

# Glossary

## Data Analytics

### Terms and Definitions

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## A

**Action-oriented question:** A question whose answers lead to change

**Algorithm:** A process or set of rules followed for a specific task

**Analytical skills:** Qualities and characteristics associated with using facts to solve problems

**Analytical thinking:** The process of identifying and defining a problem, then solving it by using data in an organized, step-by-step manner

**Attribute:** A characteristic or quality of data used to label a column in a table

**AVERAGE:** A spreadsheet function that returns an average of the values from a selected range

## B

**Big data:** Large, complex datasets typically involving long periods of time, which enable data analysts to address far-reaching business problems

**Borders:** Lines that can be added around two or more cells on a spreadsheet

**Business task:** The question or problem that data analysis resolves for a business

## C

**Cell reference:** A cell or a range of cells in a worksheet typically used in formulas and functions

**Cloud:** A place to keep data online, rather than a computer hard drive

**Context:** The condition in which something exists or happens

**COUNT:** A spreadsheet function that counts the number of cells in a range that meet a specific criteria

## D

**Dashboard:** A tool that monitors live, incoming data

**Data:** A collection of facts

**Data analysis:** The collection, transformation, and organization of data in order to draw conclusions, make predictions, and drive informed decision-making

**Data analysis process:** The six phases of ask, prepare, process, analyze, share, and act whose purpose is to gain insights that drive informed decision-making

**Data analyst:** Someone who collects, transforms, and organizes data in order to draw conclusions, make predictions, and drive informed decision-making

**Data analytics:** The science of data

**Data design:** How information is organized

**Data-driven decision-making:** Using facts to guide business strategy

**Data ecosystem:** The various elements that interact with one another in order to produce, manage, store, organize, analyze, and share data

**Data-inspired decision-making:** Exploring different data sources to find out what they have in common

**Data life cycle:** The sequence of stages that data experiences, which include plan, capture, manage, analyze, archive, and destroy

**Data science:** A field of study that uses raw data to create new ways of modeling and understanding the unknown

**Data strategy:** The management of the people, processes, and tools used in data analysis

**Data visualization:** The graphical representation of data

**Database:** A collection of data stored in a computer system

**Dataset:** A collection of data that can be manipulated or analyzed as one unit

## E

**Equation:** A calculation that involves addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division (also called a math expression)

## F

**Fairness:** A quality of data analysis that does not create or reinforce bias

**Fill handle:** A box in the lower-right-hand corner of a selected spreadsheet cell that can be dragged through neighboring cells in order to continue an instruction

**Filtering:** The process of showing only the data that meets a specified criteria while hiding the rest

**Formula:** A set of instructions used to perform a calculation using the data in a spreadsheet

**Function:** A preset command that automatically performs a specified process or task using the data in a spreadsheet

## G

**Gap analysis:** A method for examining and evaluating the current state of a process in order to identify opportunities for improvement in the future

## H

**Header:** The first row in a spreadsheet that labels the type of data in each column

## I

## J

## K

# L

**Leading question:** A question that steers people toward a certain response

# M

**Math expression:** A calculation that involves addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division (also called an equation)

**Math function:** A function that is used as part of a mathematical formula

**MAX:** A spreadsheet function that returns the largest numeric value from a range of cells

**Measurable question:** A question whose answers can be quantified and assessed

**Metric:** A single, quantifiable type of data that is used for measurement

**Metric goal:** A measurable goal set by a company and evaluated using metrics

**MIN:** A spreadsheet function that returns the smallest numeric value from a range of cells

# N

# O

**Observation:** The attributes that describe a piece of data contained in a row of a table

**Open data:** Data that is available to the public

**Operator:** A symbol that names the operation or calculation to be performed

**Order of operations:** Using parentheses to group together spreadsheet values in order to clarify the order in which operations should be performed

# P

**Pivot chart:** A chart created from the fields in a pivot table

**Pivot table:** A data summarization tool used to sort, reorganize, group, count, total, or average data

**Problem domain:** The area of analysis that encompasses every activity affecting or affected by a problem

**Problem types:** The various problems that data analysts encounter, including categorizing things, discovering connections, finding patterns, identifying themes, making predictions, and spotting something unusual

## Q

**Qualitative data:** A subjective and explanatory measure of a quality or characteristic

**Quantitative data:** A specific and objective measure, such as a number, quantity, or range

**Query:** A request for data or information from a database

**Query language:** A computer programming language used to communicate with a database

## R

**Range:** A collection of two or more cells in a spreadsheet

**Reframing:** Restating a problem or challenge, then redirecting it toward a potential resolution

**Relevant question:** A question that has significance to the problem to be solved

**Report:** A static collection of data periodically given to stakeholders

**Return on investment (ROI):** A formula that uses the metrics of investment and profit to evaluate the success of an investment

**Revenue:** The total amount of income generated by the sale of goods or services

**Root cause:** The reason why a problem occurs

## S

**Scope of work (SOW):** An agreed-upon outline of the tasks to be performed during a project

**Small data:** Small, specific data points typically involving a short period of time, which are useful for making day-to-day decisions

**SMART methodology:** A tool for determining a question's effectiveness based on whether it is specific, measurable, action-oriented, relevant, and time-bound

**Sorting:** The process of arranging data into a meaningful order to make it easier to understand, analyze, and visualize

**Specific question:** A question that is simple, significant, and focused on a single topic or a few closely related ideas

**Spreadsheet:** A digital worksheet

**SQL:** Refer to Structured Query Language

**Stakeholders:** People who invest time and resources into a project and are interested in its outcome

**Structured Query Language:** A computer programming language used to communicate with a database

**Structured thinking:** The process of recognizing the current problem or situation, organizing available information, revealing gaps and opportunities, and identifying options

**SUM:** A spreadsheet function that adds the values of a selected range of cells

## T

**Technical mindset:** The ability to break things down into smaller steps or pieces and work with them in an orderly and logical way

**Time-bound question:** A question that specifies a timeframe to be studied

**Turnover rate:** The rate at which employees voluntarily leave a company

## U

**Unfair question:** A question that makes assumptions or is difficult to answer honestly

## V

**Visualization:** (Refer to data visualization)

W

X

Y

Z