How to Survive and Thrive in

Data Reporting

This class might strike fear in the hearts of journalists, but if you can learn how to analyze complex information into compelling stories, you'll be ahead of most investigative journalists. Follow these tips to make this class an ocean breeze on calm seas.

First Things First...

- Don't overthink the instructions. Don't freak out.
- It's less about the code; it's more about the process and how data can inform your stories.
- Your projects don't need to be the most Earth-shattering story ever. Take it easy on yourself.
- Learn from the feedback on labs and projects.
- No computer science degree required. Just your sense for news.

Don't worry about getting the right answer... ! But Accuracy = Life?

There's really no "right" answer. Granular data sets that haven't been aggregated won't tell you a "right" answer. Your goal is analyzing the data and finding the "How many?", "What percent?" answers you seek. Then write a sentence that communicates it clearly. The data source might not have even aggregated the data yet, or it's aggregated in a way that is not helpful to you. Secondary sources may have analyzed it differently than you will, so they will have a different answer.

Envision Success

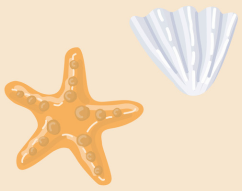
Which performer has the most appearances on the Billboard's Hot 100 list?

Break your question into pieces and put them together the way you want to see your answer.

This is the end result you want:

performer	# of appearances
name	# - number
name	#
name	#
name	#

It's Taylor Swift, by the way.



Quick Tips

- Clean up your computer and clear out your storage before installing R & RStudio
- Think story, not study
- Start your projects early and don't get behind
- Stuck? Walk away for a while; then come back and try again
- If you're really stuck, seek help on #dj-sos or during office hours
- Ask ChatGPT for help
  - Make sure to specify you're working in the tidyverse library

RStudio Tips

- Double check your code or have a friend take a second look
- Always check the parentheses and quotes
- Try not to copy and paste the codes. Type them out! You'll learn the code structure better
- Create interim data sets always
- Try to understand what the errors are telling you and troubleshoot from there
- Update your packages, unless told otherwise

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