LESSON HANDOUT
The Data Analyst Role

For the purpose of this course, we will define a data analyst as follows;

- **A data analyst turns raw data into insights that enable decision making or increase understanding. Or, more simply;**

- **A data analyst solves problems with data.**

What does turning raw data into insights mean?

By raw data, we mean data that is unprocessed and contains errors or inconsistencies which must be fixed before we can gain value from it.

This process of turning raw data into valuable data is called cleaning. Cleaning or transforming data what a data analyst might spend up to 80% of their time doing.

Once the data is cleaned, insights are gained through a process of exploratory analysis.

What is an insight?

By insight we mean something which is valuable and something which isn't obvious.

The fact that a company's revenue is growing is information, the discovery that the primary driver of this growth is online sales as a result of a specific campaign might be an insight.

That doesn't mean that the route to gaining the insight must be hard or time-intensive it's just to say that if average joe can find it at the click of a button it probably isn't an insight.

How does an insight enable decision making?

Finally, how would we enable decision making? Well to enable a decision, there are two conditions:

- The insight must be relevant to a business need
- The insight must be actionable i.e. there must be some action which can result from it, and it must arrive in time for something to be actioned