The Language of Models

Author: Nicholas G Reich

This material is part of the **statsTeachR** *project*

Today's topics

- The language of models
- Model formulas and coefficients

Example: predicting respiratory disease severity ("lung" dataset)

Reading: Kaplan, Chapters 6 and 7.

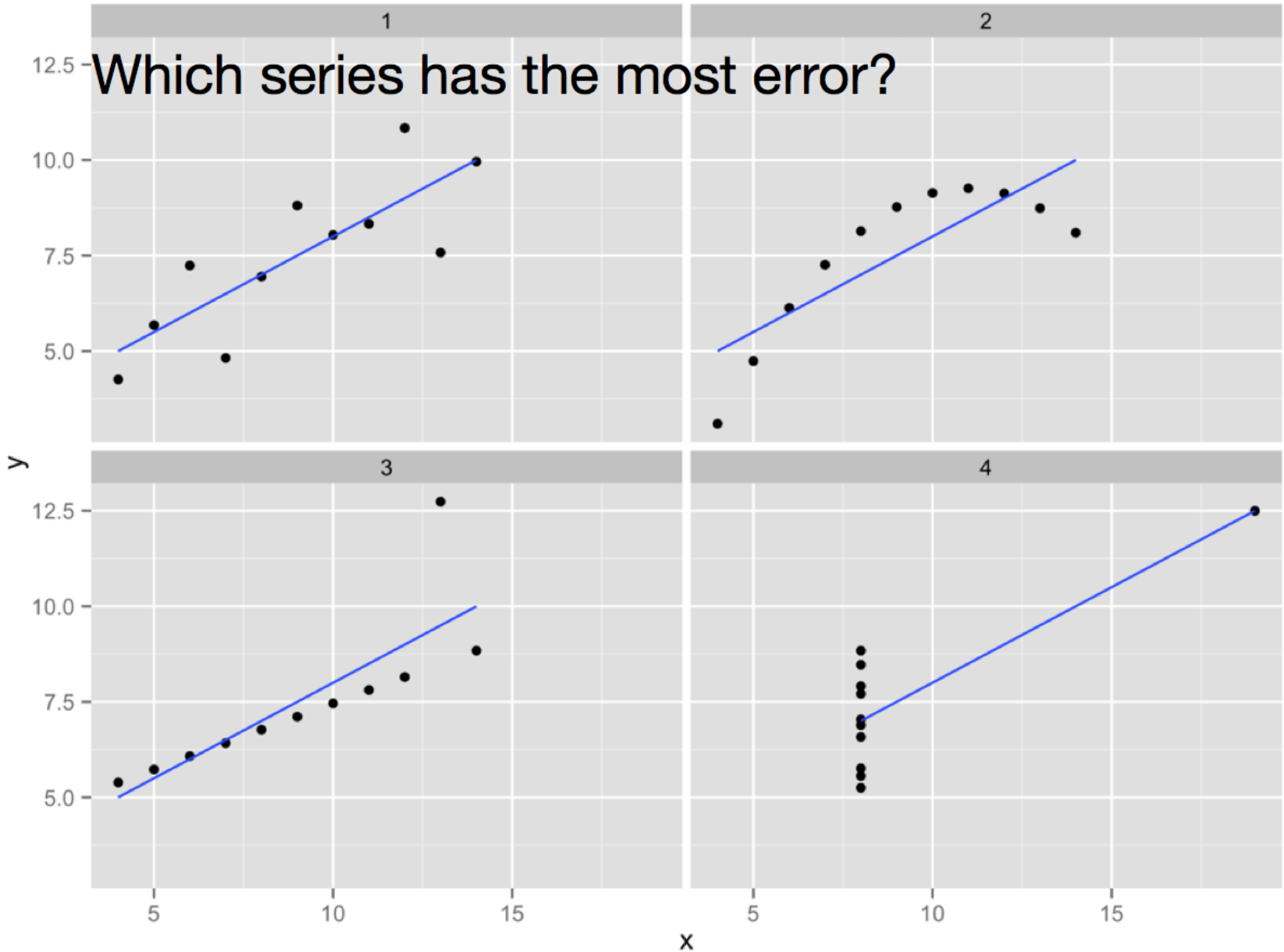


Figure acknowledgements to Hadley Wickham.

Watch the first five minutes of Hadley's UseR! 2016 talk

" ... every model has to make assumptions, and a model by its very nature cannot question those assumptions...

models can never fundamentally surprise you because they cannot question their own assumptions."

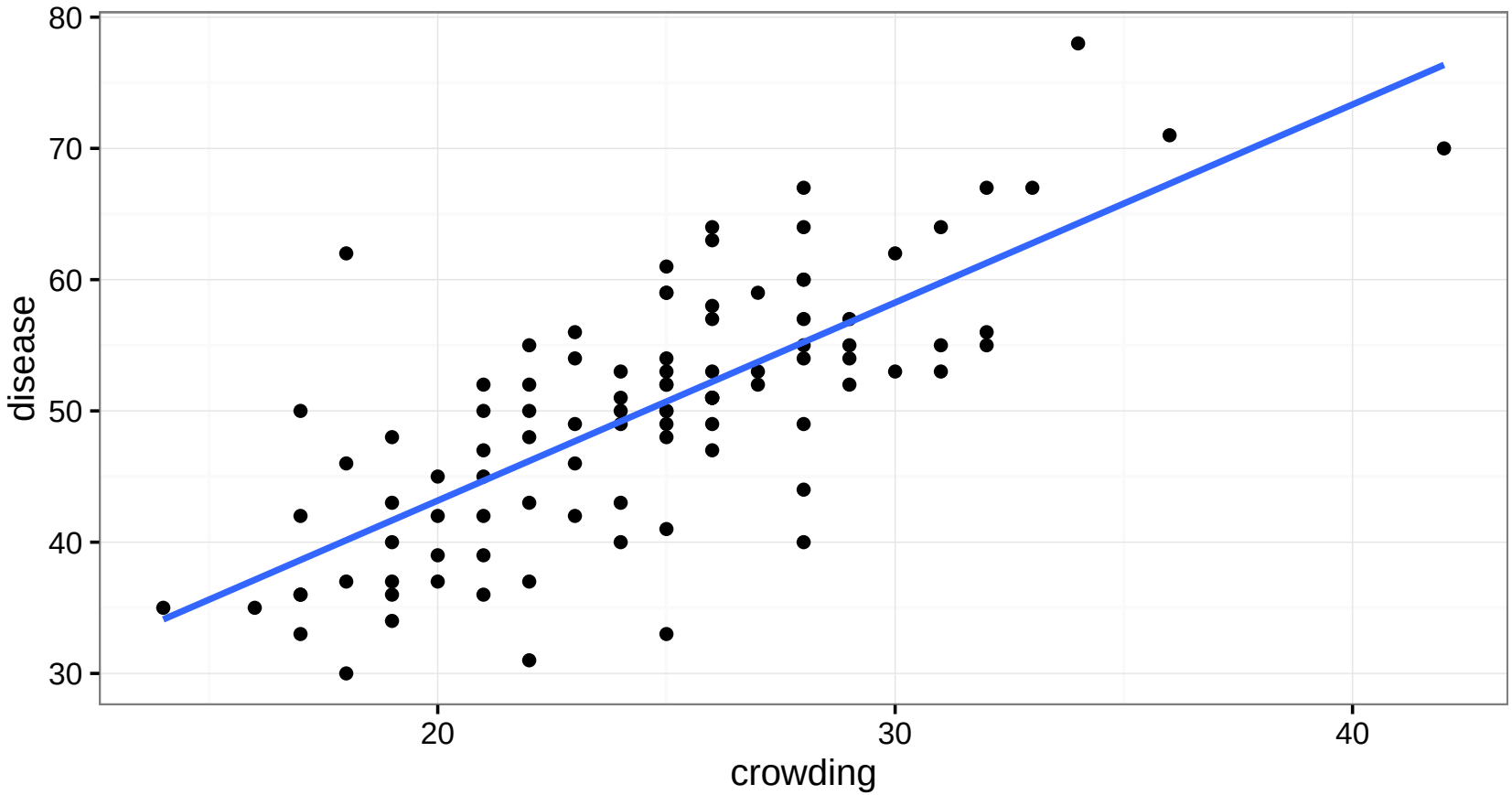
Lung Data Example

99 observations on patients who have sought treatment for the relief of respiratory disease symptoms.
The variables are:

- `disease` measure of disease severity (larger values indicates more serious condition).
- `education` highest grade completed
- `crowding` measure of crowding of living quarters (larger values indicate more crowding)
- `airqual` measure of air quality at place of residence (larger number indicates poorer quality)
- `nutrition` nutritional status (larger number indicates better nutrition)
- `smoking` smoking status (1 if smoker, 0 if non-smoker)

Lung Data Example: terms defined

```
dat <- read.table("lungc.txt", header=TRUE)
ggplot(dat, aes(crowding, disease)) + geom_point() +
    geom_smooth(method="lm", se=FALSE)
```



Things to point out: response variable? explanatory variable? model value? residual?

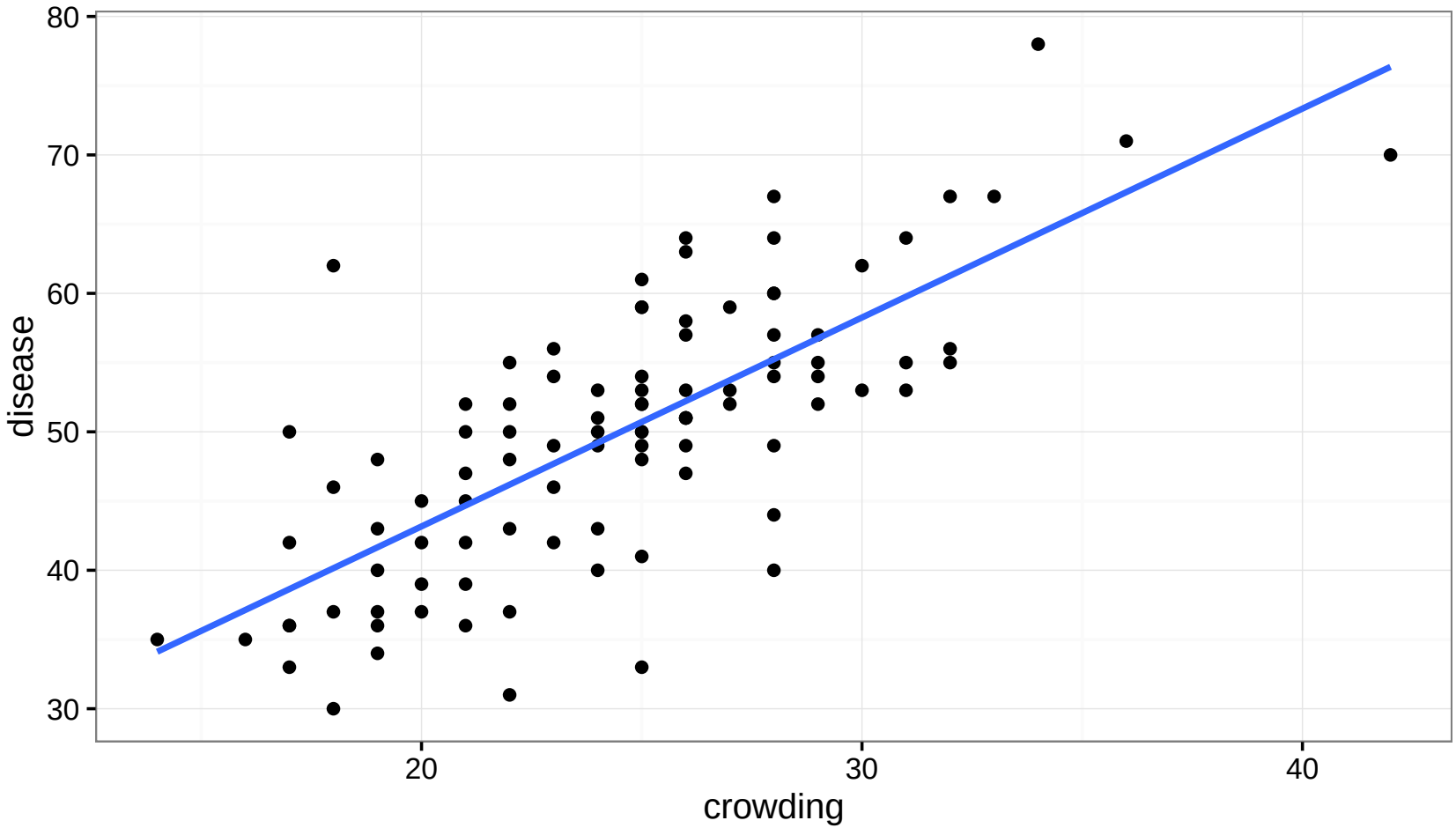
Models are functions

Definition: "a **function** is a relation between a set of inputs and a set of permissible outputs with the property that each input is related to exactly one output".[1]
[INSERT FUNCTION IMAGE]
In statistical models, inputs are explanatory variables and outputs are "typical" or "expected" values of response variables. There is always residual variation. The key challenge is judging whether the structure of a particular model is supported by evidence in the data.

[1] Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Function_(mathematics)

Lung Data Example: what is the model?

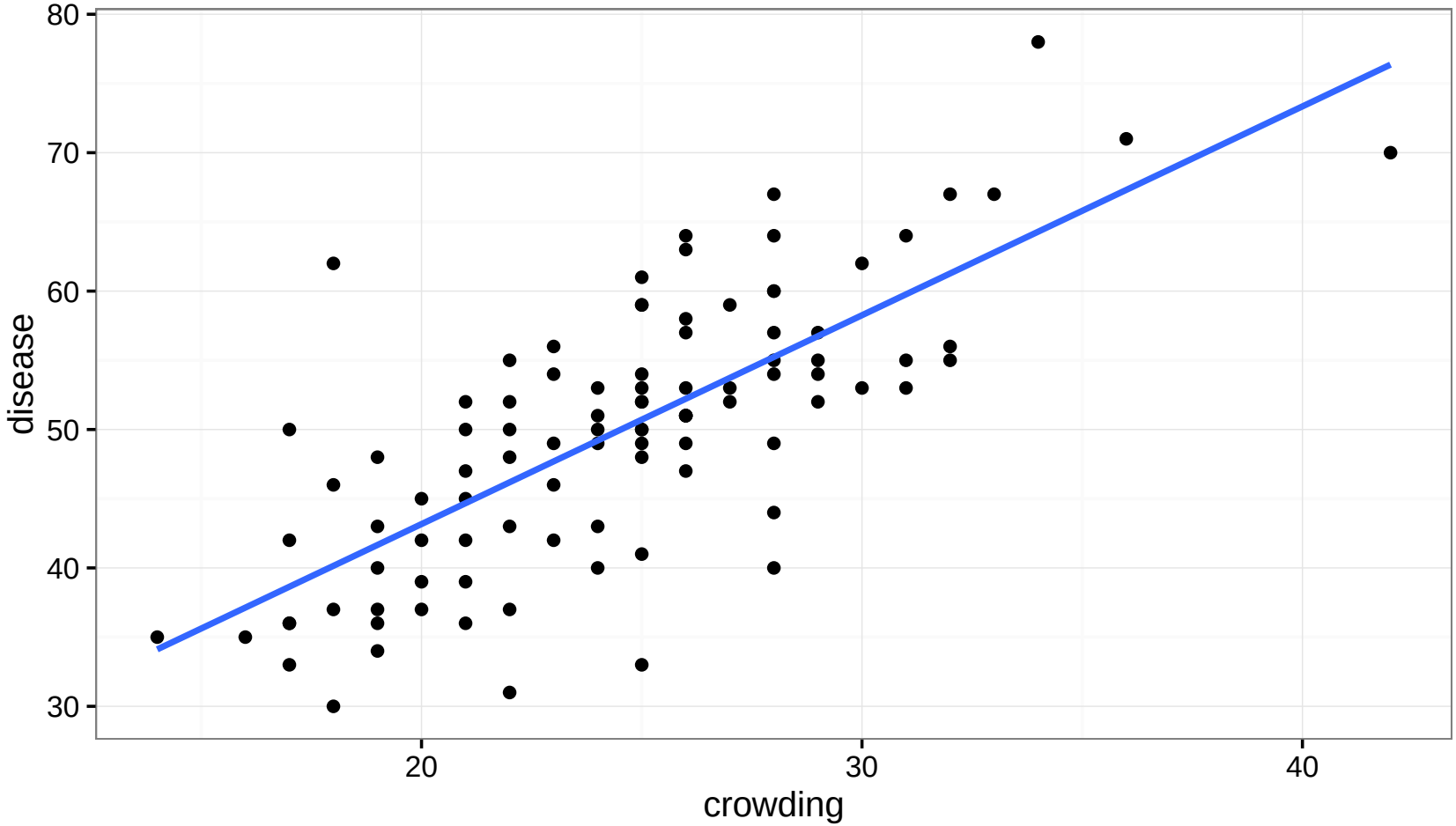
```
ggplot(dat, aes(crowding, disease)) + geom_point() +
    geom_smooth(method="lm", se=FALSE)
```



What is the approximate model function description the relationship of crowding on disease status? What is the expected

Lung Data Example: what is the model?

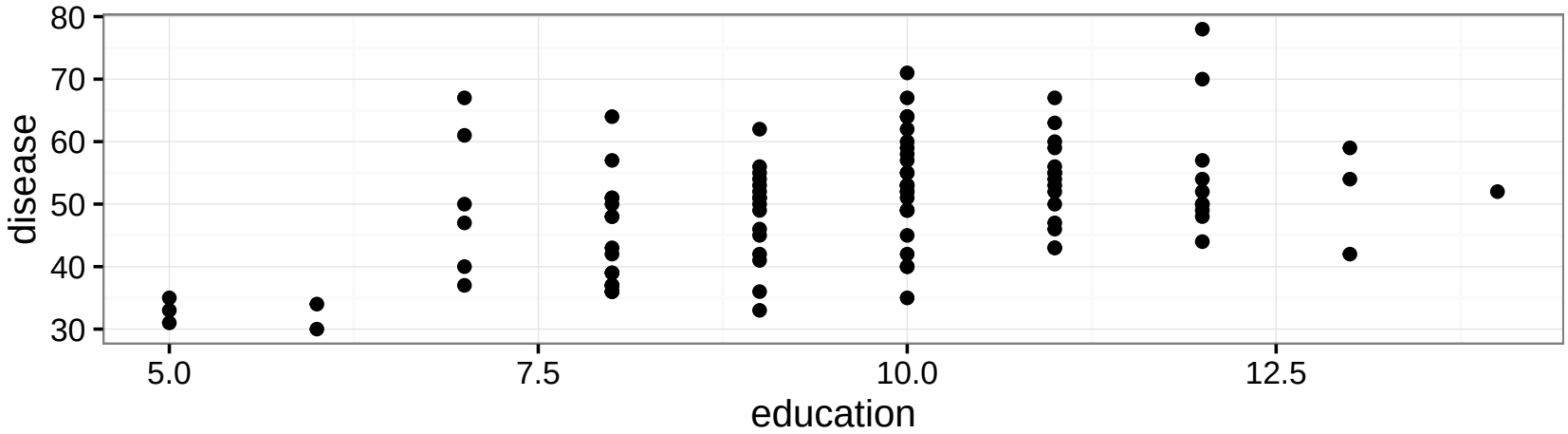
```
ggplot(dat, aes(crowding, disease)) + geom_point() +
    geom_smooth(method="lm", se=FALSE)
```



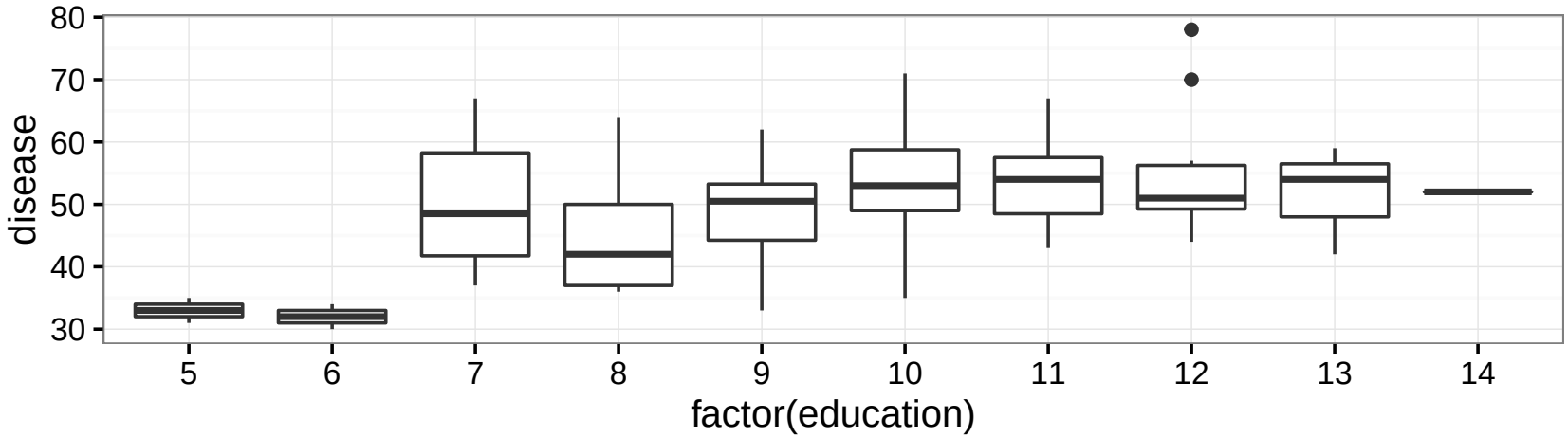
What do you like/dislike about this statement: "Based on this data, disease status worsens when crowding increases."

Which representation of education is better and why?

```
ggplot(dat, aes(education, disease)) + geom_point()
```




```
ggplot(dat, aes(factor(education), disease)) + geom_boxplot()
```

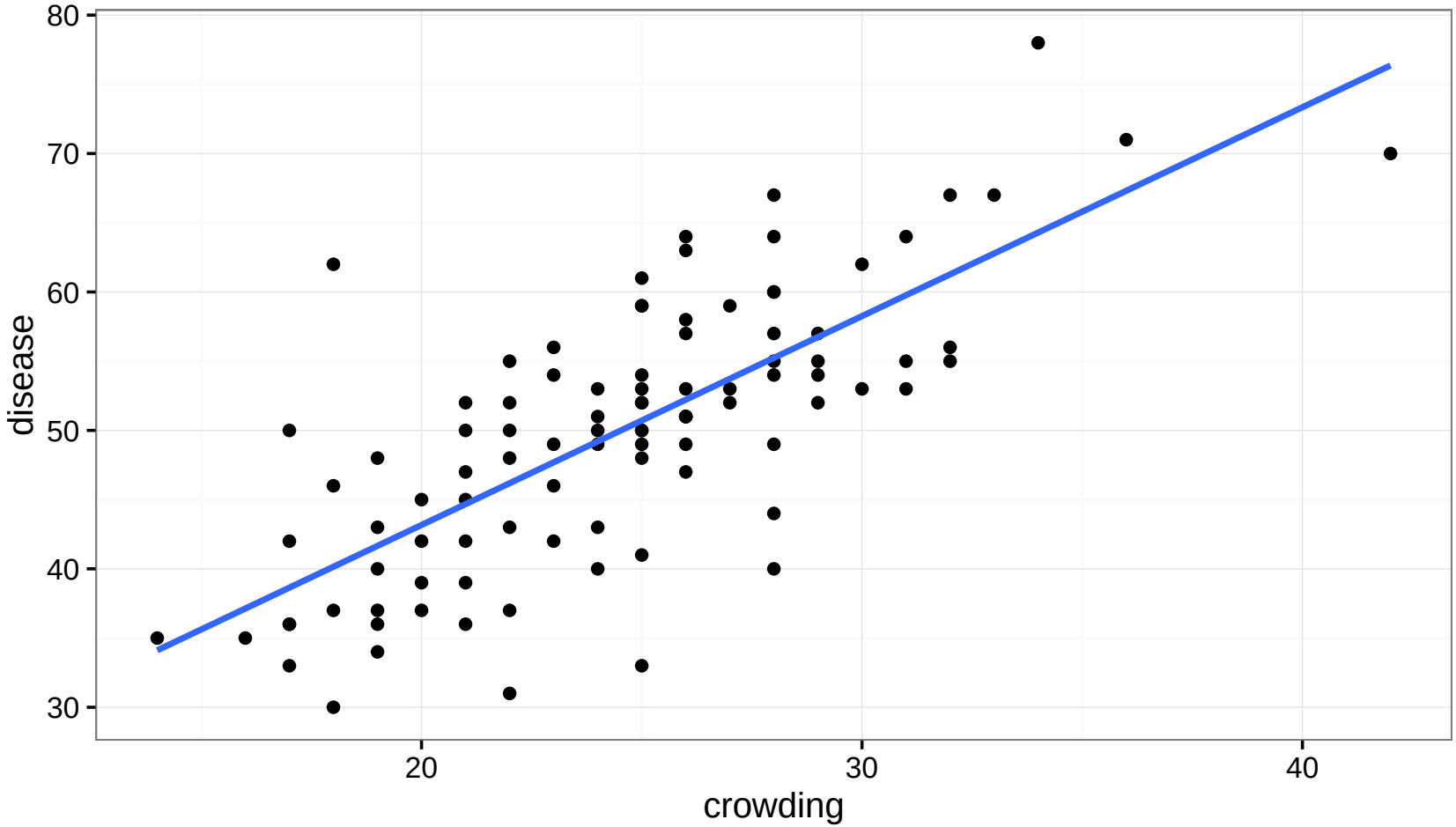


Model terms

- intercept term
- main terms
- interaction terms
- transformation terms

Lung Data Example: what is the model?

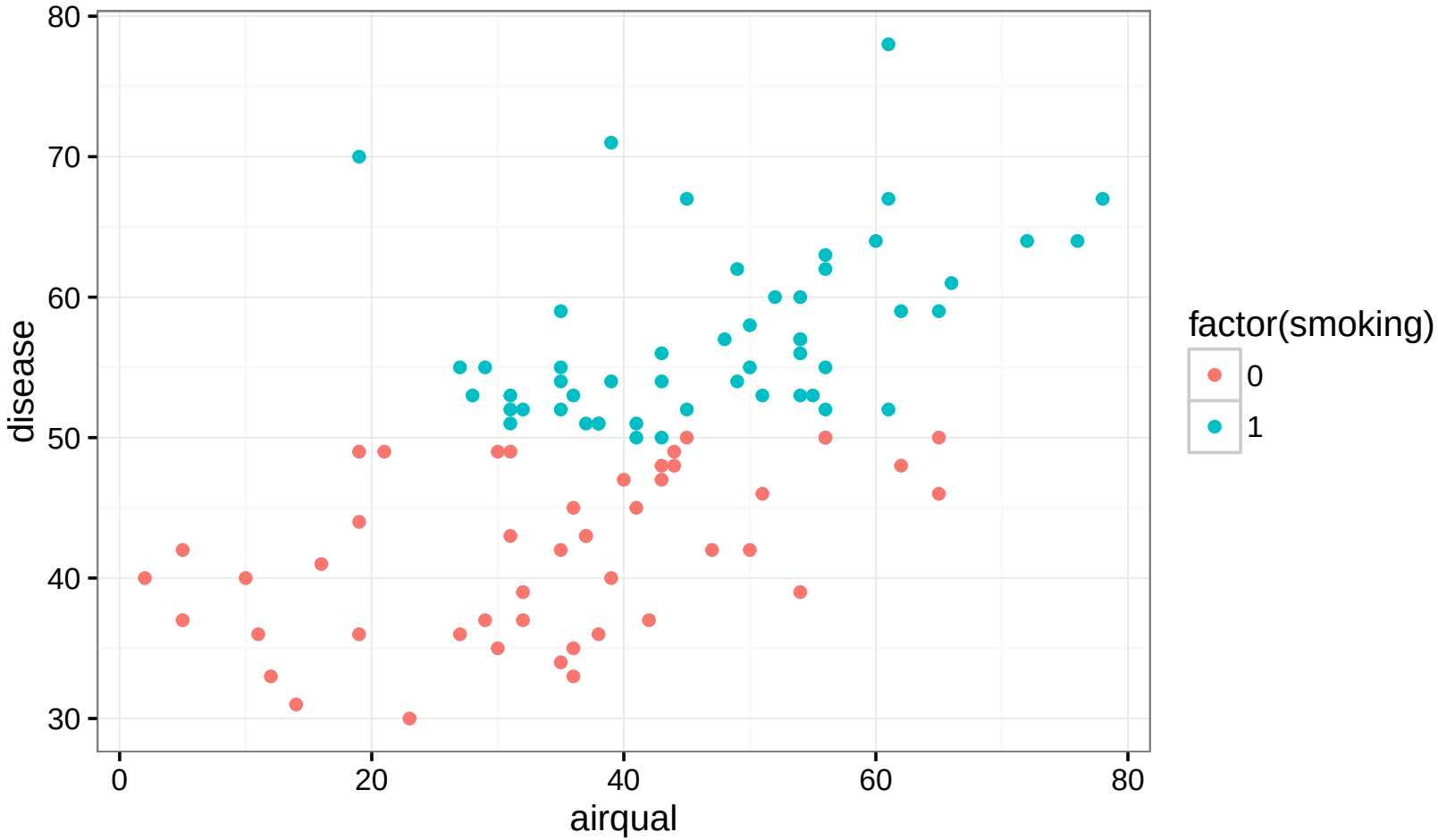
```
ggplot(dat, aes(crowding, disease)) + geom_point() +
    geom_smooth(method="lm", se=FALSE)
```



What model syntax is implied by the above figure?

Lung Data Example: what is the model?

```
ggplot(dat, aes(airqual, disease, color=factor(smoking))) +
    geom_point()
```



What is one possible model syntax implied by the above figure?

Lung Data Example

```
mlr1 <- lm(disease ~ crowding, data=dat)
kable(summary(mlr1)$coef, digits=2, format="latex")
```

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(¿—t—)
(Intercept)	12.99	3.48	3.74	0
crowding	1.51	0.14	10.83	0

```
mlr2 <- lm(disease ~ crowding + airqual, data=dat)
kable(summary(mlr2)$coef, digits=2, format="latex")
```

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(¿—t—)
(Intercept)	2.88	2.49	1.16	0.25
crowding	1.40	0.09	15.02	0.00
airqual	0.31	0.03	11.06	0.00

Why are the coefficients different?

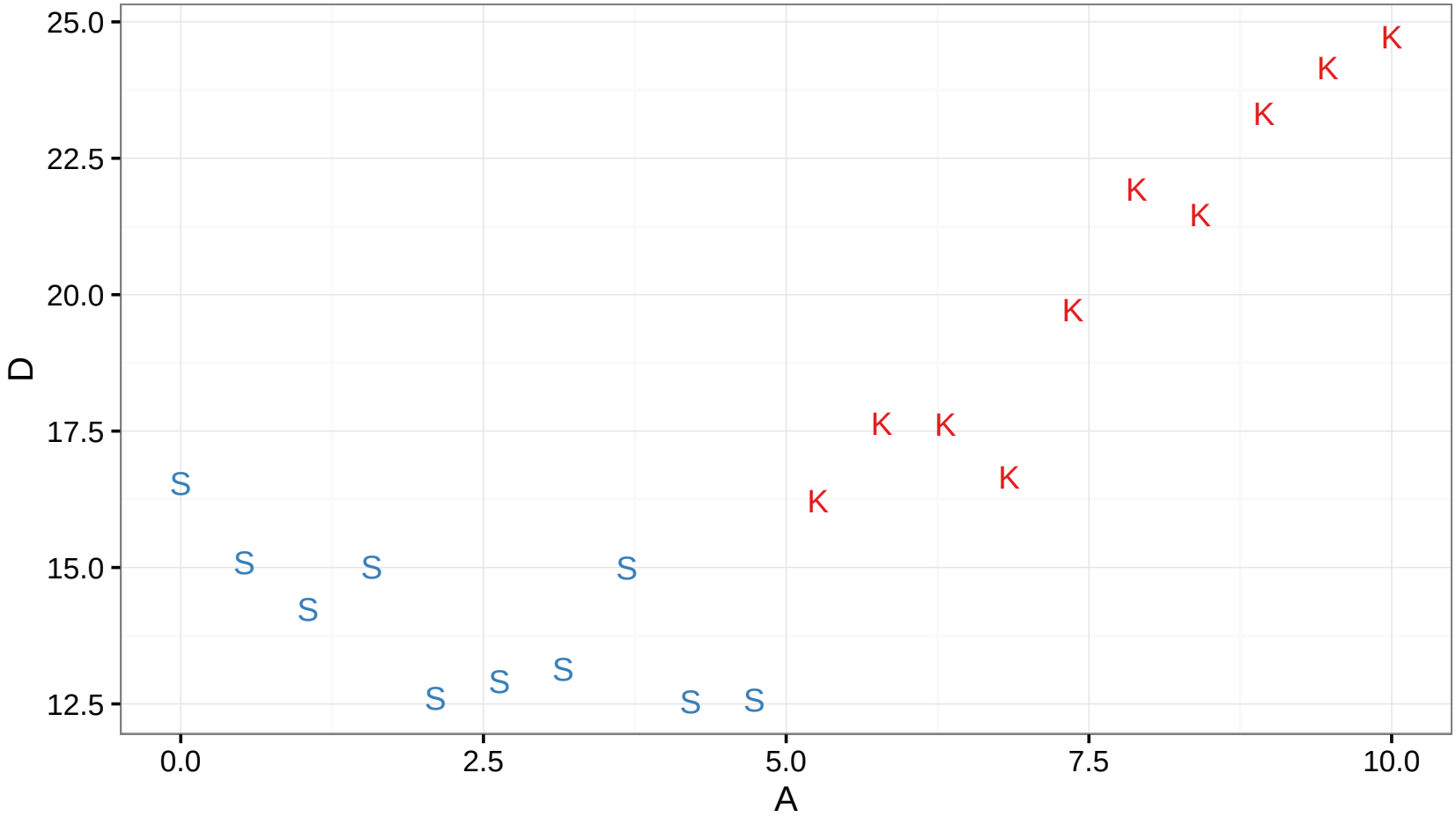
Lung Data Example

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(¿—t—)
(Intercept)	2.88	2.49	1.16	0.25
crowding	1.40	0.09	15.02	0.00
airqual	0.31	0.03	11.06	0.00

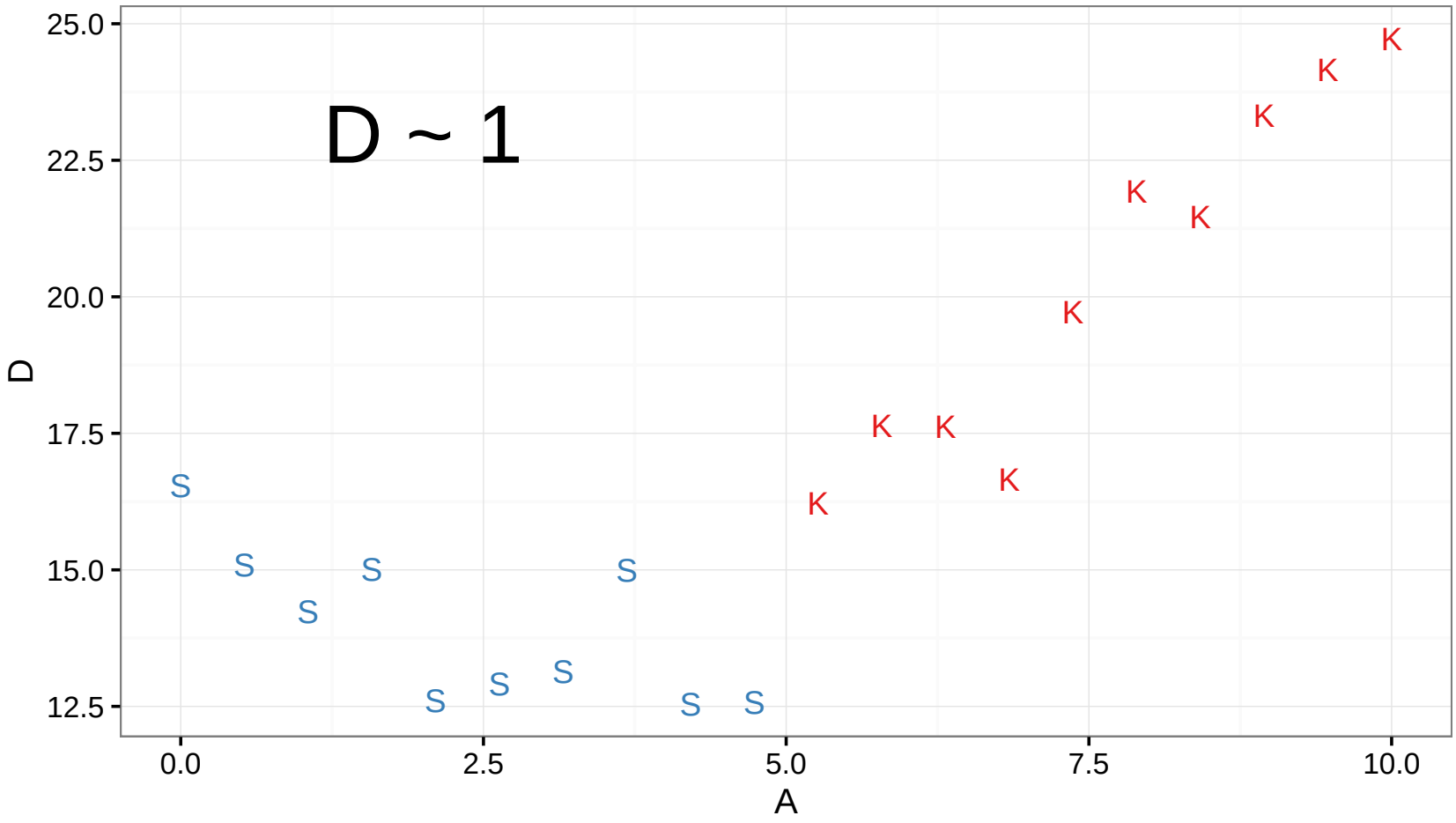
What are the interpretations of the coefficients?

Example data

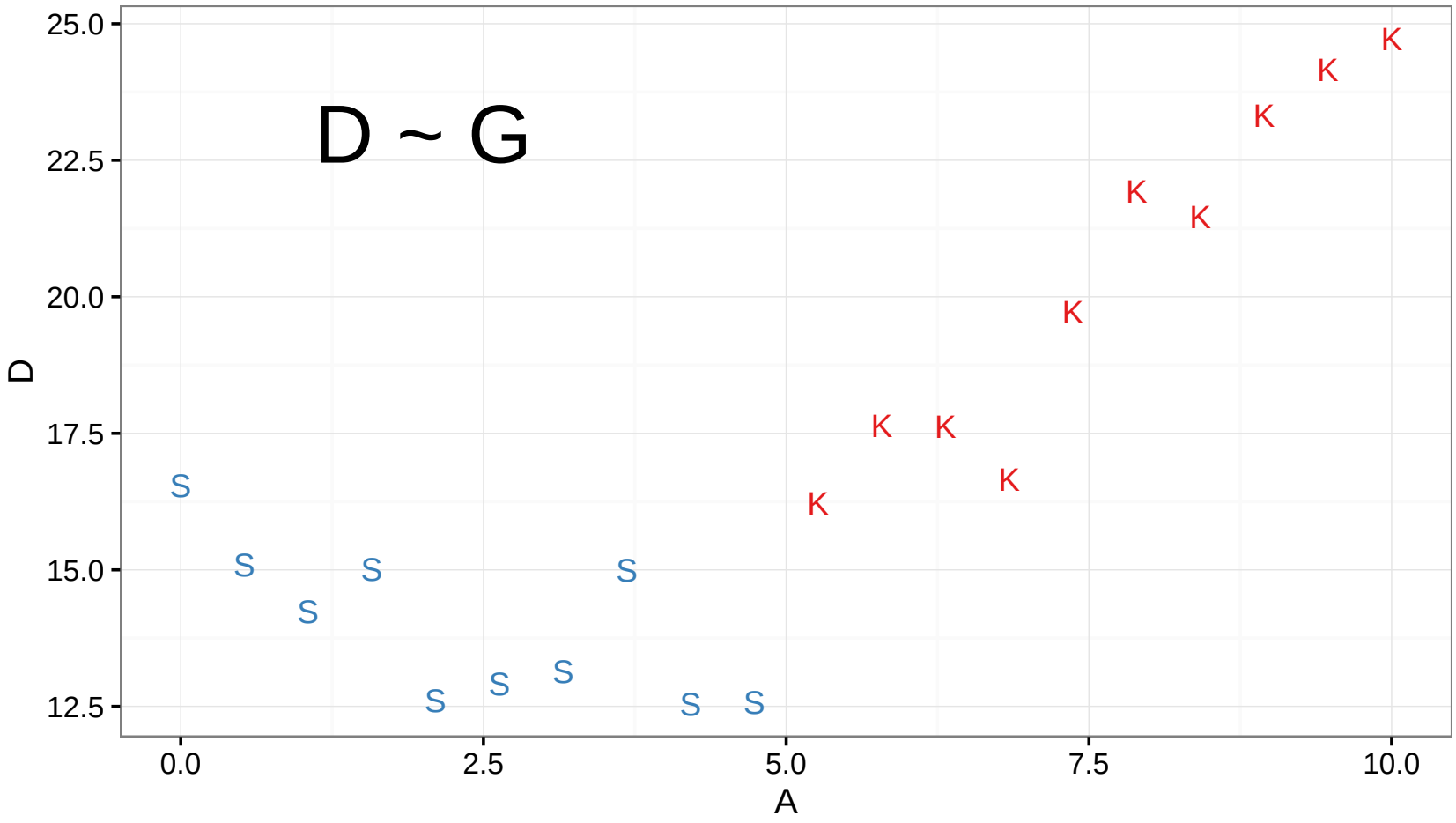
- D = a quantitative variable
- A = a quantitative variable
- G = a categorical variable with two levels, S and K



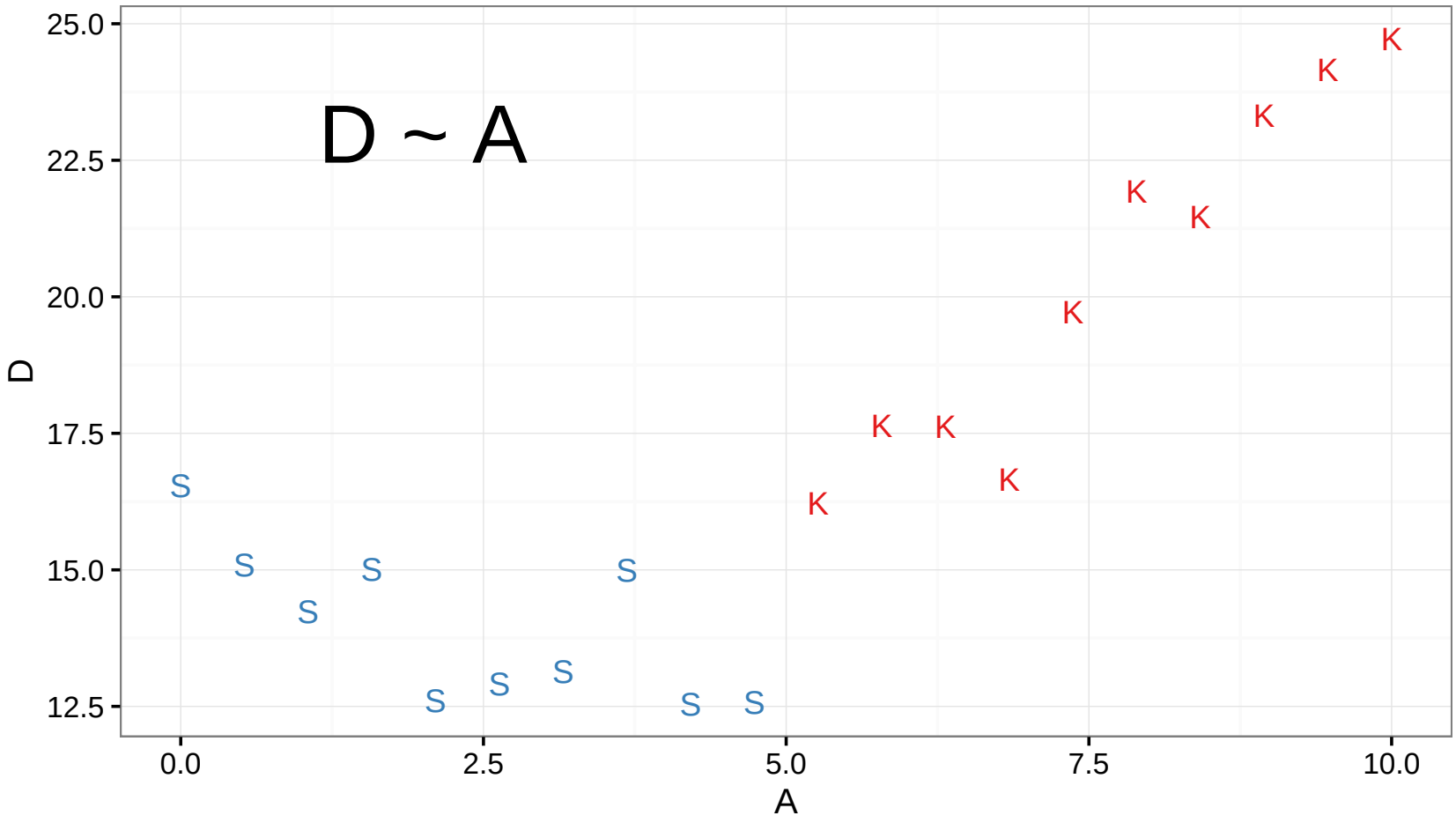
Draw the model...



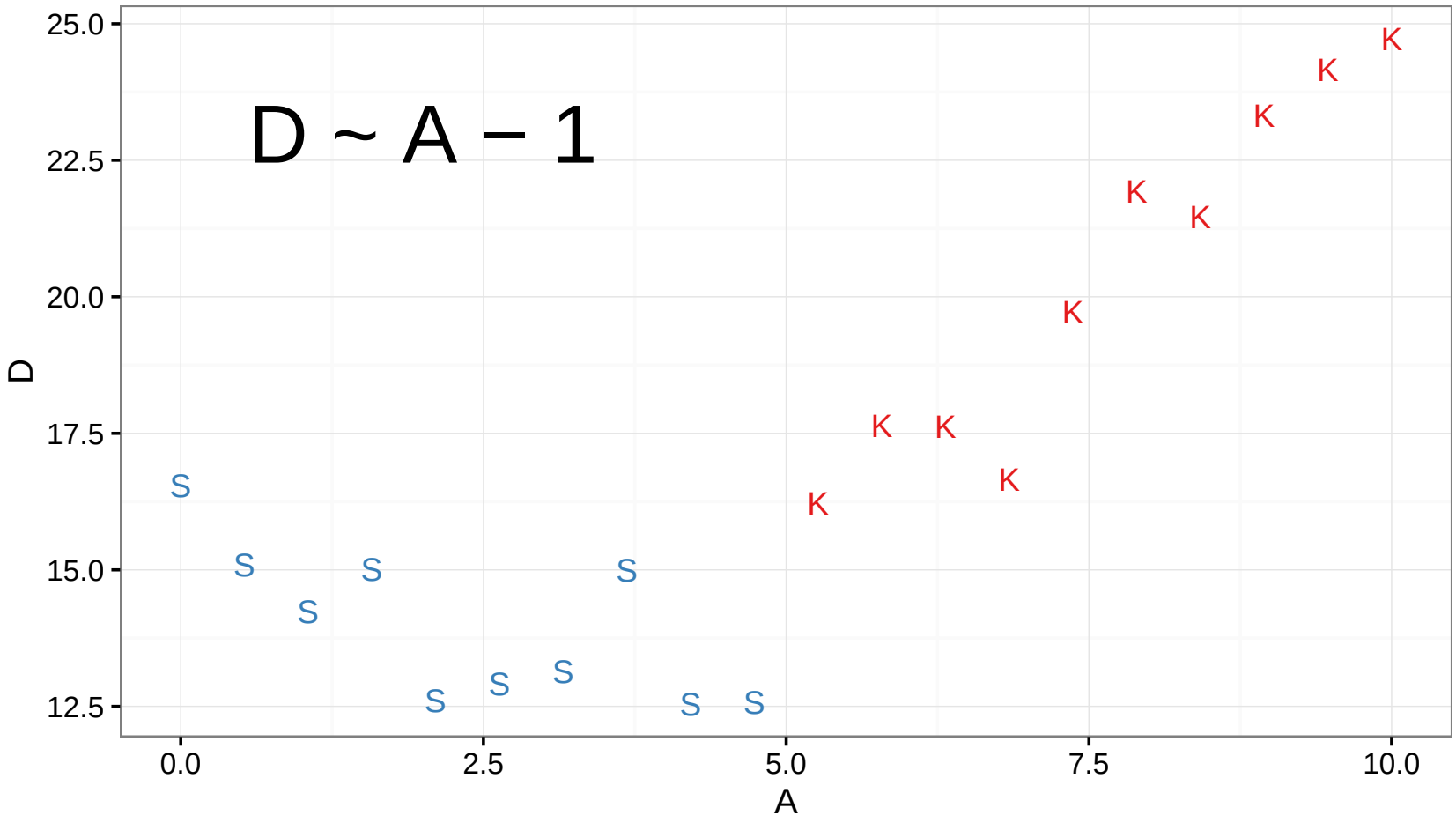
Draw the model...



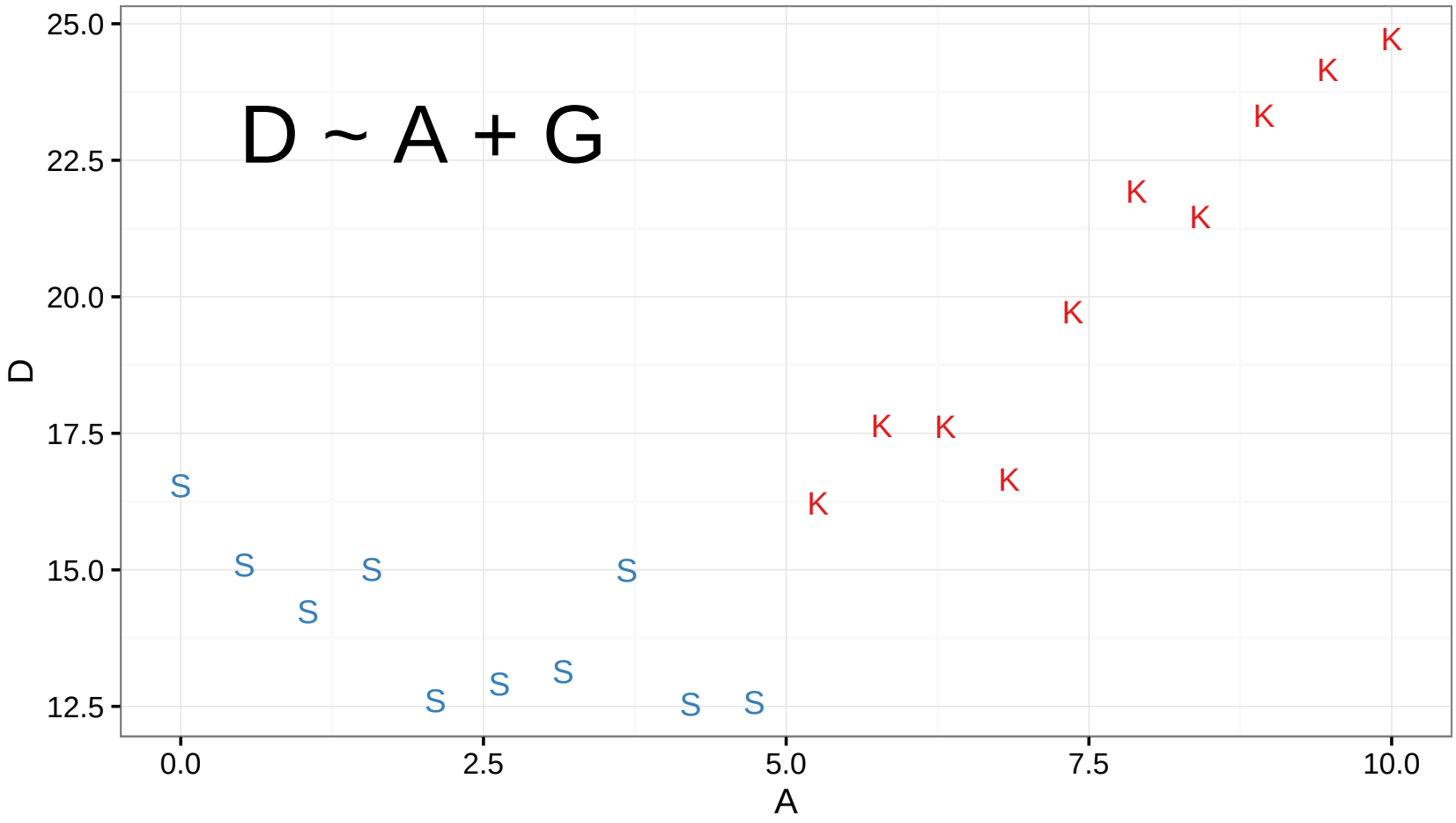
Draw the model...



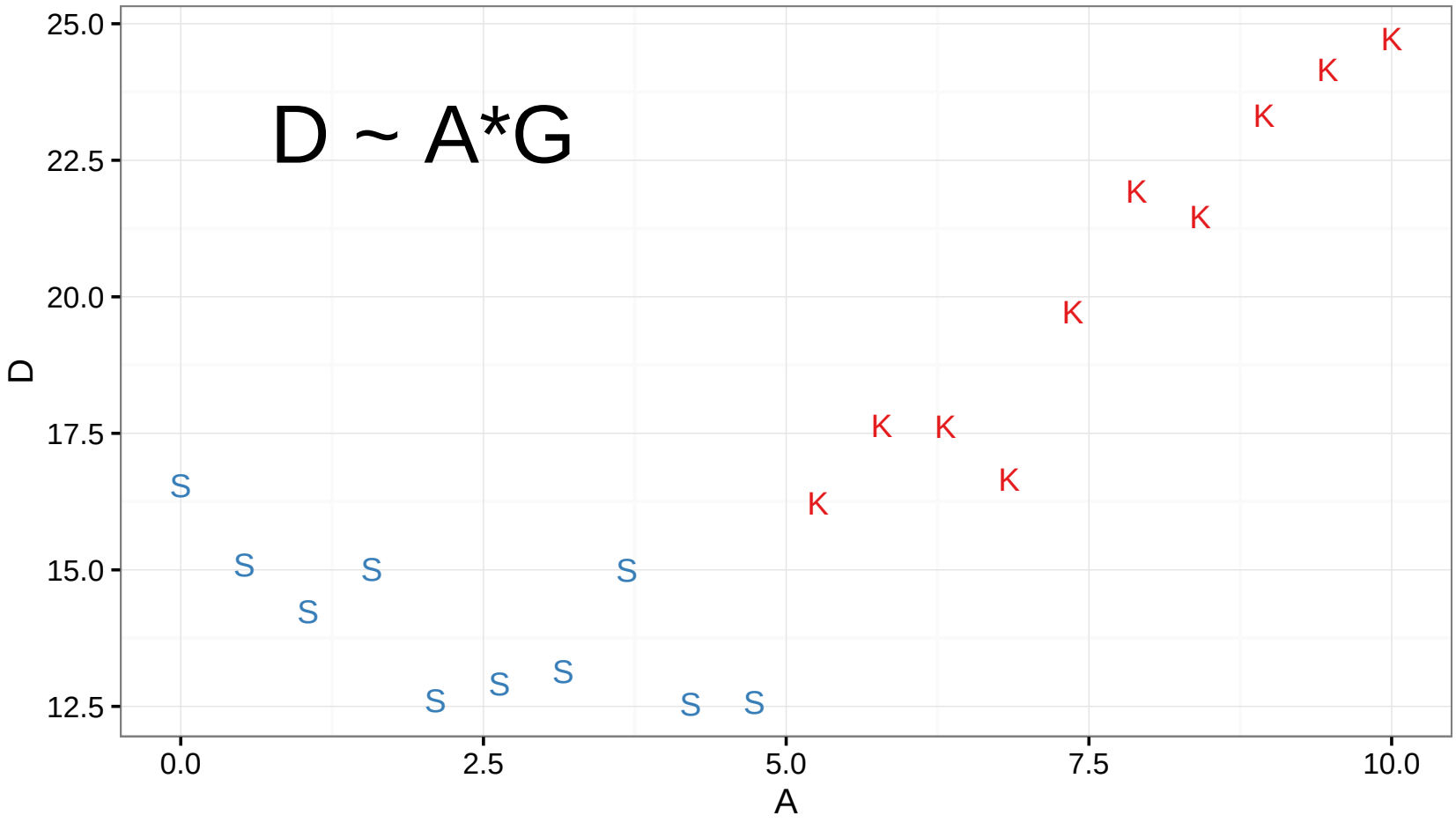
Draw the model...



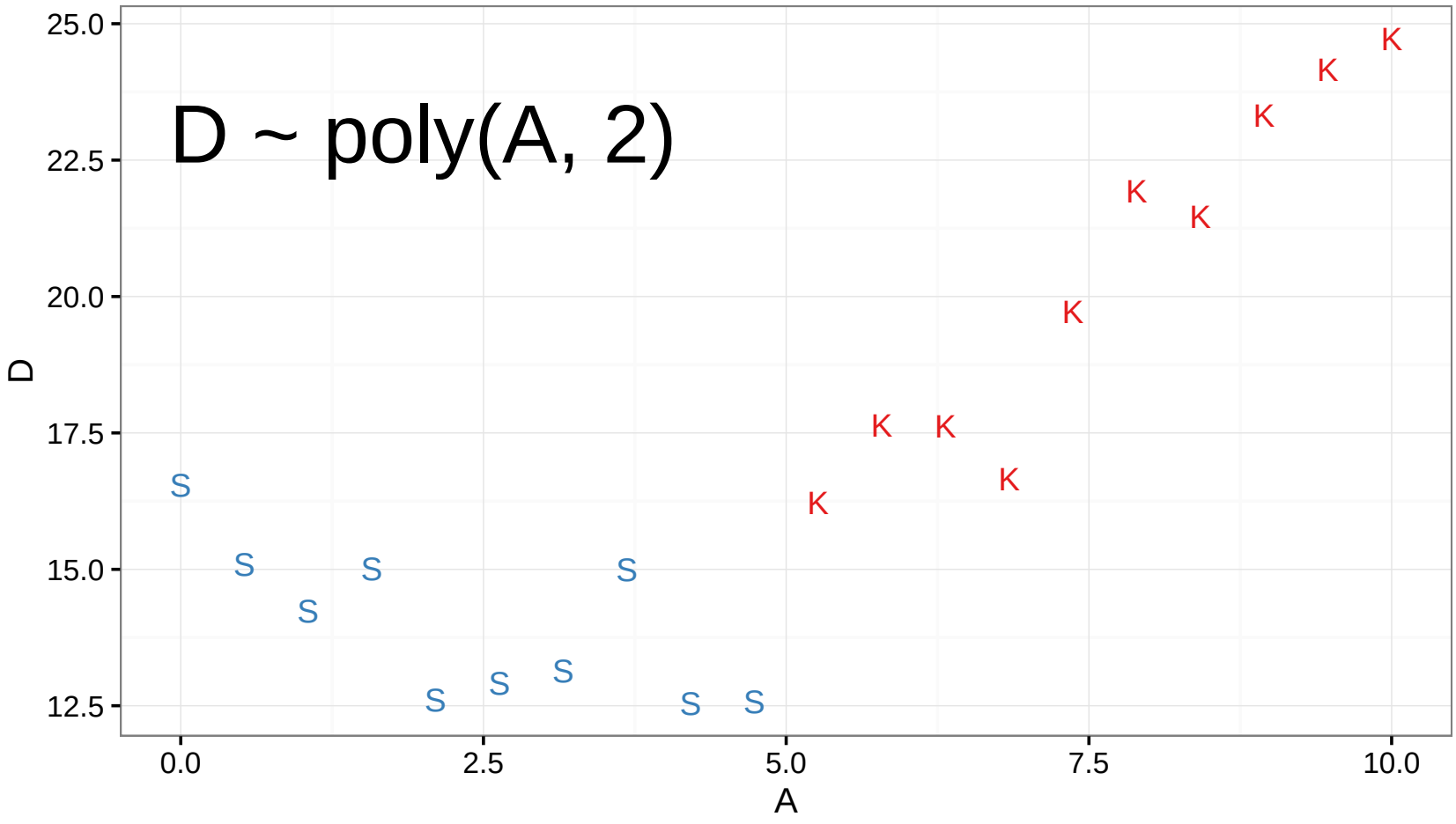
Draw the model...



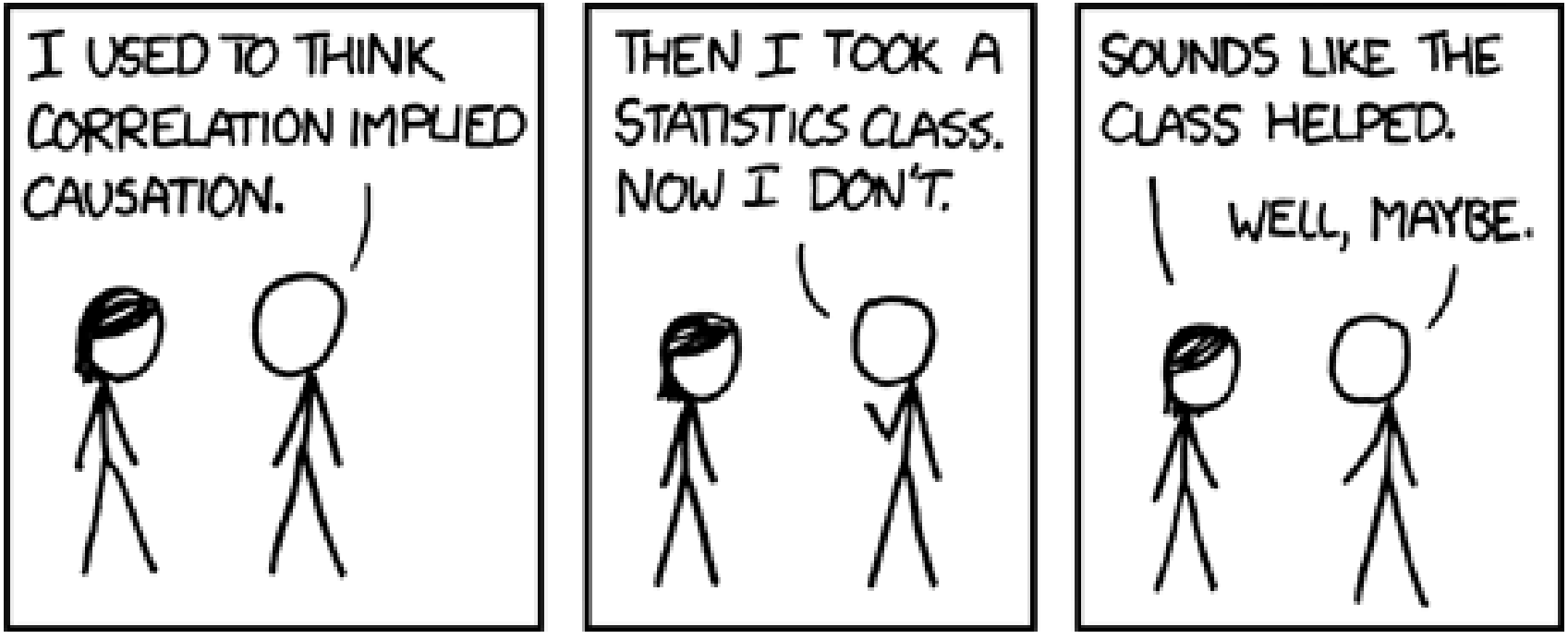
Draw the model...



Draw the model...



Parting wisdom



Up next: the mechanics and math of fitting models to data!

* Image credits: XKCD, http://xkcd.com/552/