#5: Hypothesis

In examining runners finish time year-to-year, I find they got increasingly faster in half-marathons from years 2016 through 2018, but slow back down a little in 2019. For example, in 2016, the top 3 finishers had times of 1:11:15, 1:11:50, and 1:13:43. In 2017, the top 3 finishers had times of 1:10:58, 1:11:25, 1:11:42. In 2018, 1:09:25, 1:09:51, and 1:10:38. Lastly, in 2019 the top three times were up a bit to 1:10:03, 1:12:15, 1:12:52. 2018 was their fastest year, 2016 being their slowest year.

As far as marathons go, runner’s times were up for one year and down for the next. They started out low in 2016, higher in 2017, back down in 2018, back up a little in 2019. Even with this pattern, 2016 was their fastest year and 2017 their slowest. The one year that both types of marathons had in common for an increase in time is 2019.

There are a number of potential factors that can contribute to something like a runner's increase in finish time. Sometimes there can be an increase in time across the board, as we are seeing with years 2019 for half-marathons and marathons. One thought is that overall morale may be a little lower due to the difficult job market and uncertain economic conditions that our country has experienced over the past five years. For example, uncertain job and economic conditions can be distracting in our jobs (if employed), families, hobbies, or any obligations. These distractions can cause us to struggle in our attempt to be at our best in anything and make it difficult to have a more positive outlook. It may be that runner's funding is lower due to losing a job or being laid off and they don't have what they need to train and prepare (venues, equipment, etc.) so that can cause their performance to be lacking. Something in particular about 2019 is that the concerns for the pandemic started to arise. Technically, we did not have our first case of COVID 19 until January of 2020, but the anxiety of the potential spread to the US was building all through 2019. These two items are definitely something that could cause people to be distracted and lose a step in their everyday activities.