

213. Envelope usage

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Dr Sutherland works in a large organization in which internal notes and memoranda are sent in re-usable envelopes. Each envelope has twelve spaces (windows) for the names of recipients; new users cross out their own name, and write in the next window the name of the person they wish to contact. The contributor kept a count of how many names, including his, were written on 311 of the envelopes he received, thus obtaining some idea of the age structure of envelopes in circulation.

The original article [Sutherland, W. (1990) The great pigeonhole in the sky. *New Scientist*, 9th June 1990, 73–74] gave only a histogram of the data. We obtained from Dr Sutherland the original frequencies, which are reproduced here, with thanks.

No. of windows	Frequency	No. of windows	Frequency
1	91	7	11
2	64	8	8
3	39	9	7
4	30	10	9
5	27	11	4
6	20	12	1