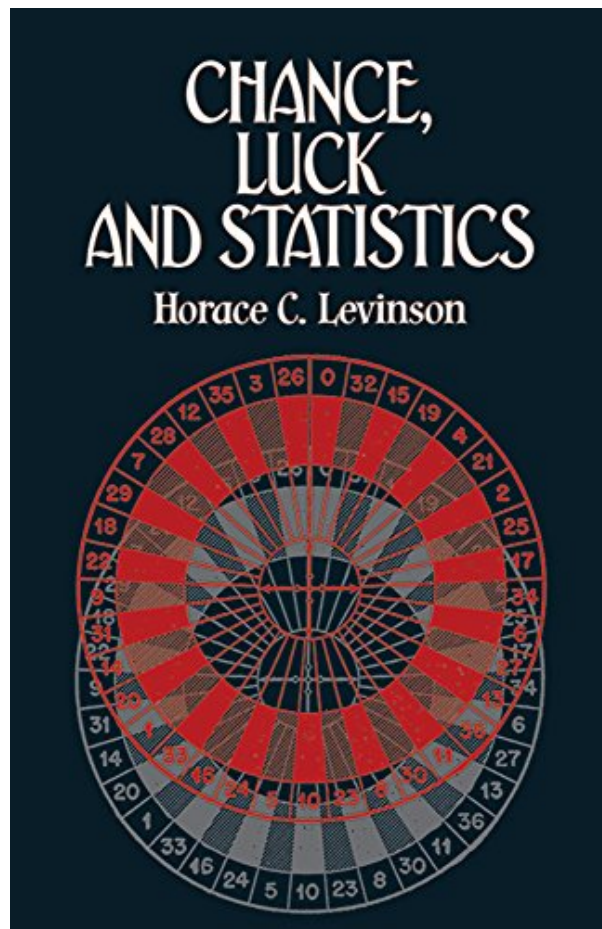


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"The style is clear and lively. The treatment ... is remarkably accurate. In short, it is a good book." — Scientific Monthly

To understand the laws behind chance and probability, you don't need a degree or other formal training in mathematics; all you need is this book! In simple, nontechnical language, it will introduce you to the fundamentals governing chance. Then you'll find a host of practical statistical applications for your new knowledge, including everyday pursuits ranging from sports and government to business and other fields.

The first part explains the theory of probability, with particular reference to superstitions and fallacies, betting odds, and the law of mathematical expectation, and with specific applications to poker, roulette, lotteries, dice games, bridge, and other games involving chance. The second part illustrates: how to apply the principles behind probability theory to statistics, with discussions of normal frequency distributions and the dangers of misusing statistics. A survey of statistical applications takes in a remarkable variety of fields, including strategic warfare, social problems, stock speculation, advertising, and operations research.

Written in a highly readable style, with frequent touches of humor, this volume will enliven any course in probability and statistics. It will appeal to both teachers and students of probability and statistics as well as to nonmathematicians.

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- Binding: Paperback
- 384 pages

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8 of 8 people found the following review helpful.

Dated, but still an excellent introduction

By Aaron C. Brown

The book has a simple two-part message. The first half is a discussion of the idea of luck versus chance, with illustrations mostly from gambling games. This is a deeper issue than many people (including people well-versed in the quantitative theory of probability) realize. It also happens to be one that troubles a lot of intelligent people who are not comfortable with Statistics, despite repeated attempts to learn the subject. I don't know of any other extended discussion of this quality done at an elementary level anyone can follow.

The second half does a similarly thorough job of moving from the mathematics of probability to the practice of statistics. The examples are drawn from everyday life or current events. This is statistics as it should be

taught, as a method of reasoning grounded in probability theory and careful consideration of data, rather than a cookbook of computer commands or bunch of theorems. A lot of books try to do this, but many academically-trained statisticians lack the long practical experience and effortless mastery this author brings to the table (he had the advantage of learning Statistics before that required years of advanced pure mathematics).

Unfortunately, the book is dated without significant alteration from the 1939 version. The examples seem old-fashioned, and some may not even be comprehensible to younger readers. As Rudolf Dankwort noted, it does not cover game theory, and its advice on poker is probabilistic only. It also does not cover nonparametric statistics, Bayesian methods or computers.

Therefore, I recommend this book mostly as an antidote to a bad statistics education for intelligent people. It will gently lay the groundwork you may have missed, so that the things you did learn will make more sense. It could also be used as a primer so that you can attack a conventional statistics book with a more solid foundation.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Five Stars

By Robin Mccartney

good book

5 of 11 people found the following review helpful.

very elementary my dear watson ...

By Rudolf Dankwort

This is a very elementary, almost jejune text. It is strictly for the non-mathematical & even non-logical! very few equations & full of obvious observations. Furthermore, it was originally written in 1939, before the advent of game theory, which it painfully lacks. The chapters on poker are also more or less useless since the element of bluffing is almost ignored. Game theory books are a lot more fun. But for the totally unscientific (in fact, for those with a distinctly superstitious bent), this book may well be worthwhile, like some of Sagan's general-reader stuff.

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