

Stat 201: Statistics I

Presentation Assignment

Metropolitan
State University



Presentations

Students will make a presentation analyzing the statistical content of a recent news item.

- Students may work alone or in pairs.
- Presentations should be short (~ 5 minutes).
- Slides can be used, but not required.
- News items should be recent (published within the last year).
- News item may be from virtually any real news or information source (no Onion articles please). Check with instructor if there are any questions.
- Link to or copy of news item to be analyzed must be provided to the instructor at least a week before presentations are made.

Content

The content of the analysis will vary depending on the content of the news item. Here are some questions to consider:

- What are the statistics being reported (proportions, means, etc.)?
- What is the population being studied? How were samples created?
- What is the source of the statistics? Is there a potential for bias?
- Do the results have statistical significance? Practical significance?
- Are effect sizes (confidence intervals) reported? Are results of statistical tests (p values) reported?
- Does the headline of the news item seem to reflect the statistical content?
- Does the news item draw reasonable conclusions from the statistics?
- Are there reasons to be suspicious of the statistics or the reporting? (Think back to issues we talked about in Chapter 1.)
- Does the news item make it easy to find the original source?

Extra analysis

Sometimes the original source of the statistical content can be found. Metro State students have access to many journal article reporting original research through the library. While analyzing journal articles is beyond the scope of this class, much can be learned by reading only the abstract. Further questions can then be considered:

- Does the news item come to the same conclusion as the researchers?
- Is the news item about what the researchers considered to be most important?
- What information from the original source would have been important to include in the news item?