

1. Probability and counting

1.2. Sample Spaces and Pebble World

The **sample space** S of an experiment = set of all possible outcomes of the experiment. Can be finite or infinite.

An **event** A is a subset of the S , and we say that A **occurred** if the actual outcome is in A .

not $A = A^c$

Example:

$A, B \subseteq S$

$A \cup B$ if and only if at least one of A, B occurs.

$A \cap B$ if and only if both of A, B .

De Morgan's laws:

$(A \cup B)^c = A^c \cap B^c$ | A OR B not occur = A not occur AND B not occur

$(A \cap B)^c = A^c \cup B^c$ | A AND B not occur = A not occur OR B not occur

1.3 Naive definition of probability

$$P_{naive}(A) = \frac{|A|}{|S|}$$

Requires S to be finite, with equal mass for each outcome.

1.4 How to count

Multiplication rule:

Consider experiment $C = 2$ sub-experiments A, B . A has a outcomes, B has b outcomes. Then C has ab outcomes.

Sampling without replacement:

n objects and making k choices from them, one at a time without replacement.
Number of outcomes: $n(n-1)\dots(n-k+1)$ for $n \leq k$.

A **permutation** of $1, 2, \dots, n$ is an arrangement of them in some order, e.g.,
3,5,1,2,4 is a permutation of 1,2,3,4,5.

There are $n!$ permutations of $1, 2, \dots, n$

Binomial coefficient: $\binom{n}{k}$ = " n choose k " number of subsets of size k for a set of size n . For example, $\binom{4}{2} = 6$

For $n \leq k$:

$$\binom{n}{k} = \frac{n(n-1)\dots(n-k+1)}{k!} = \frac{n!}{(n-k)!k!}$$

For $n > k$:

$$\binom{n}{k} = 0$$

1.5 Story Proofs

Example: **Vandermonde's identity**

$$\binom{n+m}{k} = \sum_{j=0}^k \binom{m}{j} \binom{n}{k-j}$$

Story proof:

Consider a group of m peacocks and n toucans, from which a set of size k birds will be chosen. There are $\binom{n+m}{k}$ possibilities for this set of birds. If there are j peacocks in the set, then there must be $k - j$ toucans in the set. The right-hand side of Vandermonde's identity sums up the cases for j .

1.6 General definition of probability

A **probability space** = sample space S and probability function P . Event $A \subseteq S$. $P(A) = [0, 1]$.

Axioms for probability function P :

1. $P(\emptyset) = 0, P(1) = 1$
2. If A_1, A_2, \dots are disjoint:

$$P\left(\bigcup_{j=1}^{\infty} A_j\right) = \sum_{j=1}^{\infty} P(A_j).$$

(" A_i, A_j are disjoint" means that $A_i \cap A_j = \emptyset$ if $i \neq j$)

The **frequentist view** of probability: if we say a coin has probability 1/2 of Heads, that means the coin would land Heads 50% of the time if we tossed it over and over and over (long-run frequency).

The **Bayesian view** of probability: represents a degree of belief about the event in question. We can assign probabilities to hypotheses even if it isn't possible to repeat the experiment over and over again.