

BOOK REVIEW

Publishers are invited to send in their recent mathematical publications for reviewing. Reviews of books of mathematical interest are solicited from readers. Books or reviews should be sent to The Editor, Mathematical Medley, Department of Mathematics, University of Singapore, Singapore 10.

Basic Ideas of Statistics by Bernard W. Lindgren. Macmillan, New York, 1975, x + 352 pp., 10 tables, US\$4.00.

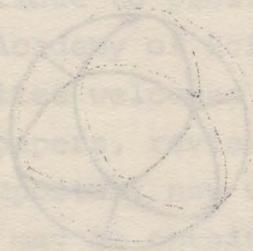
This book contains eleven chapters and may be used at Pre-University One level for about a year or by Secondary Four Students following a course of Additional Mathematics. The author uses simple language to explain the basic notions in statistics. There is a wealth of reading material though it would be more desirable to include more worked examples. However, this book is also suitable for the general reader who wishes to know something about statistics. Unfortunately, the background of the material contains no local flavour, and S.I. units are not consistently used in the book.

The material of the book is well-presented and the important statistical terms are well-explained. For instance, the concept of random variable is explained at great length (perhaps too much so). There is a lengthy chapter on comparisons between means, error estimation, standard error and two-sided T-tests, but not enough examples and exercises. The terms relating to bivariate, independence and correlation are explained with vivid examples. The chapter on inference for categorical population brings out clarity in ideas on proportions and the Z-test.

On the notions of sample space, outcomes and events, Venn diagrams should have been included to illustrate them. The topics of discrete and continuous models, normal distribution, distribution functions and random number tables are dealt with in a rather terse style. The two short chapters on linear regression and analysis of variance are informative and interesting. The tables given at the end would have been commendable if explanations were given as to how they could be used.

Generally, the presentation of many concepts, models and examples is good, illustrative and appealing to the reader. It agitates his mind, makes him think and thus involves him in the process of learning. This is a good introductory book on statistics.

Henry Kwok



'I am convinced that neither I nor any other human, past or present, was or is a genius. I am convinced that what I have every physically normal child also has at birth. We could, of course, hypothesize that all babies are born geniuses and get swiftly degeniused. Unfavourable circumstances, short-sightedness, frayed nervous systems, and ignorantly articulated love and fear of elders tend to shut off many of the child's brain-capability valves. I was lucky in avoiding too many disconnects.

'There is luck in everything. My luck is that I was born cross-eyed, was ejected so frequently from the establishment that I was finally forced either to perish or to employ some of those faculties with which we are all endowed - the use of which circumstances had previously so frustrated as to have put them in the deep freezer, where only hellishly hot situations could provide enough heat to melt them back into usability.'

R. Buckminster Fuller (1895 -)

