Lesson 15: More Practice with Box Plots

You reach into a jar of Tootsie Pops. How many Tootsie Pops do you think you could hold in one hand? Do you think the number you could hold is greater than or less than what other students can hold? Is the number you could hold a typical number of Tootsie Pops? This lesson examines these questions.

Classwork

Example 1: Tootsie Pops

As you learned earlier, the five numbers that you need to make a box plot are the minimum, the lower quartile, the median, the upper quartile, and the maximum. These numbers are called the -number summary of the data.

Ninety-four people were asked to grab as many Tootsie Pops as they could hold. Here is a box plot for these data. Are you surprised?



Exercises 1–5

1. What might explain the variability in how many Tootsie Pops those people were able to hold?
2. Estimate the values in the -number summary from the box plot.
3. Describe how the box plot can help you understand the difference in the number of Tootsie Pops people could hold.
4. Here is Jayne’s description of what she sees in the plot. Do you agree or disagree with her description? Explain your reasoning.
“One person could hold as many as Tootsie Pops. The number of Tootsie Pops people could hold was really different and spread about equally from to . About one half of the people could hold more than Tootsie Pops.”
5. Here is a different plot of the same data on the number of Tootsie Pops people could hold.



* 1. Why do you suppose the five values are separate points and are labeled?
	2. Does knowing these data values change anything about your responses to Exercises 1 to 4 above?

Exercises 6–10: Maximum Speeds

The maximum speeds of selected birds and land animals are given in the tables below.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Bird | Speed (mph) |  | Land animal | Speed (mph) |
| Peregrine falcon |  |  | [Cheetah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cheetah) |  |
| Swift bird |  |  | [Free-tailed bat](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free-tailed_bat) (in flight) |  |
| Spine-tailed swift |  |  | [Pronghorn](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pronghorn) antelope |  |
| [White-throated needletail](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White-throated_Needletail) |  |  | [Lion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Springbok) |  |
| [Eurasian hobby](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eurasian_Hobby) |  |  | [Wildebeest](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wildebeest) |  |
| Pigeon |  |  | [Jackrabbit](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jackrabbit) |  |
| [Frigate bird](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frigatebird) |  |  | [African wild dog](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African_wild_dog) |  |
| Spur-winged goose |  |  | [Kangaroo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kangaroo) |  |
| Red-breasted merganser |  |  | [Horse](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horse) |  |
| Canvasback duck |  |  | [Thomson's gazelle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomson%27s_gazelle) |  |
| [Anna's Hummingbird](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anna%27s_Hummingbird) |  |  | [Greyhound](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greyhound) |  |
| [Ostrich](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ostrich) |  |  | [Coyote](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coyote) |  |
|  |  |  | Mule deer |  |
|  |  |  | Grizzly bear |  |
|  |  |  | Cat |  |
|  |  |  | Elephant |  |
|  |  |  | Pig |  |

Data Source: Natural History Magazine, March 1974, copyright 1974; The American Museum of Natural History; and James G. Doherty, general curator, The Wildlife Conservation Society; [*http://www.thetravelalmanac.com/lists/animals-speed.htm; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fastest\_animals*](http://www.thetravelalmanac.com/lists/animals-speed.htm)

1. As you look at the speeds, what strikes you as interesting?
2. Do birds or land animals seem to have the greatest variability in speeds? Explain your reasoning.
3. Find the -number summary for the speeds in each data set. What do the -number summaries tell you about the distribution of speeds for each data set?
4. Use the -number summaries to make a box plot for each of the two data sets.

0 25 50 75 100 125 150 175 200 225 250

Maximum speed of land animals (mph)

0 25 50 75 100 125 150 175 200 225 250

 Maximum speed of birds (mph)

1. Write several sentences to tell someone about the speeds of birds and land animals.

Exercises 11–15: What is the Same and What is Different?

Consider the following box plots, which show the number of questions different students in three different classes got correct on a -question quiz.

1. Describe the variability in the scores of the three classes.
2. a. Estimate the interquartile range for each of the three sets of scores.
	1. What fraction of students does the interquartile range represent?
	2. What does the value of the IQR tell you about how the scores are distributed?
3. The teacher asked students to draw a box plot with a minimum value at and a maximum value at that had an interquartile range of . Jeremy said he could not draw just one because he did not know where to put the box on the number line. Do you agree with Jeremy? Why or why not?
4. Which class do you believe performed the best? Be sure to use the data from the box plots to back up your answer.
5. a. Find the IQR for the three data sets in the first two examples: maximum speed of birds, maximum speed of

land animals, and number of Tootsie Pops.

* 1. Which data set had the highest percentage of data values between the lower quartile and the upper quartile? Explain your thinking.

Lesson Summary

In this lesson, you learned about the -number summary for a set of data: minimum, lower quartile, median, upper quartile, and maximum. You made box plots after finding the -number summary for two sets of data (speeds of birds and land animals), and you estimated the -number summary from box plots (number of Tootsie Pops people can hold, class scores). You also found the interquartile range (IQR), which is the difference between the upper quartile and lower quartile. The IQR, the length of the box in the box plot, indicates how closely the middle half of the data is bunched around the median. (Note that because sometimes data values repeat and the same numerical value may fall in two sections of the plot, it is not always exactly half. This happened with the two speeds of mph – one went into the top quarter of the data and the other into the third quarter – the upper quartile was .)

You also practiced describing a set of data using the -number summary, making sure to be as precise as possible- avoiding words like “a lot” and “most” and instead saying about one half or three fourths.

Problem Set

1. The box plot below summarizes the maximum speeds of certain kinds of fish.
	1. Estimate the -number summary from the box plot.
	2. The fastest fish is the sailfish at mph followed by the marlin at mph. What does this tell you about the spread of the fish speeds in the top quarter of the plot?
	3. Use the -number summary and the IQR to describe the speeds of the fish.
2. Suppose you knew that the interquartile range for the number of hours students spent playing video games during the school week was . What do you think about each of the following statements? Explain your reasoning.
	1. About half of the students played video games for hours during a school week.
	2. All of the students played at least hours of video games during the school week.
	3. About half of the class could have played video games from to hours a week or from to hours.
3. Suppose you know the following for a data set: minimum value is , the lower quartile is , the IQR is , half of the data are less than , and the maximum value is .
	1. Think of a context for which these numbers might make sense.
	2. Sketch a box plot.
	3. Are there more data values above or below the median? Explain your reasoning.
4. The speeds for the fastest dogs are given in the table below.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Breed | Speed (mph) |  | Breed | Speed (mph) |
| Greyhound |  |  | Irish Wolfhound |  |
| African Wild Dog |  |  | Dalmatian |  |
| Saluki  |  |  | Border Collie  |  |
| Whippet |  |  | Alaskan Husky |  |
| Basanji |  |  | Giant Schnauzer |  |
| German Shepherd |  |  | Jack Russell Terrier |  |
| Vizsla |  |  | Australian Cattle Dog |  |
| Doberman Pinscher |  |  |  |  |

Data Source: <http://www.vetstreet.com/our-pet-experts/meet-eight-of-the-fastest-dogs-on-the-planet>; <http://canidaepetfood.blogspot.com/2012/08/which-dog-breeds-are-fastest.html>

* 1. Find the -number summary for this data set and use it to create a box plot of the speeds.
	2. Why is the median not in the center of the box?
	3. Write a few sentences telling your brother or sister about the speed of the fastest dogs.