

Alice proposes to Bob the following bet. Alice tosses a fair coin n times and computes the number of heads X .

Bob tosses the coin $n + 1$ times and obtains Y heads.

Bob wins the bet if $Y > X$. Is the bet fair?

Bonus version: compute the answer for a general coin.

$$X = \#heads \text{ in Alice's } n \text{ trials}$$

$$Y = \#heads \text{ in Bob's } n + 1 \text{ trials}$$

Let's also define Z as:

$$Z = Y - X$$

Then, if p is the probability of obtaining head:

$$P(Y > X) = P(Z > 0)$$

$$Y \sim \text{Bin}(n + 1, p)$$

$$X \sim \text{Bin}(n, p)$$

Since $Z = Y - X$:

$$Z \sim \text{Bin}(n + 1 - n, p) = \text{Bin}(1, p) = \text{Ber}(p)$$

$$Z \sim \text{Ber}(p)$$

1 Case $p = \frac{1}{2}$

$$P(Y > X) = P(Z > 0) = P(Z = 1) = \frac{1}{2}$$

The bet is fair.

2 Case $p > \frac{1}{2}$

$$P(Y > X) = P(Z > 0) = P(Z = 1) > \frac{1}{2}$$

The bet is unfair, Bob has more chance of winning

3 Case $p < \frac{1}{2}$

$$P(Y > X) = P(Z > 0) = P(Z = 1) < \frac{1}{2}$$

The bet is unfair, Alice has more chance of winning