

Theoretical and Experimental Probability Guide Notes

Probability Theory

Probability is a branch of mathematics that deals with the study of the possible outcomes of an event or set of events, together with the outcomes relatively likelihood and distributions.

For example, in an experiment of tossing a coin once there are two possible outcomes: either head or tail will come out. The probability that head occur is 1 out of 2, or $1/2$, 0.5 or 50%.

Probabilities can be given in fraction form, in decimals, or in percent. It is denoted by the symbol $P(\text{Event})$. Example $P(H) = 1/2$.

Sample Space

In an experiment, the set of all possible outcomes is called the sample space, denoted by S .

Event

An event is any subset of a sample space.

Example: Toss a die once. The sample space S consists of 6 members which represent the numbers on the 6 faces of a die. Hence, $S = \{1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6\}$. Let A be the event that an even number will occur. Then $A = \{2, 4, 6\}$.

The Probability of the Occurrence of an Event

The probability of the occurrence of an event E is given by the formula

$$P(E) = \frac{n(E)}{n(S)}$$

Sample Problem 1. Solve Problem involving theoretical and experimental probability.

1. A box contains one red ball, one white ball, and one blue ball. If the experiment is to remove one ball at random from the box, what is the probability that it is red?

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2. Let two dice be tossed once. Find the probability that the sum of the numbers shown on the two top faces is six.

3. From a deck of cards, four cards are drawn at random. What is the probability that:

A. All four are aces?

B. All four hearts?

4. If a pair of dice is tossed, find the probability that the sum of the numbers that will appear is 5.