

## Thinking Probabilistically

The world is probabilistic. Even nearly impossible things, like winning the lottery, have some calculable probability of occurring.



Probability gives a universal framework for analyzing the randomness in the world around us, with applications that stretch from games to sports to finance to engineering to medicine.

This lesson kicks off our introduction to probability. Through a series of guided exercises, we'll tour some of the most important ideas that we'll encounter later in the course. Our topics include

**conditional probability**, which helps to account for information we know for certain, and

**counting strategies** and **probability rules**, which are used to compute probabilities.

To end the lesson, we'll see how probability can help us determine our confidence that someone committed a crime given some evidence in the case.

This first puzzle is a classic. It's from a 1983 research study on how people think about probability.



Linda is 31 years old, single, outspoken, and very bright. She majored in philosophy. As a student, she was deeply concerned with issues of discrimination and social justice, and also participated in anti-nuclear demonstrations.

Which of the following scenarios is more probable?

- Linda is a bank teller.
- Linda is a bank teller and is active in the feminist movement.

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