

Average Names



Compare the number of letters in the names of the people in your family or group of friends.

What you need

1-inch graph paper	Pencil	Paper
Glue	Calculator	Scissors

What to do

1. Some names are short and some names are long. Some are in the middle! This length of name is close to the average length of all the names.
2. Make a list of the names of your family or friends.
3. Write one letter in each square spelling out the names.
4. Cut out the names.
5. Line up the names from shortest to longest.
6. Find the average length of the names: Cut out and move the letters from the longer names to the shorter names until all the names have the same number of letters.
7. The average will be the number of letters each name ended up with after you moved them.

What to ask

- Which name has the most letters?
- Which name has the fewest letters?
- Which names are “just right”?
- Which names did not need to be cut?
- How would the name “Joe” affect your average?
- How about the name “Mary-Elizabeth” or “Gabriella”?



Did you know?

Averages are used in sports, statistics, business, and weather. Averages help to compare results. Averages are simply a redistribution that creates equal groups from unequal groups. Understanding this in a concrete way can assist understanding how mean averaging works and how extreme lows and highs may “skew” the average. The mathematical name for average is “mean”.





What's next?

- Line up the names from shortest to longest. Which name is exactly in the middle? How many letters does it have? This is the median.
- Which name's letter-length shows up most often? This is the mode.

To learn more

The Name Jar

by Yangsook Choi

Being the new kid in school is hard enough, but what about when nobody can pronounce your name? Having just moved from Korea, Unhei is anxious that American kids will like her. So instead of introducing herself on the first day of school, she tells the class that she will choose a name by the following week. Her new classmates are fascinated by this no-name girl and decide to help out by filling a glass jar with names for her to pick from.

Two Ways to Count to Ten

by Ruby Dee

A retelling of a traditional Liberian tale in which King Leopard invites all the animals to a spear-throwing contest whose winner will marry his daughter and succeed him as king.

How it helps with school

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) Standards

Probability and Statistics: 3.14B; 4.13C; 5.13B

Underlying Processes and Mathematical Tools: 3.15A-D; 4.14A-D; 5.14A-D

National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) Standards

Number and Operations, Data Analysis and Probability, Problem Solving

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