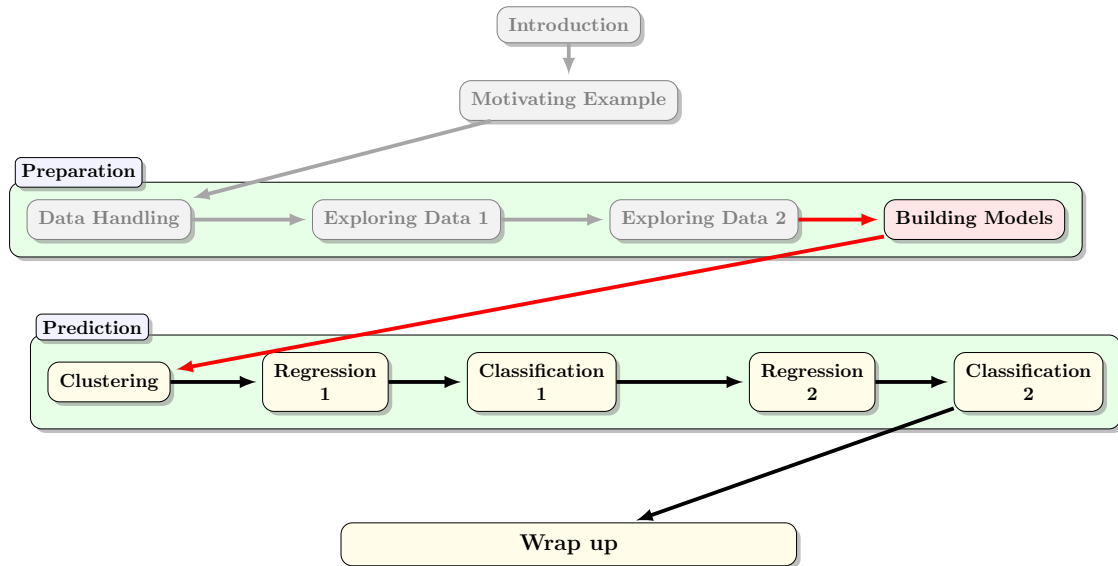
Prediction

## Outline

- Encoding categorical features, using pandas
- Scaling numeric features
- Looking ahead to feature preparation
- Overview of ML and what we have achieved

Wrap up

## Data Mining (Week 6)



# Outline

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1. Modelling Process	3
1.1. Models and error	5
2. Categorical Columns	7
3. Dataset Splits	15
4. Feature engineering	18
5. Wrap up	21
6. Resources	26

# The Pipeline Metaphor

## Model Building Pipeline



Defining the Goal



Building the Model



Interpreting the Model



Preparing the Dataset for ML



Evaluating the Model

*Source: Dataiku*

# The Pipeline Metaphor

## Model Building Pipeline

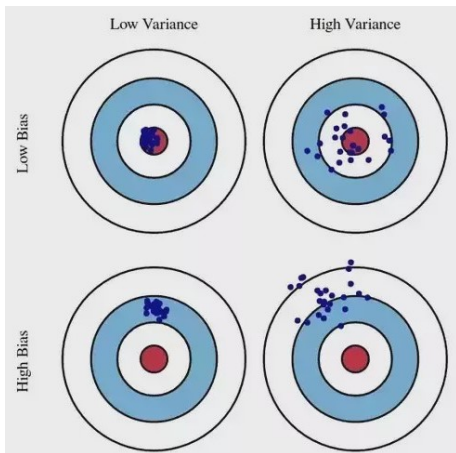


*Source: Dataiku*

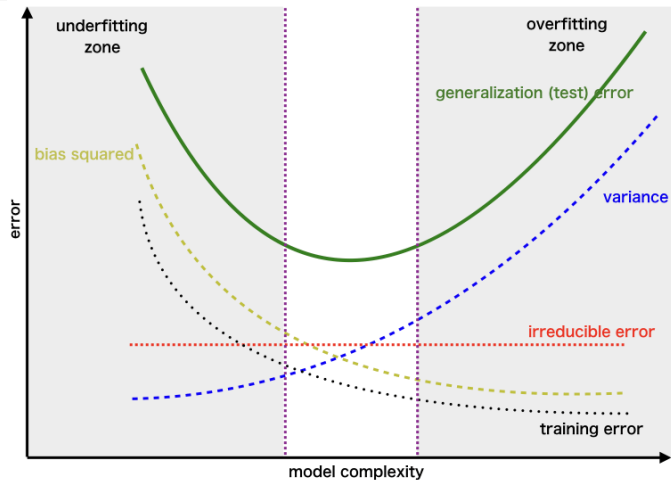
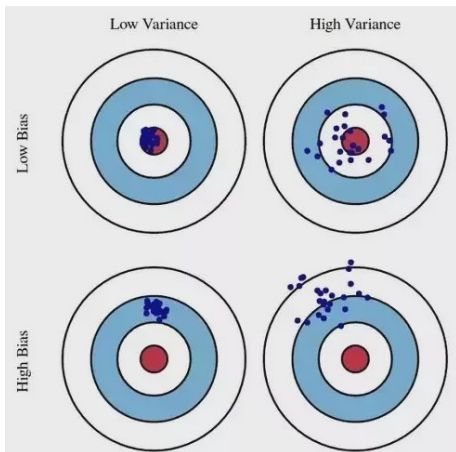
## Comments

- We saw the first two stages in previous weeks
- This week we look at the remaining stages
- Of course this pipeline is a simplification. In reality it is iterative.

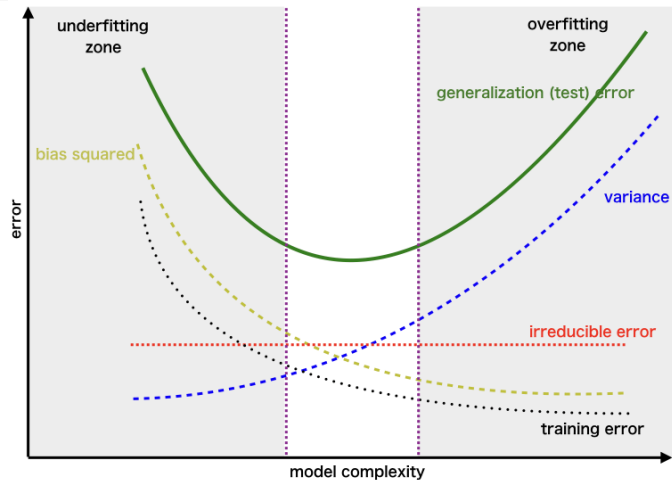
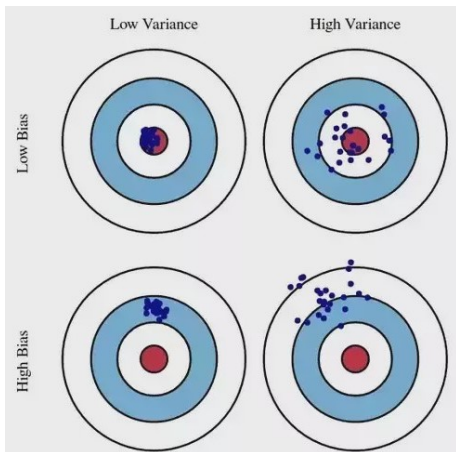
# Bias-Variance and Total Error



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# Bias-Variance and Total Error



Look for parameters  $\alpha$  that minimise the generalization error (estimated using the test set that was not used during training)



# Example Model Types

Model	Applications	Concerns
Logistic Regression	X-ray classification	Regression with transformed variable
Fully connected networks	Classification	Classical ANN: choose encoding and size
Convolutional Neural Networks	Image processing	deep learning - choose segmentation
Recurrent Neural Networks	Voice recognition	ANN with feedback - how much?
Random Forest	Fraud Detection	Ensemble method - how many?
Reinforcement Learning	Learning by trial and error	Choose goal and penalties
Generative Models	Text, Image creation	Choose parameters
K-means	Segmentation	Choose distance function and $k$
k-Nearest Neighbors	Recommendation systems	Choose distance function and $k$
Bayesian Classifiers	Spam and noise filtering	Deal with imbalances

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# Using Categorical Features in (Logistic) Regression

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Given the following fragment of a dataset, where the goal is to predict the salary of employees in a large organisation:

```
df = pd.read_csv('data/team.csv',\
                 index_col="Name")
df
```

Role Skilled Salary			
Name			
<b>Alice</b>	Designer	Yes	40000
<b>Bob</b>	Programmer	No	25000
<b>Carol</b>	Tester	No	30000

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How can this data be represented by a linear model, where all quantities must take numeric values?

## Using pandas .getdummies() on a binary-valued column

```
dfSkilledDummies = pd.get_dummies(df['Skilled'],\n    prefix='Skilled',\n    dtype=int)\ndfSkilledDummies
```

	Skilled_No	Skilled_Yes
Name		
Alice	0	1
Bob	1	0
Carol	1	0

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Name		
Alice	0	1
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➤ Note that a binary-valued column becomes 2 dummy columns

## Reducing redundancy (by 1) in 2 dummy columns

```
dfSkilledIndicators = pd.get_dummies(df['Skilled'],\
    prefix='Skilled',\
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    dtype=int)\
    .rename(columns={"Skilled_Yes": "IsSkilled"})\
dfSkilledIndicators
```

IsSkilled	
Name	
Alice	1
Bob	0
Carol	0



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```
dfSkilledIndicators = pd.get_dummies(df['Skilled'],\
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```

IsSkilled	
Name	
Alice	1
Bob	0
Carol	0

➤ A single indicator column can replace a group of 2 dummy columns

# Using pandas .getdummies() on a multi-valued column

```
dfRoleDummies = pd.get_dummies(df['Role'],\n                                prefix='Role',\n                                dtype=int)\ndfRoleDummies
```

	Role_Designer	Role_Programmer	Role_Tester
Name			
Alice	1	0	0
Bob	0	1	0
Carol	0	0	1

# Using pandas .getdummies() on a multi-valued column

```
dfRoleDummies = pd.get_dummies(df['Role'],\n                                prefix='Role',\n                                dtype=int)\ndfRoleDummies
```

	Role_Designer	Role_Programmer	Role_Tester
Name			
Alice	1	0	0
Bob	0	1	0
Carol	0	0	1

Note that an  $n$ -valued column becomes  $n$  dummy columns

# Reducing redundancy (by 1) in $n$ dummy columns

```
dfRoleIndicators = pd.get_dummies(df['Role'],\
    prefix='Role',\
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    dtype=int)\
    .rename(columns={\
        "Role_Programmer": "IsProgrammer",\
        "Role_Tester": "IsTester"})\
dfRoleIndicators
```

	IsProgrammer	IsTester
Name		
Alice	0	0
Bob	1	0
Carol	0	1

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dfRoleIndicators
```

	IsProgrammer	IsTester
Name		
Alice	0	0
Bob	1	0
Carol	0	1

$n - 1$  indicator columns can replace a group of  $n$  dummy columns

# Deriving and using dummy/indicator features

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- Build the model using the features in  $F$ .

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- ➌ How do we handle data (that includes categorical columns) that is split into training and test?

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## But what about...

- 1 Ordered categorical features - can we do better than treating them as unordered (and losing information)?
- 2 Categorical targets (whether ordered or not) - how should we handle these?
- 3 How do we handle data (that includes categorical columns) that is split into training and test?
- 4 How can we reverse the operation (i.e., return from (0,1)-valued columns to categorical columns)?

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# Training, test and valuation subsets: 3-way Holdout

## Why Split?

Hold back some data to check how the model is doing.

- **Training** data is sample used to fit the model parameters.
- **Test** data is sample used to test the final model fitted to the training data.
- **Validation** data is sample used to test each interim model while tuning it.

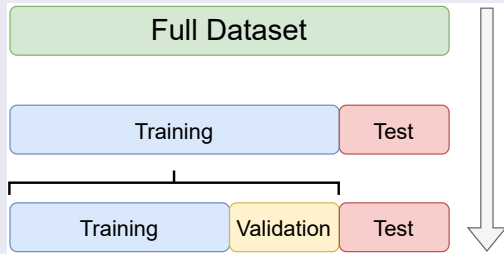
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## Typical Splits



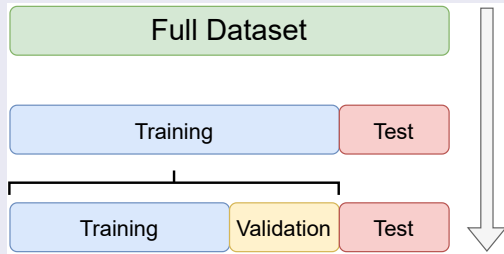
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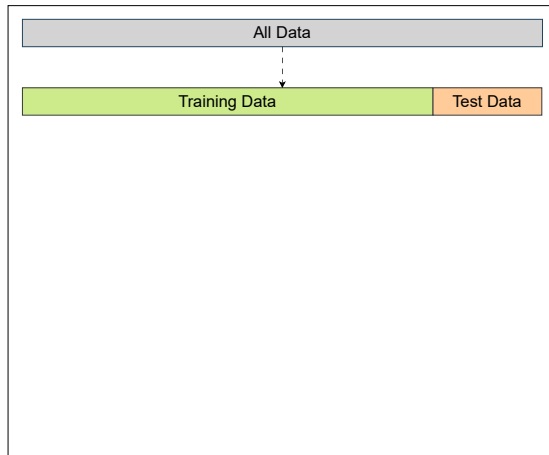
## Typical Splits



## sklearn example

```
from sklearn.model_selection import train_test_split
trainVal, test = train_test_split(df, test_size=0.2, seed=42)
train, validation = train_test_split(trainVal, test_size=0.1)
```

# K-fold cross validation - preparation

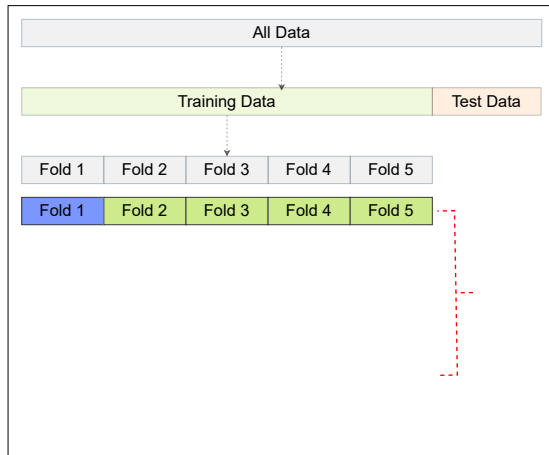


## Before Cross Validation

- Perform the train-test split
- Using the **Training Set** only
  - Perform 3-pass EDA
  - Encode the categorical features
  - Scale the numerical features
  - Other feature engineering steps...



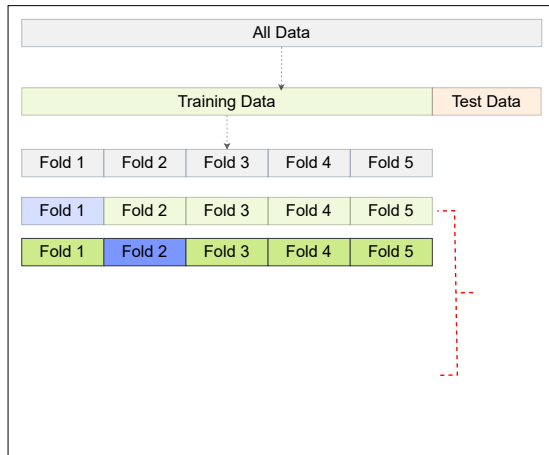
# K-fold cross validation - initialise, pass 1



## Initialise and perform first pass

- Randomly split the training set into  $K$  folds
- In the diagram,  $K = 5$  but  $K = 10$  is common
- In the first pass, set  $i = 1$
- Fold  $i = 1$  is held back for validation
- Folds  $i = 2, \dots, K$  are used to train a model, giving parameters  $\mathbf{a}^{(1)}$ .
- The model is evaluated against fold  $i = 1$
- The distance between the actual and predicted targets is calculated and recorded as  $d^{(1)}$ .

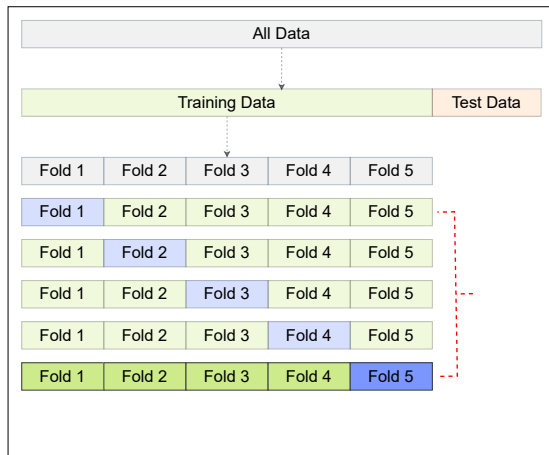
# K-fold cross validation - initialise, pass 2



## Perform second pass

- In the second pass, set  $i = 2$
- Fold  $i = 2$  is held back for validation
- Folds  $i = 1, 3, \dots, K$  are used to train a model, giving parameters  $\mathbf{a}^{(2)}$ .
- The model is evaluated against fold  $i = 2$
- The distance between the actual and predicted targets is calculated and recorded as  $d^{(2)}$ .
- The parameters  $\mathbf{a}^{(2)}$  and distance  $d^{(2)}$  are recorded.

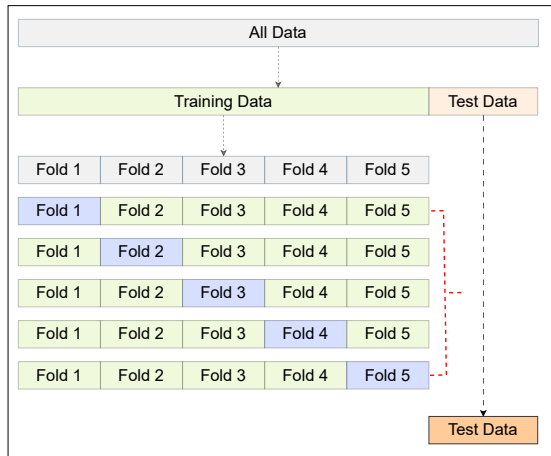
# K-fold cross validation - initialise, pass $K = 5$



## Perform last pass

- In the last pass, set  $i = K$
- Fold  $i = K$  is held back for validation
- Folds  $i = 1, \dots, K - 1$  are used to train a model, giving parameters  $\mathbf{a}^{(K)}$ .
- The model is evaluated against fold  $i = K$
- The distance between the actual and predicted targets is calculated and recorded as  $d^{(K)}$ .
- The entire training set was used to learn the “average” parameters  $\mathbf{a}$
- We also have an estimate of the distribution of the prediction error  $d$ , so can compare hyperparameters

# K-fold cross validation - using the results



## Finding and using the best model

- Typically cross validation is used to compare effects of hyperparameters
- Use the setting(s) with the lowest cross-validation error
- Given this “best” model, we can predict the test targets
- We can then compute the prediction error on the test set, as before

# K-fold cross validation

## sklearn example

```
from sklearn.model_selection import cross_val_score  
# clf is some classifier, X and y are the features and target of the training set  
scores = cross_val_score(clf, X, y, cv=5)
```

- `scores` is a  $k = 5$  element array, can be used to estimate the prediction error (or other score) while building a model
- Details of cross validation are hidden...

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# Featuring engineering 1: Scaling of numerical variables

## Scaling - what it does

- If numeric features have different scales, e.g.  $[-0.005, -0.003]$  and  $[10000, 10001]$  some terms dominate, others are “lost”
- Better: transfer the scaling from the feature to the model parameter
- A min-max scaling is often a good choice:

$$\tilde{X} = \frac{X - X_{\min}}{X_{\max} - X_{\min}}$$

- Note that  $X$  is in the range  $[X_{\min}, X_{\max}]$  but  $\tilde{X}$  is in the range  $[0, 1]$ .
- Other options include StandardScaler (subtract mean and divide by standard deviation) and a max-abs scaler (scales to  $[-1, 1]$ )

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## sklearn example

```
from sklearn.preprocessing import MinMaxScaler
# df is a dataframe with numeric features
scaler = MinMaxScaler()
dfScaled = scaler.fit(df)
```

`dfScaled` can be used instead of `df` with the advantage that the fitted parameters are more accurate.



## Feature Engineering 2: Choice of Features

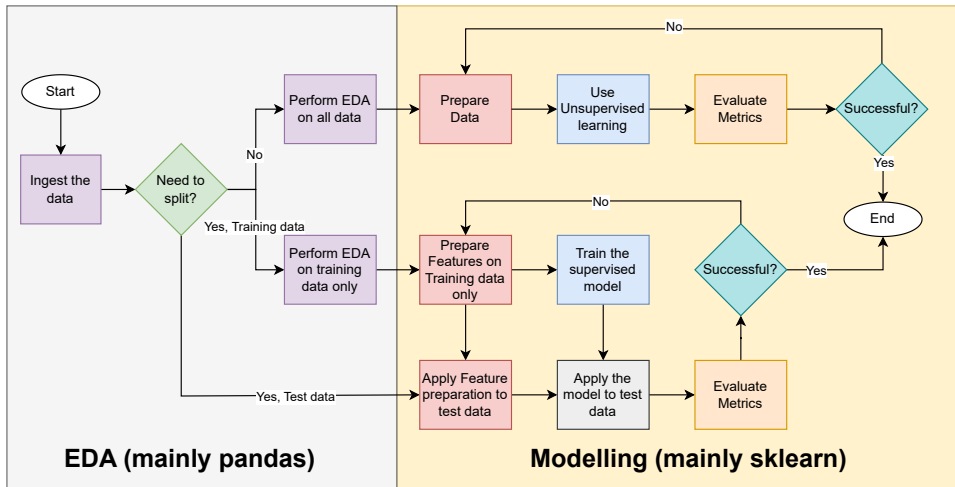
- How many to include? Use metrics to decide. Will see some when considering regression and classification.
- How do we handle different feature types? Need to encode categorical variables.
- Can we derive new numeric features? Yes,  $f' = \log(f)$  etc. is possible

# Outline

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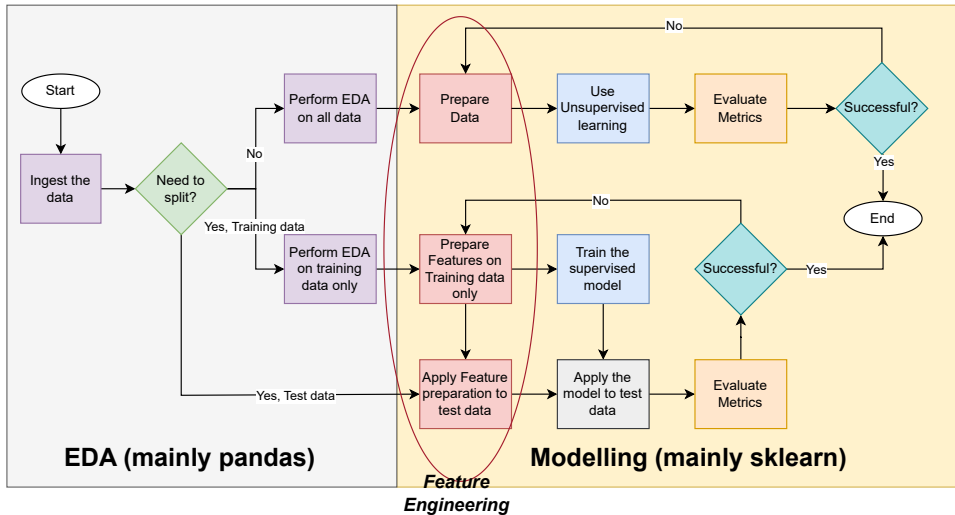
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# An overview of Machine Learning



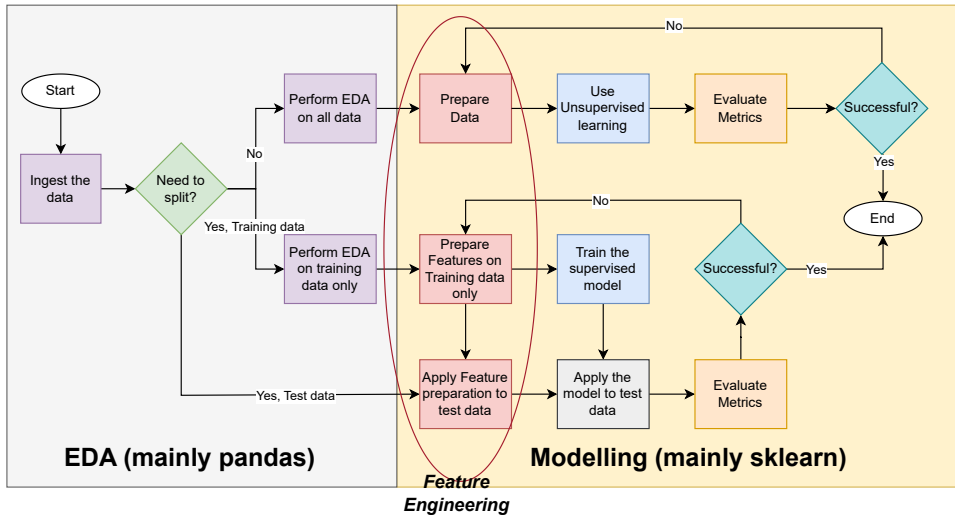
On first glance, this might seem overwhelming, but note that the boxes are colour-coded, so that related operations share the same colour.

# Where feature preparation fits...



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- Can also rescale numerical columns, or encode more exotic columns (other datatypes, computed columns, ...)

# Feature Engineering more generally

- Use of pandas `getdummies()` requires care and is not always suitable
- Scikit-learn, imported as the `sklearn` package, supports a variety of column transformations
- Categorical columns can be features or targets, ordered or unordered
- Can also rescale numerical columns, or encode more exotic columns (other datatypes, computed columns, ...)
- As seen in the schematic, if an ML procedure is unsuccessful, more feature engineering should be considered - it can help.

# Summary

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- In subsequent weeks we will put this theory into practice.

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# Resources

- **A Summary of the Basic Machine Learning Models**

[towardsdatascience.com/a-summary-of-the-basic-machine-learning-models-e0a65627ecbe](https://towardsdatascience.com/a-summary-of-the-basic-machine-learning-models-e0a65627ecbe)

- **Train-Test Split for Evaluating Machine Learning Algorithms**

[https://machinelearningmastery.com/](https://machinelearningmastery.com/train-test-split-for-evaluating-machine-learning-algorithms)

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This week I have focused on the theory rather than its (python) implementation. This is a nice article that covers the implementation side of things.

- **Cross-Validation: Estimator Evaluator**

[medium.com/swlh/cross-validation-estimator-evaluator-897d28afb4ff](https://medium.com/swlh/cross-validation-estimator-evaluator-897d28afb4ff)

Nice article that covers cross-validation in a lot more detail — we will be using many of these variants in later weeks, especially k-fold stratified.