

## CHAPTER OVERVIEW

### 2: Describing Data

Chapter by Matthew Crump

*Far better an approximate answer to the right question, which is often vague, than an exact answer to the wrong question, which can always be made precise.*

— John W. Tukey

This chapter is about **descriptive statistics**. These are tools for describing data. Some things to keep in mind as we go along are:

1. There are lots of different ways to describe data
2. There is more than one “correct” way, and you get to choose the most “useful” way for the data that you are describing
3. It is possible to invent new ways of describing data, all of the ways we discuss were previously invented by other people, and they are commonly used because they are useful.
4. Describing data is necessary because there is usually too much of it, so it doesn’t make any sense by itself.

[2.1: This is what too many numbers looks like](#)

[2.2: Look at the data](#)

[2.3: Important Ideas - Distribution, Central Tendency, and Variance](#)

[2.4: Measures of Central Tendency \(Sameness\)](#)

[2.5: Measures of Variation \(Differentness\)](#)

[2.6: Using Descriptive Statistics with data](#)

[2.7: Rolling your own descriptive statistics](#)

[2.8: Remember to look at your data](#)

[2.9: Videos](#)

[2.10: References](#)

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