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What Is an Almanac?

An almanac is a book that is published each year. In general, it will include a calendar, astronomical information, data about weather trends, statistics dealing with many other areas of interest, and details about various events and anniversaries. There are many different kinds of almanacs. In fact, there are hundreds of different almanacs published every year. There are almanacs published by newspapers, such as the *New York Times Almanac*. There are technology almanacs, sports almanacs, nautical almanacs, nutrition almanacs, farmers' almanacs, and even a witches' almanac. Whatever you can think of, whatever you're interested in, you can find an almanac about it. For this book about how to use an almanac, we will be using *The World Almanac and Book Of Facts*. It's an amazing book that is full of an incredible amount of facts about so many subjects that you could never be bored.

Using Lists

There are all kinds of lists: to-do lists, shopping lists, etc. There are also many interesting lists that tell us things about all kinds of things. There are alphabetical lists, chronological lists, numerical lists, and lists based upon percentages. A popular kind of list is the popularity list. A popularity list usually has a title with words like "Top Ten…," or "Favorite…," or "Best…."

Here is an example of such a list from *The World Almanac*:

Top-Grossing North American Concert Tours, 1985-2001

Source: Pollstar, Fresno, CA

	Artist (Year)	Total gross	Cities/ Shows
1.	The Rolling Stones (1994)	$121.2	43/60
2.	U2 (2001)	109.7	56/80
3.	Pink Floyd (1994)	103.5	39/59
4.	The Rolling Stones (1989)	98.0	33/60
5.	The Rolling Stones (1997)	89.3	26/33
6.	'N Sync (2001)	86.8	36/43
7.	Backstreet Boys (2001)	82.1	73/98
8.	Tina Turner (2000)	80.2	88/95
9.	U2 (1997)	79.9	37/46
10.	The Eagles (1994)	79.4	32/54
11.	'N Sync (2000)	76.4	64/86
12.	The New Kids on the Block (1990)	$74.1	122/152
13.	Dave Matthews Band (2000)	68.2	43/63
14.	U2 (1992)	67.0	61/73
15.	The Rolling Stones (1999)	64.7	26/34
16.	The Eagles (1995)	63.3	46/58
17.	KISS (2000)	62.7	120/128
18.	Bruce Springsteen & The E Street Band (1999)	61.4	18/54
19.	Dave Matthews Band (2001)	60.5	36/51
20.	Barbra Streisand (1994)	58.9	06/22

(1) In millions. Not adjusted for inflation.

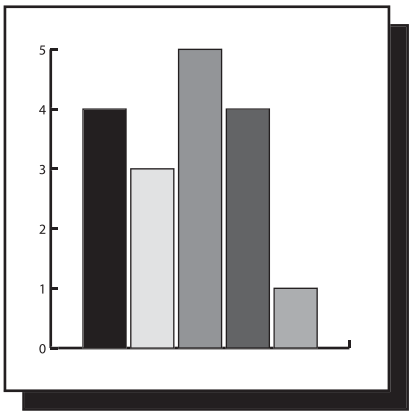
→ Activity: Gross Graphs!

What can you learn from this list? Which concerts are the most recent, and what did they gross? Which concert tour took place first? Which band has had the most top-grossing tours? Which bands or performers have only one top-grossing tour?

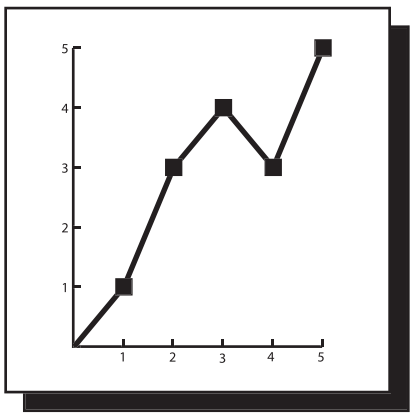
What is the difference between the highest amount earned and the least?

Challenge: *Using the information from the list, create a graph to show the information. Use one of the following types of graphs.*

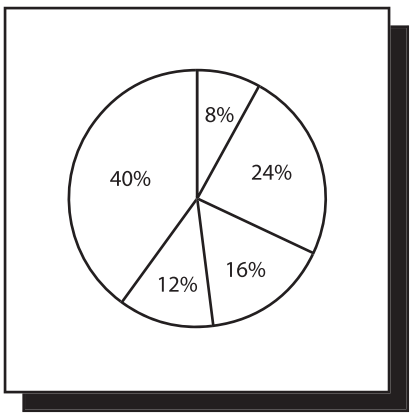
bar graph



line graph



pie graph



Weights and Measures

It's difficult for some people to remember the metric system, but its use is growing all over the world—and for good reason: it actually makes more sense, even if it is unfamiliar to many of us, and it was signed into law as the only system to be sanctioned by Congress. In 1975 President Ford signed the Metric Conversion Act. So we'd better get busy and learn the metric system! This will help:

Frequently Used Conversions

Boldface indicates exact values. For greater accuracy, use the "multiply by" number in parentheses.

U.S. Customary to Metric

	If you have:	Multiply by:	To get:
Length	inches	**25.4**	millimeters
	inches	**2.54**	centimeters
	inches	**0.0254**	meters
	feet	0.3 (**0.3048**)	meters
	yards	0.9 (**0.9144**)	meters
	miles[1]	1.6 (**1.609344**)	kilometers
Area	sq. inches	6.5 (**6.4516**)	sq. cm.
	sq. feet	0.09 (0.09290341)	sq. meters
	sq. yards	0.84 (0.83612736)	sq. meters
	acres	0.4 (0.4046873)	hectares
	sq. miles	2.6 (2.58998811)	sq. kilometers
Weight	ounces (avdp)	28 (**28.349523125**)	grams
	pounds (avdp)	454 (**453.59237**)	grams
	pounds (avdp)	0.45 (**0.45359237**)	kilograms
	short tons[2]	0.91 (**0.90718474**)	metric tons
	long tons[3]	1 (**1.0160469088**)	metric tons
Liquid meas.	ounces	0.03 (0.02957353)	liters
	cups	0.24 (0.23658824)	liters
	pints	0.47 (0.473176473)	liters
	quarts	0.95 (0.946352946)	liters
	gallons	3.79 (3.785411784)	liters

Metric to U.S. Customary

	If you have:	Multiply by:	To get:
Length	millimeters	0.04 (0.03937)	inches
	centimeters	0.4 (0.3937)	inches
	meters	39 (39.37)	inches
	meters	3.3 (3.280840)	feet
	meters	1.1 (1.093613)	yards
	kilometers	0.6 (0.621371)	miles
Area	sq. cm.	0.16 (0.15500)	sq. inches
	sq. meters	10.8 (10.76391)	sq. feet
	sq. meters	1.2 (1.195990)	sq. yards
	hectares	2.5 (2.471044)	acres
	sq. kilometers	0.39 (0.386102)	sq. miles
Weight	grams	0.035 (0.03527396)	ounces (avdp)
	grams	0.002 (0.00220462)	pounds (avdp)
	kilograms	2.2 (2.204623)	pounds (avdp)
	metric tons	1.1 (1.102311)	short tons[2]
	metric tons	0.98 (0.9842065)	long tons[3]
Liquid meas.	liters	33.8 (33.81402)	ounces
	liters	4.2 (4.226752)	cups
	liters	2.1 (2.113376)	pints
	liters	1.1 (1.056688)	quarts
	liters	0.26 (0.264172)	gallons

(1) Statute mile. (2) A short ton is 2,000 pounds. (3) A long ton is 2,240 pounds.

→ Activity: How Many Centimeters Long Is My Left Foot?

Measure your foot (with or without shoe), your height, your weight, the width of your desk or the room you are in, and how much is in your drinking glass or juice carton. List each of these items and their inches, feet, pounds or ounces. Next, convert the measurements to metric by multiplying according to the table above. List in metric measurements the length of your foot, your height, your weight, the width of your desk or the room, and the amount you have to drink. You may use a calculator, if you wish. Record as many metric measurements as you can around the house and your classroom. Start to get a feel for the system by remembering and comparing things to those you already know.

Challenge: *Find out what the temperature is in your classroom or outside, and convert it to Celsius. Use the following formulas:*

TO CONVERT FAHRENHEIT TEMPERATURES TO CELSIUS:

1. Subtract 32 from the Fahrenheit temperature value.
2. Then multiply by 5.
3. Then divide the result by 9. Example:
   To convert 68 degrees Fahrenheit to Celsius,
   68 – 32 = 36; 36 x 5 = 180; 180 ÷ 9 = 20

TO CONVERT CELSIUS TEMPERATURES TO FAHRENHEIT:

1. Multiply the Celsius temperature by 9.
2. Then divide by 5.
3. Then add 32 to the result.
   Example: To convert
   20 degrees Celsius to Fahrenheit,
   20 x 9 = 180; 180 ÷ 5 = 36; 36 + 32 = 68

