

Lecture 1 — Basics of Probability Theory

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- What is a Set?

- A set is a collection of objects (elements) that make up the set
- We usually use upper case letters to describe a set and lower-case letters to refer to the elements
- A set can be defined using enumerations:

$$A = \{\text{Jane, Bill}, \dots\}$$

$$B = \{1, 2, 3, \dots\}$$

- A set can also be defined using a description method
- $A = \{x \mid x \text{ satisfies some property}\}$
- For example:

$$A = \{\text{Students} \mid \text{Students who earned an 'A'}\}$$

- A set can have a finite or infinite number of elements
- Useful notations:
 - * $x \in A \equiv$ element x is contained in A
 - * $x \notin A \equiv$ element x is not contained in A
 - * $C = \{\} = \emptyset$ — C is an empty or null set
 - * $D = S$ — Universal set including all elements in a given category
 - * $A \subset B$ — A is a subset of set B
 - * Simple Set: A set with a single element
 - * Set equality: $A = B$ only if $A \subset B$ and $B \subset A$
 - * $A^C \equiv$ complement of set A , which includes all elements in a given category that are not in set A

- The Inclusion-Exclusion Rule

- For two finite sets A and B , we have:

$$|A \cup B| = |A| + |B| - |A \cap B|$$

- This can be expanded to three sets (with a new set C):

$$|A \cup B \cup C| = |A| + |B| + |C| - |A \cap B| - |A \cap C| - |B \cap C| + |A \cap B \cap C|$$

- Types of Sets

- Collectively Exhaustive Sets — A collection of sets A_1, A_2, \dots, A_n are collectively exhaustive if (at least one of the events must occur):

$$A_1 \cup A_2 \cup \dots \cup A_n = S$$

- Mutually Exclusive Sets — Two sets are mutually exclusive if they have no elements in common:

$$A_i \cap A_j = \emptyset \quad i \neq j$$

- Partitions — A collection of sets A_1, A_2, \dots, A_n is a partition if they are both mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive:

$$A_1 \cup A_2 \cup \dots \cup A_n = S \quad \text{and} \quad A_i \cap A_j = \emptyset \quad i \neq j$$

- Algebraic Rules of Manipulating Sets

- Commutative: $A \cap B = B \cap A$ and $A \cup B = B \cup A$
- Associative: $A \cap (B \cap C) = (A \cap B) \cap C$
- Distributive: $A \cup (B \cap C) = (A \cup B) \cap (A \cup C)$
- De Morgan's Law: $(A \cup B)^c = A^c \cap B^c$ and $(A \cap B)^c = A^c \cup B^c$

- Applying Set Theory to Probability Theory

- The Probability Function

- * A probability measure $P[x]$ is a function that maps events in the sample space to real numbers
- * The probability function assigns a value 0 to 1 to a certain event; for example, the probability function of rolling a single, standard die would be $P[1] = P[2] = \dots = P[6] = 1/6$

- Axioms of Probability

- * For any event A , $P[A] \geq 0$
- * $P[S] = 1$
- * For any countable collection of mutually exclusive events:

$$P[A_1 \cup A_2 \cup \dots \cup A_n] = P[A_1] + P[A_2] + \dots + P[A_n]$$