STA 291
Fall 2009

LECTURE 21

THURSDAY, 5 November

Continuous Probability Distributions

- For continuous distributions, we can not list all possible values with probabilities
- Instead, probabilities are assigned to intervals of numbers
- The probability of an individual number is 0
- Again, the probabilities have to be between 0 and 1
- The probability of the interval containing all possible values equals 1
- Mathematically, a continuous probability distribution corresponds to a (density) function whose integral equals 1

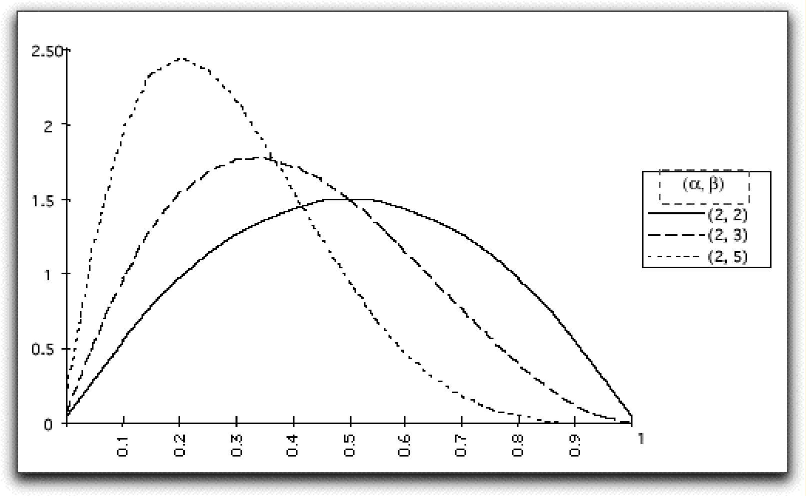
Continuous Probability Distributions: Example

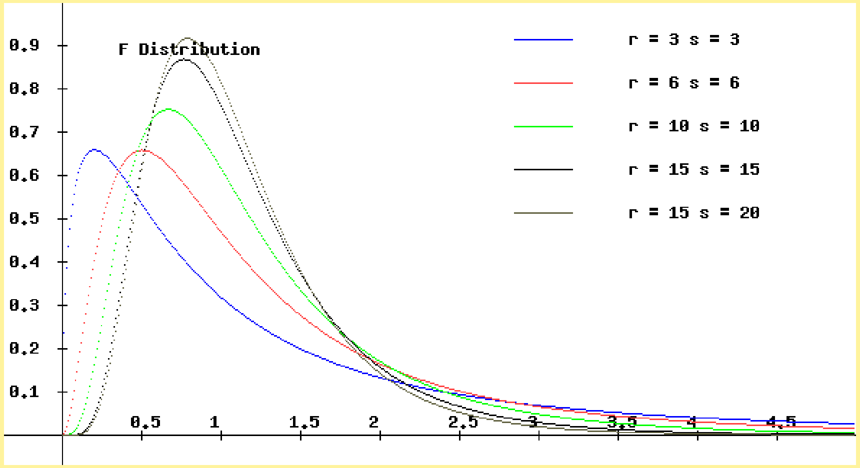
- Example: X=Weekly use of gasoline by adults in North America (in gallons)
- $P(6<X<9)=0.34$
- The probability that a randomly chosen adult in North America uses between 6 and 9 gallons of gas per week is 0.34
- Probability of finding someone who uses exactly 7 gallons of gas per week is 0 (zero)—might be *very close* to 7, but it won't be exactly 7.

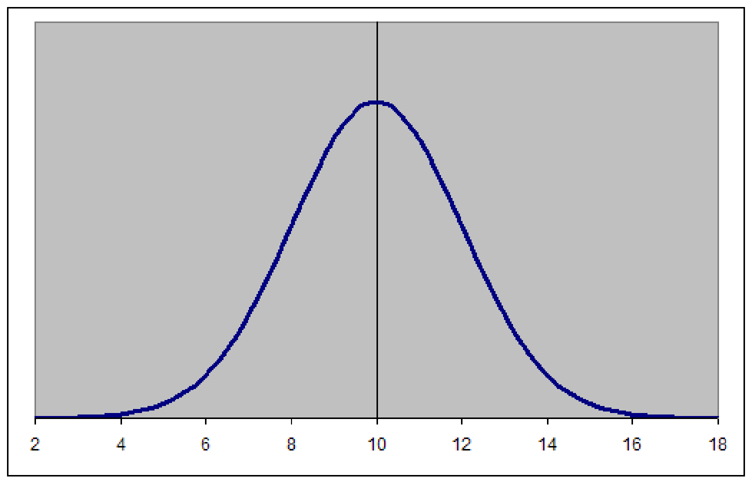
Graphs for Probability Distributions

- Discrete Variables:
  - Histogram
  - Height of the bar represents the probability
- Continuous Variables:
  - Smooth, continuous curve
  - Area under the curve for an interval represents the probability of that interval

Some Continuous Distributions





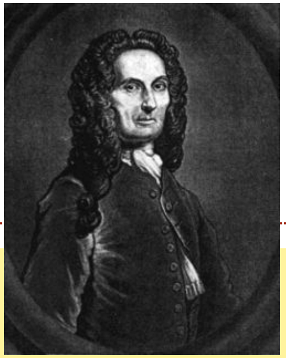


Normal Distribution

- Ch **9 Normal Distribution**

- Suggested problems from the textbook:
  9.1, 9.3, 9.5, 9.9, 9.15, 9.18, 9.24, 9.27.

The Normal Distribution



- Carl Friedrich Gauß (1777-1855), ***Gaussian Distribution***
- Normal distribution is perfectly ***symmetric and bell-shaped***
- Characterized by two parameters: ***mean μ*** and ***standard deviation σ***
- The ***68%-95%-99.7% rule*** applies to the normal distribution; that is, the probability concentrated within 1 standard deviation of the mean is always 0.68; within 2, 0.95; within 3, 0.997.
- The ***IQR ≈ 4/3σ rule*** also applies

Normal Distribution Example

- Female Heights: women between the ages of 18 and 24 average 65 inches in height, with a standard deviation of 2.5 inches, and the distribution is approximately normal.
- Choose a woman of this age at random: the probability that her height is between $\mu-\sigma=62.5$ and $\mu+\sigma=67.5$ inches is _____%?
- Choose a woman of this age at random: the probability that her height is between $\mu-2\sigma=60$ and $\mu+2\sigma=70$ inches is _____%?
- Choose a woman of this age at random: the probability that her height is greater than $\mu+2\sigma=70$ inches is _____%?

Normal Distributions

- So far, we have looked at the probabilities within one, two, or three standard deviations from the mean

$$(\mu \pm \sigma, \mu \pm 2\sigma, \mu \pm 3\sigma)$$

- How much probability is concentrated within 1.43 standard deviations of the mean?
- More generally, how much probability is concentrated within *z* standard deviations of the mean?

Calculation of Normal Probabilities

Table Z (page A-76 and A-77) :

Gives amount of probability between 0 and *z*, the *standard normal* random variable.

So what about the "*z* standard deviations of the mean" stuff from last slide?

Normal Distribution Table

- Table 3 shows, for different values of z, the probability to the left of $\mu + z\sigma$ (the cumulative probability)

- Probability that a normal random variable takes any value up to z standard deviations above the mean

- For z =1.43, the tabulated value is .9236

- That is, the probability **less than or equal to $\mu + 1.43\sigma$** for a normal distribution equals .9236

Why the table with Standard Normal Probabilities is all we Need

- When values from an arbitrary normal distribution are converted to *z*-scores, then they have a standard normal distribution
- The conversion is done by subtracting the mean μ, and then dividing by the standard deviation σ:

$$z = \frac{x - \mu}{\sigma}$$

z-scores: properties and uses

- The z-score for a value x of a random variable is the number of standard deviations that x is above μ

- If x is below μ, then the z-score is negative

- The z-score is used to compare values from different (normal) distributions

z-scores: properties and uses

- The z-score is used to compare values from different normal distributions
- SAT: $\mu = 500$, $\sigma = 100$
- ACT: $\mu = 18$, $\sigma = 6$
- Which is better, 650 in the SAT or 25 in the ACT?

$$z_{\text{SAT}} = \frac{650 - 500}{100} = 1.5 \qquad z_{\text{ACT}} = \frac{25 - 18}{6} = 1.17$$

Backwards z Calculations

- We can also use the table to find *z-values* for given probabilities
- Find the *z-value* corresponding to a right-hand tail probability of 0.025
- This corresponds to a probability of 0.975 to the left of z standard deviations above the mean
- Table: $z = 1.96$

Going in Reverse, S'More

- Find the *z-value* for a right-hand tail probability
  - of 0.1 is z = ____________.
  - of 0.01 is z = ____________.
  - of 0.05 is z = ____________.

Attendance Question #14

Write your name and section number on your index card.

Today's question: