

Assignment 1: Guide to Worksheet Data

Part I: Locating information about your high school from the Data Quest web site

The first set of data (rows 1 through 25) is taken from a website maintained by the California Department of Education called "Data Quest" (<http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>). If you went to a public high school in California or are using one of the four proxy high schools, you can find data about your school at this site. You may want to make a bookmark for the home page of Data Quest, especially as some of data pages lack a clearly marked tab for returning to the Data Quest home page. To help those who are unfamiliar with internet searches, I have made copies of sample web pages (marked p. A.1, p. A.2, etc.). If you need a copy of this booklet, let me know.

A.1) Type in the URL for the Data Quest home page. Once the home page appears, you will be asked to select options under "1. Level" and "2. Subject" (see page A1). Under "1. Level" select the "school" option. Under "2. Subject" select the "School Performance" option. This option will open a box to four more choices. Choose "Academic Performance Index (API)" option within the "School Performance" box. After you have made your selections, press the "Submit" button.

A.2) Once you have submitted your request on the Data Quest home page, you will be taken to a second page entitled "API School Level Reports" (see page A2 top). You will be asked to type a portion of the name of your high school (e.g., the first four letters) and click submit. This will take you to a second page (entitled "Academic Performance Index (API) Report" (see page A2 bottom). Select your high school name under the "Select Agency" box and year of report under "Select Report." Choose the first option "2004 API Base Report-School Report." Click submit.

A.3) You should now see a page with the heading "2004 Academic Performance Index (API) Base" (see page A3).

Item 1 on your data worksheet asks for your school's API base score. You should see this score on the top left side of the page.

Item 2 on your data worksheet asks for your school's statewide rank. You should see this number next to the API base score. Schools are ranked in ten percent increments. A score of one means that the school is in the bottom 10 percent of all California public (high) schools. A score of ten means that the school ranks in the 90th percentile or higher of all California public (high) schools. A score of six means that the school ranks in the 60th to 69th percentile (i.e., at least 59% of schools have lower scores and at least 30% have higher scores).

A.4) Once you have recorded your high school's API base score and statewide rank, look at the top right corner of the pages, you will see a box entitled "School Demographic Characteristics." Click on this box.

Items 3-10. On the left side of this page you will see a chart with the heading "Ethnic/Racial". These data measure the ethnic and racial composition of your high school. Record the percentage under each ethnic/racial group listed. Make a mental note of the

groups that are most and least represented in your high school. If you want to indicate the size of your high school, fill in the blank under item 10 asking for "Total Student Enrollment."

(Note that I included numbers in parentheses next to the percentages of each group attending Piedmont and Balboa High. I included these data (as well as the schools' total enrollment) to give you a sense of the density of each group within each high school. You do not need to find the numbers for each ethnic group for your school. You can make more accurate comparisons by looking at percentages of each group within each school.)

Items 11-16 The next column (on the left side) presents data on parent education level. Item 11—"percent with a response"—indicates the proportion of parents who gave information about their educational levels to the school. Copy the percentages for your school. Note how parents' education level differs among the three high schools. I included state averages for parental education to give you a sense of how the schools compare to the California average.

Item 17 The next chart on the right side of the page shows the percent of "participants in free or reduced price lunch." Record the number on your worksheet for your school. Why is this datum significant?

Item 18 Scrolling down on the right side of the page, you will see the percentage of English learners in your high school. Record the number on your worksheet for your school. Why is this datum significant?

A.5) Return to the Data Quest home page. Select "School" under "Level" and "Create your own report" under "Subject." Then click the submit key. You will be taken to a page entitled "Select Year of Data and Enter a Portion of the School Name" (see page A5). Follow the directions given on this page (e.g., click on "2004-05"--the first option under "1) Determine time frame." Type in the first four letters of your high school under "2) Type a portion of the name." When completed, click the submit button. If there are several schools whose names begin with the letters you have typed in, you will be taken to a new page with a list of these schools on a scroll. Look for and select the name of your high school, checking that the city associated with the high school name is indeed the city of your high school. Click the submit button.

A.6) You should now be at the "Select Your Own Data" page (see p. A6). Scroll down until you see "Graduation data (prior year)." Select the boxes marked "Graduates" and "Grads Completing UC/CSU Classes." In the row underneath graduation data, you will see "Dropout data Grades 9-12 (prior year)." Select the boxes "Number of Dropouts (9-12)" and "1 yr dropout rate (9-12)" and "4 yr dropout rate (9-12)". Then click the submit button at the bottom of the page. (Note, in most cases, you will be able to find the data you are looking for under the year 2004-05. If by some chance you get the message that no data is available, go back to p. A2 and try an earlier year, e.g., 2003-04.)

Items 19-20. Copy the data for your school (first row of the chart) on to your worksheet.

Item 21 To determine the percentage of UC/CSU eligible grads as a share to the total graduates, divide the number of UC/CSU eligible grads (line 20) by the total number of grads (line 19) (For example, at Balboa High, 165 kids graduated in 2003-04, 58 of whom met UC/CSU admissions requirements. Divide 58 by 165. The quotient is .3515 or 35.15%.) Write the quotient from your calculation as a percentage on line 21.

Items 22-24 Copy the data for your school (first row of the chart) on to your worksheet.

A.7) Return to the Data Quest home page. Select “School” under “Level” and “Subject Area/Courses” under “Subject.” Then click the submit key. You will be taken to “Year/Portion of School Name” page (see p. A5). Leave the year as 2004-05 and type in the first four letters of your school and click submit. This should take you to the “Course Information” page (see page A7). Make sure the name of your high school appears under “Select Agency. Under “Select Report” choose the third option, “Course Enrollments by School (Select categories below)” and “Teaching Assignments-Advanced Placement (grades 9-12)” (the third of the five choices). Click submit at the bottom of the page.

A.8) Item 25 You should be at a page entitled “Course Enrollments by School” (see page A.8). You will see a listing of advance placement classes by subject (English, Science, etc.). Scroll across the row until you see the heading “number of classes” and down the column until you see “school total.” The number in this box represents the total number of advance placement classes offered by this school. Record this number on line 25 of your worksheet. How does the number of advance placement classes offered at your high school compare to Balboa or Piedmont’s offerings?

Congratulations on finishing the first half of the data worksheet! You might want to take a break at this point.

Part II. Locating information about your community from the American FactFinder website.

B.1) The second website we will use to help you situate your class standing in the broader context of American society is called American FactFinder and is maintained by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Enter the URL to get to FactFinder’s home page: <http://factfinder.census.gov/home>. You may want to make a bookmark for this home page. At the top of the page, you will see a column headed by “Fast Access to Information” and “Get a Fact Sheet for your community...” Type in your home zip code in the box labeled “city/town, county or zip” and click on the “go” button (see page B.1). The Piedmont and Balboa data is based on the zip code of the two high schools.

Items 25-28 Under the “General Characteristics” column, copy the appropriate percentages for each of the first ten items on part II of the worksheet. Do you see any significant variations in age across the three communities?

Items 29-35 The US Census distinguishes between race and ethnicity. Latinos are counted as an ethnicity, but can be of any “race.” This manner of calculating racial populations means that the general category of “whites” includes both Hispanic “whites” and non-Hispanic “whites.” Thus, ignore the percentage of whites listed on this page, but copy the percentage of the other groups on to your worksheet. (The category “black” is also enlarged by the inclusion of Latinos who claim African ancestry, but this is a smaller group and does not inflate the estimates of African Americans as much as the inclusion of Hispanics inflates estimates of “whites.”)

B.3) Item 36 On the right side of the column heading “General Characteristics” there is an option called “show more.” Click on this option. You will be taken to a page with a chart listing general demographic characteristics of your area (see page B.3). Scroll down past “age” and “race” until you find the heading “HISPANIC OR LATINO AND RACE.” At the end

of this section, you will find a subheading "white alone." Copy the percentage of "white alone" in your home community on to your worksheet.

Items 38-44 Click on your "back" button to return to your general data page on your home community. Look under "Social Characteristics" to find items 38-41 and copy the percentages on to your worksheet. Look under "Economic Characteristics" to find items 42-44. Again, copy the percentages on to your worksheet.

B.4) Items 45-51 On the right side of the column heading "Economic Characteristics" click on the "show more" option. Scroll down until you see the heading "Employed civilian population 16 years and over." The first category listed is "Occupation." Copy the percentages on to your worksheet. What do these data tell you about the class composition of your home community?

Congratulations! You've finished the Data Worksheets!! Bring your completed copies with you to class on September 27th and again on October 4th.