# **Chapter 2**

# Graphical methods for presenting data

## 2.1 Introduction

We have looked at ways of collecting data and then collating them into tables. Frequency tables are useful methods of presenting data; they do, however, have their limitations. With large amounts of data graphical presentation methods are often clearer to understand. Here, we look at methods for producing graphical representations of data of the types we have seen previously.

# 2.2 Stem and Leaf plots

**Stem and leaf plots** are a quick and easy way of representing data graphically. They can be used with both discrete and continuous data. The method for creating a stem and leaf plot is similar to that for creating a grouped frequency table. The first stage, as with grouped frequency tables, is to decide on a reasonable number of intervals which span the range of data. The interval widths for a stem and leaf plot must be equal. Because of the way the plot works it is best to use "sensible" values for the interval width – i.e. 5, 10, 100, 1000; if a dataset consists of many small values, this interval width could also be 1, or even 0.1 or 0.01. Once we have decided on our intervals we can construct the stem and leaf plot. This is perhaps best described by demonstration.

Consider the following data: 11, 12, 9, 15, 21, 25, 19, 8. The first step is to decide on interval widths – one obvious choice would be to go up in 10s. This would give a **stem unit** of 10 and a **leaf unit** of 1. The stem and leaf plot is constructed as below.

You can clearly see where the data have been put. The stem units are to the left of the vertical line, while the leaves are to the right. So, for example, our first observation -11 – is made up of

a stem unit of one 10 and a leaf unit one 1. It is important to give an equal amount of space to each leaf value – by doing so, we can get a clear picture of any patterns in the data (it's almost like a bar–chart on its side – but it still shows the "raw" observations!). Before producing a stem and leaf plot, it will probably help to first write down the data in ascending numerical order.

#### **Example 1: Percentage returns on a share**

As you might imagine, the interval width does not have to be 10. The following numbers show the percentage returns on an ordinary share for 23 consecutive months:

Here, the largest value is 2.4 and the smallest -2.3, and we have lots of decimal values in between. Thus, it seems sensible here to have a stem unit of 1 and a leaf unit of 0.1. A stem and leaf diagram for this set of returns then might look like:

### **Example 2: Unemployment rates in the U.S.**

Hopefully, that should all seem fine so far. So what can go wrong? Consider the following data, which are the percentage unemployment rates for 10 U.S. states:

 $17 \quad 18 \quad 15 \quad 14 \quad 12 \quad 19 \quad 20 \quad 21 \quad 24 \quad 15$ 

If you were to choose 10 as the interval width (i.e. go up in 10s), the stem and leaf plot would look like

Here, the interval width is too large, resulting in only two intervals for our data. With such few intervals it is difficult to identify any patterns in the data. We can get a better idea about what is going on if we choose a smaller interval width – say 5. Doing so gives the following stem and leaf plot:

Notice now that there are two 1s in the stem – one for observations between 10 and 14 (inclusive) and another for observations between 15 and 19 (inclusive). Thus, the stem unit is still 10, but the interval width is now only 5. Changing the interval width like this produces a plot which starts to show some sort of pattern in the data – indeed, this is the intention of such graphical presentations. We could, however, go to the other extreme and have *too many* intervals. If this were the case, any pattern would again be lost because lots of intervals would contain no observations at all. So choose your interval width carefully!

### **Example 3: Call centre data**

Stem

n =

Let's work through the following example. The observations in the table below are the recorded time it takes to get through to an operator at a telephone call centre (in seconds).

	54	56	50	67	55	38	49	45	39	50		
	45	51	47	53	29	42	44	61	51	50		
	30	39	65	54	44	54	72	65	58	62		
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#### **Example 4: Production line data**

If there is more than one significant figure in the data, the extra digits are *cut* (or truncated), not *rounded*, to the nearest value; that is to say, 2.97 would become 2.9, not 3.0. To illustrate this, consider the following data on lengths of items on a production line (in cm):

2.97 3.81 2.54 2.01 3.49 3.09 1.99 2.64 2.31 2.22

The stem and leaf plot for this is as follows:

Here the interval width is 0.5. This allows for greater clarity in the plot. Why do you think we *cut* the extra digits?

#### **Example 5: student marks**

The stem and leaf plot below represents the marks on a test for 50 students.

1 4 1 5 7 7 9 2 0 0 1 1 1 2 2 4 4 4 5 7 7 8 8 8 3 2 3 3 3 4 5 5 6 7 7 8 8 9 9 9 4 0 0 1 2 2 3 3 4 4 5 5 0 0 0 n = 50, stem unit = 10, leaf unit = 1.

It's easy to see some of the advantages of graphically presenting data. For example, here you can clearly see that the data are centred around a value in the low 30's and fall away on either side. From stem and leaf plots we can quickly and easily tell if the distribution of the data is symmetric or asymmetric. We can see whether there are any **outliers**, that is, observations which are either much larger or much smaller than is typical of the data. We could perhaps even tell whether the data are **multi–modal**, that is to say, whether there are two or more peaks on the graph with a gap between them. If so, this could suggest that the sample contains data from two or more groups.

### 2.2.1 Using Minitab

With the small data sets we have seen so far, it is obviously relatively easy to create stem and leaf plots by hand. With larger data sets this would be more problematic and certainly more time consuming. Fortunately, there are computer packages that will create these plots for us – Minitab is one such package, and can be found on most university computers.

Details and guidance on using Minitab will be provided in the computer practical sessions in week 7.

# 2.3 Bar Charts

**Bar charts** are a commonly–used and clear way of presenting categorical data or any ungrouped discrete frequency observations.

Student	Mode	Student	Mode	Student	Mode
1	Car	11	Walk	21	Walk
2	Walk	12	Walk	22	Metro
3	Car	13	Metro	23	Car
4	Walk	14	Bus	24	Car
5	Bus	15	Train	25	Car
6	Metro	16	Bike	26	Bus
7	Car	17	Bus	27	Car
8	Bike	18	Bike	28	Walk
9	Walk	19	Bike	29	Car
10	Car	20	Metro	30	Car

For example, recall the example on students' modes of transport:

The first logical step is to put these into a frequency table, giving

Mode	Frequency
Car	10
Walk	7
Bike	4
Bus	4
Metro	4
Train	1
Total	30

We can then present this information as a bar chart, by following the five step process shown below:

- 1. First decide what goes on each axis of the chart. By convention the variable being measured goes on the horizontal (x-axis) and the frequency goes on the vertical (y-axis).
- 2. Next decide on a numeric scale for the frequency axis. This axis represents the frequency in each category by its height. It must start at zero and include the largest frequency. It is common to extend the axis slightly above the largest value so you are not drawing to the edge of the graph.
- 3. Having decided on a range for the frequency axis we need to decide on a suitable number scale to label this axis. This should have sensible values, for example, 0, 1, 2, ..., or 0, 10, 20..., or other such values as make sense given the data.
- 4. Draw the axes and label them appropriately.
- 5. Draw a bar for each category. When drawing the bars it is essential to ensure the following:
  - the width of each bar is the same;
  - the bars are separated from each other by equally sized gaps.

This gives the following bar chart:



This bar chart clearly shows that the most popular mode of transport is the car and that the metro, bus and cycling are all equally popular (in our small sample). Bar charts provide a simple method of quickly spotting simple patterns of popularity within a discrete data set.

# 2.4 Histograms

Bar charts have their limitations; for example, they cannot be used to present continuous data. When dealing with continuous random variables a different kind of graph is required. This is called a **histogram**. At first sight these look similar to bar charts. There are, however, two critical differences:

- the horizontal (*x*-axis) is a continuous scale. As a result of this there are *no gaps between the bars* (unless there are no observations within a class interval);
- the height of the rectangle is only proportional to the frequency if the class intervals are all equal. With histograms it is the *area* of the rectangle that is proportional to their frequency.

Initially we will only consider histograms with equal class intervals. Those with uneven class intervals require more careful thought.

Producing a histogram is much like producing a bar chart and in many respects can be considered to be the next stage after producing a grouped frequency table. In reality, it is often best to produce a frequency table first which collects all the data together in an ordered format. Once we have the frequency table, the process is very similar to drawing a bar chart.

- 1. Find the maximum frequency and draw the vertical (y-axis) from zero to this value, including a sensible numeric scale.
- 2. The range of the horizontal (x-axis) needs to include not only the full range of observations but also the full range of the class intervals from the frequency table.
- 3. Draw a bar for each group in your frequency table. These should be the same width and touch each other (unless there are no data in one particular class).

The frequency table for the data on service times for a telephone call centre (Section 1.3.2) was

Service time	Frequency
$175 \leq \text{time} < 180$	1
$180 \le \text{time} < 185$	3
$185 \le \text{time} < 190$	3
$190 \le \text{time} < 195$	6
$195 \le \text{time} < 200$	10
$200 \leq \text{time} < 205$	12
$205 \le \text{time} < 210$	8
$210 \leq \text{time} < 215$	3
$215 \leq \text{time} < 220$	3
$220 \leq \text{time} < 225$	1
Total	50



The histogram for these data is:

Histograms are useful tools in data analysis. They are easy to produce in Minitab for large data sets and provide a clear visual representation of the data. Using histograms, it is easy to spot the **modal** or most popular class in the data, i.e. the one with the highest peak. It is also easy to spot simple patterns in the data. Is the frequency distribution symmetric, as the histograms produced above, or is it skewed to one side like the left–hand histogram in the following graphic?



Histograms also allow us to make early judgements as to whether all our data come from the same population. Consider the right–hand histogram in the graphic above. It clearly contains two separate modes (peaks), each of which has its own symmetric pattern of data. This clearly suggests that the data come from two separate populations, one centred around 85 with a narrow spread and one centred around 100 with a wider spread. In real situations it is unlikely that the difference would be as dramatic, unless you had a poor sampling method. However, the drawing of histograms is often the first stage of a more complex analysis.

Finally, when drawing histograms be aware of observations on variables which have boundaries on their ranges. For example heights, weights, times to complete tasks etc. can not take negative values so there is a lower limit at zero. Computer programs do not automatically know this. You should make sure that the lower limit of the first class interval is not negative in such cases.

We have seen some basic ways in which we might present data graphically. These methods will often provide the mainstay of business presentations. There are, however, other techniques which are useful and offer advantages in some applications over histograms and bar charts.

## 2.5 Percentage Relative Frequency Histograms

When we produced frequency tables in Section 1.3, we included a column for *percentage relative frequency*. This contained values for the frequency of each group, relative to the overall sample size, expressed as a percentage. For example, a percentage relative frequency table for the data on service time (in seconds) for calls to a credit card service centre is:

Service time	Frequency	<b>Relative Frequency</b> (%)
$175 \le \text{time} < 180$	1	2
$180 \le \text{time} < 185$	3	6
$185 \le \text{time} < 190$	3	6
$190 \leq \text{time} < 195$	6	12
$195 \le \text{time} < 200$	10	20
$200 \leq \text{time} < 205$	12	24
$205 \leq \text{time} < 210$	8	16
$210 \leq \text{time} < 215$	3	6
$215 \leq \text{time} < 220$	3	6
$220 \leq \text{time} < 225$	1	2
Totals	50	100

You can plot these data like an ordinary histogram, or, instead of using *frequency* on the vertical axis (*y*-axis), you could use the *percentage relative frequency*.



Note that the *y*-axis now contains the relative percentages rather than the frequencies. You might well ask "why would we want to do this?".

These percentage relative frequency histograms are useful when comparing two samples that have different numbers of observations. If one sample were larger than the other then a frequency histogram would show a difference simply because of the larger number of observations. Looking at percentages removes this difference and enables us to look at *relative* differences.

For example, in the following graph there are data from two groups and four times as many data points for one group as the other. The left-hand plot shows an ordinary histogram and it is clear that the comparison between groups is masked by the quite different sample sizes. The right-hand plot shows a histogram based on (percentage) relative frequencies and this enables a much more direct comparison of the distributions in the two groups.



Overlaying histograms on the same graph can sometimes not produce such a clear picture, particularly if the values in both groups are close or overlap one another significantly.

# 2.6 Relative Frequency Polygons

These are a natural extension of the relative frequency histogram. They differ in that, rather than drawing bars, each class is represented by one point and these are joined together by straight lines. The method is similar to that for producing a histogram:

- 1. Produce a percentage relative frequency table.
- 2. Draw the axes
  - The x-axis needs to contain the full range of the classes used.
  - The y-axis needs to range from 0 to the maximum percentage relative frequency.
- 3. Plot points: pick the mid point of the class interval on the *x*-axis and go up until you reach the appropriate percentage value on the *y*-axis and mark the point. Do this for each class.
- 4. Join adjacent points together with straight lines.

The relative frequency polygon is exactly the same as the relative frequency histogram, but instead of having bars we join the mid–points of the top of each bar with a straight line. Consider the following simple example.

<b>Class Interval</b>	Mid Point	% Relative Frequency
$0 \le x < 10$	5	10
$10 \le x < 20$	15	20
$20 \le x < 30$	25	35
$30 \le x < 40$	35	25
$40 \le x < 50$	45	10

This can be easily drawn by hand:



Relative frequency polygon

These percentage relative frequency polygons are very useful for comparing two or more samples – we can easily "overlay" many relative frequency polygons, but overlaying the corresponding histograms could get really messy! Consider the following data on gross weekly income (in  $\pounds$ ) collected from two sites in Newcastle. Let us suppose that many more responses were collected in Jesmond so that a direct comparison of the frequencies using a standard histogram is not appropriate. Instead we use *relative* frequencies.

Weekly Income (£)	West Road (%)	Jesmond Road (%)
$0 \leq \text{income} < 100$	9.3	0.0
$100 \leq \text{income} < 200$	26.2	0.0
$200 \leq \text{income} < 300$	21.3	4.5
$300 \leq \text{income} < 400$	17.3	16.0
$400 \leq \text{income} < 500$	11.3	29.7
$500 \leq \text{income} < 600$	6.0	22.9
$600 \leq \text{income} < 700$	4.0	17.7
$700 \leq \text{income} < 800$	3.3	4.6
$800 \leq \text{income} < 900$	1.3	2.3
$900 \leq \text{income} < 1000$	0.0	2.3

Minitab was used to produce the following plot of the percentage relative frequancy polygons for the two groups.



We can clearly see the differences between the two samples. The line connecting the boxes represents the data from West Road and the line connecting the circles represents those for Jesmond Road. The distribution of incomes on West Road is skewed towards lower values, whilst those on Jesmond Road are more symmetric. The graph clearly shows that income in the Jesmond Road area is higher than that in the West Road area.

## 2.7 Cumulative Frequency Polygons (Ogive)

Cumulative percentage relative frequency is also a useful tool. The cumulative percentage relative frequency is simply the sum of the percentage relative frequencies at the end of each class interval (i.e. we add the frequencies up as we go along). Consider the example from the previous section:

Class Interval	% Relative Frequency	Cumulative % Relative Frequency
$0 \le x < 10$	10	10
$10 \le x < 20$	20	30
$20 \le x < 30$	35	65
$30 \le x < 40$	25	90
$40 \le x < 50$	10	100

At the upper limit of the first class the cumulative % relative frequency is simply the % relative frequency in the first class, i.e. 10. However, at the end of the second class, at 20, the cumulative % relative frequency is 10 + 20 = 30. The cumulative % relative frequency at the end of the last class must be 100.

The corresponding graph, or *ogive*, is simple to produce by hand:

- 1. Draw the axes.
- 2. Label the x-axis with the full range of the data and the y-axis from 0 to 100%.
- 3. Plot the cumulative % relative frequency at the *end point* of each class.
- 4. Join adjacent points, starting at 0% at the lowest class boundary.



For example, Minitab was used to produce the ogive below for the income data from the West Road survey:



This graph instantly tells you many things. To see what percentage of respondents earn less than  $\pounds x$  per week:

- 1. Find x on the x-axis and draw a line up from this value until you reach the ogive;
- 2. From this point trace across to the *y*-axis;
- 3. Read the percentage from the *y*-axis.

If we wanted to know what percentage of respondents in the survey in West Road earn less than  $\pounds 250$  per week, we simply find  $\pounds 250$  on the x-axis, trace up to the ogive and then trace across to the y-axis and we can read a figure of about 47%. The process obviously works in reverse. If we wanted to know what level of income 50% of respondents earned, we would trace across from 50% to the ogive and then down to the x-axis and read a value of about  $\pounds 300$ .

Ogives can also be used for comparison purposes. The following plot contains the ogives for the income data at both the West Road and Jesmond Road sites.



It clearly shows the ogive for Jesmond Road is shifted to the right of that for West Road. This tells us that the surveyed incomes are higher on Jesmond Road. We can compare the percentages of people earning different income levels between the two sites quickly and easily.

This technique can also be used to great effect for examining the changes before and after the introduction of a marketing strategy. For example, daily sales figures of a product for a period before and after an advertising campaign might be plotted. Here, a comparison of the two ogives can be used to help assess whether or not the campaign has been successful.

# 2.8 Other graphical summaries

### 2.8.1 Multiple Bar Charts

The data below gives the daily sales of CDs (in  $\pounds$ ) by music type for an independent retailer.

Day	Chart	Dance	Rest	Total
Monday	12000	10000	2700	24700
Tuesday	11000	8000	3000	22000
Wednesday	9000	6000	2000	17000
Thursday	10000	5000	2500	17500
Friday	12000	11000	3000	26000
Saturday	19000	12000	4000	35000
Sunday	10000	8000	2000	20000
Total	83000	60000	19200	162200

Bar charts could be drawn of total sales per music type in the week, or of total daily sales. It might be interesting to see daily sales broken down into music types. This can be done in a similar manner to the bar charts produced previously. The only difference is that the height of the bars is dictated by the total daily sales, and each bar has segments representing each music type.

The Minitab worksheet and chart this produces are shown below:



These types of charts are particularly good for presenting such financial information or illustrating any breakdown of data over time – for example, the number of new cars sold by month and model.

### 2.8.2 Pie charts

Pie charts are simple diagrams for displaying categorical or grouped data. These charts are commonly used within industry to communicate simple ideas, for example market share. They are used to show the proportions of a whole. They are best used when there are only a handful of categories to display.

A pie chart consists of a circle divided into segments, one segment for each category. The size of each segment is determined by the frequency of the category and measured by the angle of the segment. As the total number of degrees in a circle is 360, the angle given to a segment is  $360^{\circ}$  times the fraction of the data in the category, that is

angle = 
$$\frac{\text{Number in category}}{\text{Total number in sample }(n)} \times 360.$$

Consider the data on newspaper sales to 650 students.

Paper	Frequency	Degrees
The Times	140	77.5
The Sun	200	110.8
The Sport	50	27.7
The Guardian	120	66.5
The Financial Times	20	11.1
The Mirror	80	44.3
The Daily Mail	10	5.5
The Independent	30	16.6
Totals	650	360.0

The pie chart is constructed by first drawing a circle and then dividing it up into segments whose angles are calculated using this formula.

Minitab was used to produce the following pie chart:



It shows that The Sun, The Times and The Guardian are the most popular papers.

Note that the pie chart is a simple circle. Some computer software will draw "perspective" pie charts, pie charts with slices detached etc. It is best to avoid such gimmicks which merely obscure the information contained in the chart.

### 2.8.3 Scatter Plots

*Scatter plots* are used to plot two variables which you believe might be related, for example, height and weight, advertising expenditure and sales, or age of machinery and maintenance costs.

Consider the following data for monthly output and total costs at a factory.

Total costs (£)	Monthly Output
10300	2400
12000	3900
12000	3100
13500	4500
12200	4100
14200	5400
10800	1100
18200	7800
16200	7200
19500	9500
17100	6400
19200	8300

If you were interested in the relationship between the cost of production and the number of units produced you could easily plot this by hand.

- 1. The "response" variable is placed on the *y*-axis. Here we are trying to understand how total costs relate to monthly output and so the response variable is "total costs".
- 2. The variable that is used to try to explain the response variable (here, monthly output) is placed on the *x*-axis.
- 3. Plot the pairs of points on the graph.

This graph can be produced using Minitab (Select Graph then Scatterplot then Simple and insert the required variables).



The plot highlights a clear relationship between the two variables: the more units made, the more it costs in total. This relationship is shown on the graph by the upwards trend within the data – as monthly output increases so too does total cost. A downwards sloping trend would imply that as output increased, total costs declined, an unlikely scenario. This type of plot is the first stage of a more sophisticated analysis which we will develop in Semester 2 of this course.

### 2.8.4 Time Series Plots

So far we have only considered data where we can (at least for some purposes) ignore the order in which the data come. Not all data are like this. One exception is the case of time series data, that is, data collected over time. Examples include monthly sales of a product, the price of a share at the end of each day or the air temperature at midday each day. Such data can be plotted by using a **scatter plot**, but with *time* as the (horizontal) *x*-axis, and where the points are connected by lines.

Consider the following data (overleaf) on the number of computers sold (in thousands) by quarter (January-March, April-June, July-September, October-December) at a large warehouse outlet.

Quarter	<b>Units Sold</b>
Q1 2000	86.7
Q2 2000	94.9
Q3 2000	94.2
Q4 2000	106.5
Q1 2001	105.9
Q2 2001	102.4
Q3 2001	103.1
Q4 2001	115.2
Q1 2002	113.7
Q2 2002	108.0
Q3 2002	113.5
Q4 2002	132.9
Q1 2003	126.3
Q2 2003	119.4
Q3 2003	128.9
Q4 2003	142.3
Q1 2004	136.4
Q2 2004	124.6
Q3 2004	127.9

By hand, a time series plot is constructed as follows:

- 1. Draw the x-axis and label over the time scale.
- 2. Draw the *y*-axis and label with an appropriate scale.
- 3. Plot each point according to time and value.
- 4. Draw lines connecting all points.



The time series plot is:

The plot clearly shows us two things: firstly, that there is an upwards trend to the data, and secondly that there is some regular variation around this trend. We will come back to more sophisticated techniques for analysing time series data later in the course.

## 2.9 Exercises

1. The following table shows the weight (in kilograms) of 50 sacks of potatoes leaving a farm shop.

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	10.41	10.06	9.38	11.36	9.65
	11.24	10.58	8.55	10.47	8.22
	9.36	9.63	10.33	10.05	11.57
	11.36	10.82	8.93	10.08	9.53
	10.05	11.30	11.01	9.72	10.67
	9.91	10.26	10.67	10.21	8.18
	8.70	9.49	10.98	10.01	9.92
	9.27	11.69	9.66	9.52	10.40
	10.61	8.83	10.11	10.37	9.73
	10.72	10.63	12.86	10.62	10.26

Display these data in a stem and leaf plot. Note the number of decimal places and adjust accordingly. State clearly both the stem and the leaf units.

2. A market researcher asked 650 students what their favourite daily newspaper was. The results are summarised in the frequency table below. Represent these data in an appropriate graphical manner.

The Times	140
The Sun	200
The Sport	50
The Guardian	120
The Financial Times	20
The Mirror	80
The Daily Mail	10
The Independent	30

3. Produce a histogram for the data on length of mobile phone calls from the exercises in Chapter 1 (listed again below) and comment on it.

281.4	293.4	306.5	286.6	298.4
312.7	327.7	311.5	314.8	303.3
270.7	293.9	310.9	346.4	304.6
304.1	320.7	283.6	337.5	259.6
305.4	317.9	289.5	286.9	300.5
278.3	300.1	292.6	312.9	302.5
293.2	267.5	326.9	257.7	285.9
299.6	293.9	303.9	323.7	263.5
281.1	306.9	310.2	301.6	313.9
314.8	292.0	302.4	267.9	292.0

Daily Sales	Before	After
$1000 \le \text{sales} < 2000$	10	7
$2000 \leq \text{sales} < 3000$	30	10
$3000 \leq \text{sales} < 4000$	40	25
$4000 \leq \text{sales} < 5000$	20	35
$5000 \leq \text{sales} < 6000$	15	37
$6000 \leq \text{sales} < 7000$	12	40
$7000 \leq \text{sales} < 8000$	10	20
$8000 \leq \text{sales} < 9000$	8	10
$9000 \le sales < 10000$	0	5
Totals	145	189

4. Consider the following data for daily sales at a small record shop, before and after a local radio advertising campaign.

- (a) Calculate the percentage relative frequency for before and after.
- (b) Calculate the cumulative percentage relative frequency for before and after.
- (c) Plot the relative frequency polygons for both on one graph and comment.
- (d) Plot the ogives for both on one graph.
- (e) Find the level of sales, before and after, that are reached on 25%, 50% and 75% of days.