A portion of the estimation process for the y-intercept is based on the exclusion of relevant variables from the regression model. When you leave relevant variables out, this can produce bias in the model. Bias exists if the [residuals](https://statisticsbyjim.com/glossary/residuals/) have an overall positive or negative mean. In other words, the model tends to make predictions that are systematically too high or too low. The constant term prevents this overall bias by forcing the [residual](https://statisticsbyjim.com/glossary/residuals/) mean to equal zero.

Imagine that you can move the regression line up or down to the point where the residual mean equals zero. For example, if the regression produces residuals with a positive [average](https://statisticsbyjim.com/glossary/mean/), just move the line up until the mean equals zero. This process is how the constant ensures that the regression model satisfies the critical assumption that the residual average equals zero. However, this process does not focus on producing a y-intercept that is meaningful for your study area. Instead, it focuses entirely on providing that mean of zero.