

Basics of Probability

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Math 107-03, Spring 2020, Spelman College

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Smart list of outcomes–ELOs

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Notice how we effectively multiplied probabilities here, this is legal because the coins are “physically independent” of each other.

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Let's apply similar reasoning to the 2 dice situation. Instead of looking at the total number of dots on top, let's look at all of the possibilities. Since each die can come up in one of 6 ways, then there are $36 = 6 \times 6$ possibilities overall: $(1,1), (1,2), (1,3), (1,4), (1,5), (1,6), (2,1), (2,2), (2,3), \dots, (6,4), (6,5), (6,6)$.

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These are 36 ELOs, since for any particular pair, say $(1,3)$, we have $P((1,3)) = \frac{1}{6} \times \frac{1}{6} = \frac{1}{36}$ because the first die comes up 1 a sixth of the time, on average, and the second die comes up 3 a sixth of the time, on average.

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The totals when rolling 2 fair dice

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	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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Note $P(T = 2) = P((1, 1)) = \frac{1}{36}$.

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Now let's refocus on the total number of dots $T = \{2, 3, \dots, 11, 12\}$. Note $P(T = 2) = P((1, 1)) = \frac{1}{36}$. However, a total of 3 can arise in 2 ways, so $P(T = 3) = P((1, 2) \text{ or } (2, 1)) = \frac{1}{36} + \frac{1}{36} = \frac{2}{36}$.

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Similarly, a total of 4 can arise in 3 ways, so $P(T = 4) = P((1, 3) \text{ or } (2, 2) \text{ or } (3, 1)) = \frac{1}{36} + \frac{1}{36} + \frac{1}{36} = \frac{3}{36}$.

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Note that $P(\text{don't get 6}) = 1 - P(\text{get 6})$.

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It works because

$$\begin{aligned} P(\text{not } E) &= \frac{\#(\text{not } E)}{\#(S)} = \frac{\#(S) - \#(E)}{\#(S)} \\ &= \frac{\#(S)}{\#(S)} - \frac{\#(E)}{\#(S)} = 1 - \frac{\#(E)}{\#(S)} = 1 - P(E) \end{aligned}$$

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Find $P(\text{at least one Head}) = 1 - P(\text{NOT at least one Head}) = 1 - P(\text{NO Heads}) = 1 - P(TT) = 1 - \frac{1}{4} = \frac{3}{4}$.

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Let T be the total for 2 fair dice.

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