

MATH 130: 4/14 WORKSHEET

STATISTICS: IN THE NEWS ACTIVITY

Our final unit is on *statistics*, the use of mathematics to make predictions about the world and summarize complicated data sets. To introduce this unit, we will be looking at how numbers are used to summarize data in different genres of media.

The news press.

Look at this article

[<https://www.nytimes.com/2026/04/03/business/economy/jobs-report-hiring-unemployment.html>],

or find another article on the New York Times website. Read through the article and take note of how it presents data.

- Look at the use of numbers to summarize data. Record what kind each use is (i.e. is it an average? quantiles? standard deviation? what?).
- Look at the use of graphics to summarize data. Report on the type of graphic used.
- What point is the article making with the data? Do you think this point is supported?
- Critique the use of data. Do you think the summary of data is accurate or misleading? Explain.

Polling and research reports.

Look at this article

[<https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2026/03/25/americans-broadly-disapprove-of-u-s-military-action-in-iran/>],

or pick another report from Pew Research Forum. Read through the article and take note of how it presents data.

- Look at the use of numbers to summarize data. Record what kind each use is (i.e. is it an average? quantiles? standard deviation? what?).
- Look at the use of graphics to summarize data. Report on the type of graphic used.
- What point is the article making with the data? Do you think this point is supported?
- Critique the use of data. Do you think the summary of data is accurate or misleading? Explain.

Academic scholarship.

Look at this article [<https://sci-hub.st/10.1177/0038040718784603>]. Read the abstract and introduction to understand what the article is about, then look at the data and methods section to take note of how it presents data.

- Look at the use of numbers to summarize data. Record what kind each use is (i.e. is it an average? quantiles? standard deviation? what?).
- Look at the use of graphics to summarize data. Report on the type of graphic used.
- What point is the article making with the data? Do you think this point is supported?
- Critique the use of data. Do you think the summary of data is accurate or misleading? Explain.