

Section 4.3: The Multiplication Rule and Conditional Probability

Since the size of a sample space grows so quickly we want to continue our search for rules of that allow us to compute the probabilities of complex events. When thinking about what happens with combinations of outcomes, things are simplified if the individual trials are independent.

Definition 1 *Two events are independent if the outcome of one event doesn't influence or change the likelihood of the outcome of the other event.*

Example 1 *Coin flips are independent. The coin does not remember its sequence of flips; the chance of heads or tails is always constant at $p = \frac{1}{2}$.*

Example 2 *From [ajc.com](#) on 1/6/2017, "As the metro area faces another dire winter forecast, it's hard to forget that only three years ago we let 2.6 inches of snow knock us on our collective backside, turning Atlanta into national laughingstock. We called it "SnowJam '14." Not to be confused with "Snow Jam '82" where nearly the same thing happened, or "Snowpocalypse '11" which had been so recent that some leaders figured the region was statistically safe from another snow debacle for at least a decade."*

Example 3 *The Phillies chance of winning the World Series in 2017 and the health of Phillies pitchers are dependent events. If any pitcher suffers a serious injury and is out for the season, the Phillies chance of winning the World Series goes down.*

Example 4 *The Phillies chance of winning the World Series in 2017 and the health of pitchers of their opponents are dependent events. If any pitcher suffers a serious injury and is out for the season, their team's chance of winning goes down and the Phillies chance of winning the World Series goes up.*

Example 5 *The Phillies chance of winning the World Series in 2017 and the health of Dr. DeMaio's pitching arm are independent events. No matter what happens to Dr. DeMaio, the Phillies chances of winning the World Series are completely unaffected.*

Theorem 1 *Multiplication Rule: For two independent events A and B, the probability that both A and B occur is the product of the probabilities of the two events.*

$$P(A \text{ and } B) = P(A) \times P(B)$$

Example 6 *Approximately 85% of all human beings are right-handed. What is the probability that three randomly selected people are all right-handed? $p = .85 \times .85 \times .85 = .85^3 = 0.61413$.*

Example 7 Ignoring ambidextrous people, What is the probability that two randomly selected people are all left-handed? $p = .15^2 = 0.0225$.

Exercise 1 Shaquille O'Neal's lifetime free throw percentage is .527. Shaq is fouled on a three-point shot.

What is the probability that he makes all three free throws?

What is the probability that he makes none of the free throws?

Exercise 2 A box contains 3 white balls, 4 red balls and 5 black balls. A ball is picked, its color recorded and returned to the box. Another ball is then selected and its color recorded.

Remark 2 Since we put the 1st ball back into the box before selecting another, we are making **selections with replacement**. Doing so makes subsequent selections independent events.

Find the probability that 2 black balls are selected.

Find the probability that 2 balls of the same color are selected.

Example 8 A box contains 3 white balls, 4 red balls and 5 black balls. Four balls are picked with replacement.

Find the probability no red balls are selected.

Find the probability that the fourth ball selected is the first occurrence of the color white?

In most situations where we want to find a probability, we'll use the rules in combination. A good thing to remember is that it can be easier to work with the complement of the event we're really interested in. This is almost always the case when you encounter the *phrase at least one*. The event of **at least one** is equivalent to **one or more**. Note that if event A is the event of **at least one** then the complement of A is **none**.

Example 9 *A die is independently rolled 8 times. What is the probability that the number 2 appears at least once? $p = 1 - \left(\frac{5}{6}\right)^8 = 0.76743$*

Example 10 *Shaquille O'Neal's lifetime free throw percentage is .527. Shaq is fouled on a three-point shot. What is the probability that he makes at east one of his three free throws?*

Exercise 3 *According to Nielson Media Research, 30% of all televisions are tuned to NFL Monday Night Football when it is televised. Assuming that this show is being broadcast and that the televisions are randomly selected, find the probability that at least 1 of 15 televisions is tuned to NFL Monday Night Football.*

A requirement of the multiplication rule is that events are independent. Naturally, this will not always be the case. In order to compute the probability of A and B when they are not independent events we rely on conditional probabilities. When we want the probability of an event from a conditional distribution, we write $P(B|A)$ and say “the probability of B given A .” A probability that takes into account a given condition is called a **conditional probability**.

Theorem 3 *General Multiplication Rule:* For any two events A and B , the probability that both A and B occur is the .

$$P(A \text{ and } B) = P(A) \times P(B|A)$$

Exercise 4 *A study at a local bar found people of various ages playing games.*

	21-29	30-39	40-49	50 and older	Total
Darts	4	12	15	6	37
Pool	8	17	16	11	52
Karaoke	17	5	0	1	23
Total	29	34	31	18	112

Find the probability that a randomly selected person...

1. Plays darts.
2. Is 21-29.
3. Is 21-29 given that they are playing darts.
4. Is 21-29 given that they are singing karaoke.
5. Is singing karaoke given that they are 21-29.
6. Is 30-39 and playing pool.
7. Is playing pool given that they are 30-39.

A pair of dice is thrown one at a time. Let A be the event that the sum of 9 is rolled. Let B be the event that the first die thrown is a 2. Let C be the event that the first die thrown is a 5. Let D be the event that the sum of 7 is rolled.

1. What is the probability the sum of the dice is 9?
2. What is the probability the sum of the dice is 9, given that the first die rolled is 2?
3. What is the probability the sum of the dice is 9, given that the first die rolled is 5?
4. Are events A and B independent? Are events A and C independent?
5. What is the probability the sum of the dice is 7?
6. What is the probability the sum of the dice is 7, given that the first die rolled is 2?
7. What is the probability the sum of the dice is 7, given that the first die rolled is 5?
8. Are events D and B independent? Are events D and C independent?

Exercise 5 *A box contains 3 white balls, 4 red balls and 5 black balls. A ball is picked, its color recorded and set aside. Another ball is then selected and its color recorded.*

Remark 4 *In this case, we did not return the 1st ball back to the box before selecting another. We are now making **selections without replacement**. Doing so makes subsequent selections dependent or conditional events. Find the probability that 2 black balls are selected.*

Find the probability that 2 balls of the same color are selected.

Find the probability that the second ball selected is the first occurrence of the color white?

1 Exercises

1. Navidi/Monk Section 4.3: 7-10, 15-37,39, 40, 42, 50, 55, 58, 59-62