



Graphics in R

There are three main types of functions that deal with graphics in R

High-level functions that produce complete plots

Low-level functions or graphical primitives that can be added to an existing plot or assembled to build a new plot type

A limited set of interactive features for working with graphical output

Graphics in R

When making graphics in R, you typically issue a series of calls to graphics functions, each producing a complete plot or adding to an existing plot

Sometimes, people refer to this as the “Painter’s model” meaning you add layers to a plot in steps, with later output obscuring what came before

Standard plots

A range of standard plots can be made with R and these are typically produced by a single function call (but can be added to)

These functions have embedded in them a number of “good choices” (both in terms of layout and design as well as any parameters that might need setting) to facilitate rapid iterations to support analysis

These, however, can also just be the starting point for more elaborate graphics, adding annotations, overlaying other plotting elements

The BRFSS

The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System is the world's largest telephone survey and it is designed to track health risks in the United States; like many surveys, **the BRFSS works with only a *sample of a larger population***

With over 200 million adults in the United States, the CDC couldn't possibly contact their entire population*; instead, they selected around 400 thousand adults, calling roughly 30 thousand per month

1. Background

The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) is a collaborative project of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and U.S. states and territories. The BRFSS, administered and supported by the Behavioral Surveillance Branch (BSB) of the CDC, is an ongoing data collection program designed to measure behavioral risk factors in the adult population 18 years of age or over living in households. The BRFSS was initiated in 1984, with 15 states collecting surveillance data on risk behaviors through monthly telephone interviews. The number of states participating in the survey increased, so that by 2000, 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands were participating in the BRFSS.

The objective of the BRFSS is to collect uniform, state-specific data on preventive health practices and risk behaviors that are linked to chronic diseases, injuries, and preventable infectious diseases in the adult population. Factors assessed by the BRFSS include tobacco use, health care coverage, HIV/AIDS, physical activity, and fruit and vegetable consumption. Data are collected from a random sample of adults (one per household) through a telephone survey.

<http://www.cdc.gov/brfss/>

BRFSS

Turning Information Into Health



Our data

The BRFSS in 2008 consists of responses from 400 thousand people; in this discussion, we will only look at a subset (a subsample, if you will) of **40 thousand people***

Each respondent receiving the survey is asked a series of questions and **the original BRFSS data set has 292 different fields**, most of which are questions; to make things easier, we've only pulled 34 variables

Variables

state

Where does the respondent live?

imonth

Interview Month

iday

Interview Day

iyear

Interview Year

nattempts

Number of Attempts

numadults

Number of Adults in Household

nummen

Number of Adult Women in Household

numwomen

Number of Adult Women in Household

Variables

genhlth

Respondents were asked to evaluate their general health values are excellent, very good, good, fair, poor

physhlth

The number of days out of the last 30 that the respondent was in poor health

menthlth

The number of days out of the last 30 that the respondent was in poor mental health

hlthplan

1 if the respondent has some form of health coverage and 2 else

medcost

Was there a time in the past 12 months when you needed to see a doctor but could not because of cost?

checkup1

Time since the respondent's last routine checkup

Variables

qlrest2

During the past 30 days, for about how many days have you felt you did not get enough rest or sleep?

cvdinfr4

Has the respondent ever had a heart attack? (1 yes, 2 no)

cvdcrhd4

Has the respondent ever had angina or coronary heart disease?

cvdstrk3

Has the respondent ever had a stroke?

asthma2

Does the respondent have asthma?

smoke100

1 if the respondent has smoked at least 100 cigarettes in their entire life and
2 otherwise

Variables

age in years

marital Is the respondent married?

children Number of children (< 18 years old) living at the household

educ The highest grade or year of school the respondent completed

employ Is the respondent currently employed?

income2 range

weight in pounds

height in inches

wtyrago desired weight in pounds

sex of the respondent

drnkany

Has the respondent had at least one alcoholic beverage in the last 30 days?

Variables

lsatisfy

How satisfied is the respondent with their life overall?

Preliminary examination

When faced with a new data set, we often have a look at a few cases; you should do this before and after the data are “loaded” into R or whatever analysis package you might end up using

What do we notice?

```
> brfss[1:20,1:13]
```

	state	imonth	iday	iyear	nattempts	numadults	nummen	numwomen	genhlth	physhlth	menthlth	hlthplan	medcost
1	Illinois	January	12	2008	1	1	1	0	Excellent	3	0	1	2
2	Florida	March	10	2008	7	2	1	1	Fair	7	0	2	1
3	Missouri	February	6	2008	5	2	1	1	Very good	2	1	1	2
4	South Dakota	March	18	2008	4	2	1	1	Very good	0	1	1	2
5	Connecticut	October	17	2008	10	3	2	1	Good	0	0	1	2
6	Pennsylvania	July	10	2008	6	4	1	3	Good	0	30	1	1
7	Tennessee	July	21	2008	12	2	1	1	Excellent	0	0	1	2
8	Texas	August	5	2008	3	2	1	1	Poor	0	0	1	2
9	New Hampshire	April	9	2008	3	2	1	1	Very good	0	0	1	2
10	Indiana	July	13	2008	5	2	1	1	Excellent	0	0	1	2
11	Florida	September	14	2008	10	4	2	2	Fair	30	0	1	2
12	Illinois	September	13	2008	1	3	1	2	Fair	0	0	1	2
13	Kansas	August	28	2008	8	1	0	1	Excellent	0	0	2	2
14	Puerto Rico	February	2	2008	1	4	1	3	Fair	25	0	1	2
15	Alabama	August	18	2008	5	4	2	2	Very good	0	0	1	2
16	Louisiana	June	28	2008	6	1	1	0	Very good	0	0	1	2
17	Texas	March	6	2008	5	2	1	1	Good	0	0	1	2
18	Missouri	March	28	2008	4	2	1	1	Excellent	0	0	1	2
19	Minnesota	June	10	2008	2	3	2	1	Very good	0	0	1	2
20	Illinois	December	11	2008	16	3	0	3	Very good	3	2	1	2

A look

The survey responses are a mix of qualitative and quantitative data; let's start slow with a look at a couple of the categorical variables

What is the gender breakdown?

What proportion of respondents have exercised in the last 30 days?

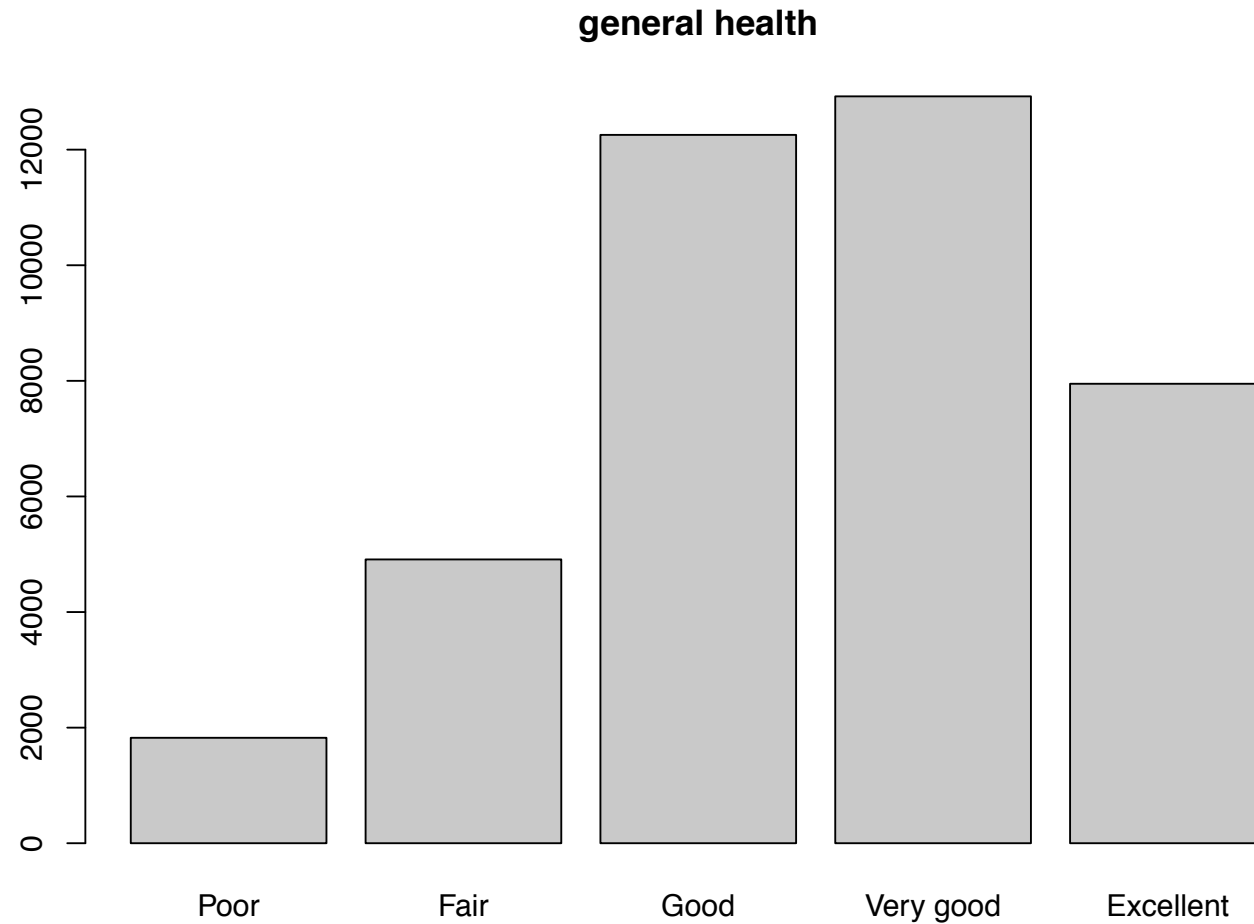
What about the respondents' general health?

Their overall satisfaction with their lives?

exerany		genhlth		lsatisfy	
1	29726	excellent	7949	very satisfied	17590
2	10233	very good	12922	satisfied	18806
		good	12255	dissatisfied	12255
		fair	4910	very dissatisfied	4910
gender		poor	1824	don't know	191
male	19604	don't know	61	refused	364
female	20396	refused	79		

Graphical displays

A **barplot** can be formed to make comparisons easier



```
# let's start with tabular output

table(brfss$genhlth)

# for the moment, drop the non-responders and the unsure :)

ta = table(brfss$genhlth)
ta = ta[5:1]

# a high-level plot routine

barplot(ta,main="general health")

# ... or flipped on its side (getting fancy!)

par(oma=c(0,2,0,0))
barplot(ta,main="general health",horiz=TRUE,las=1)

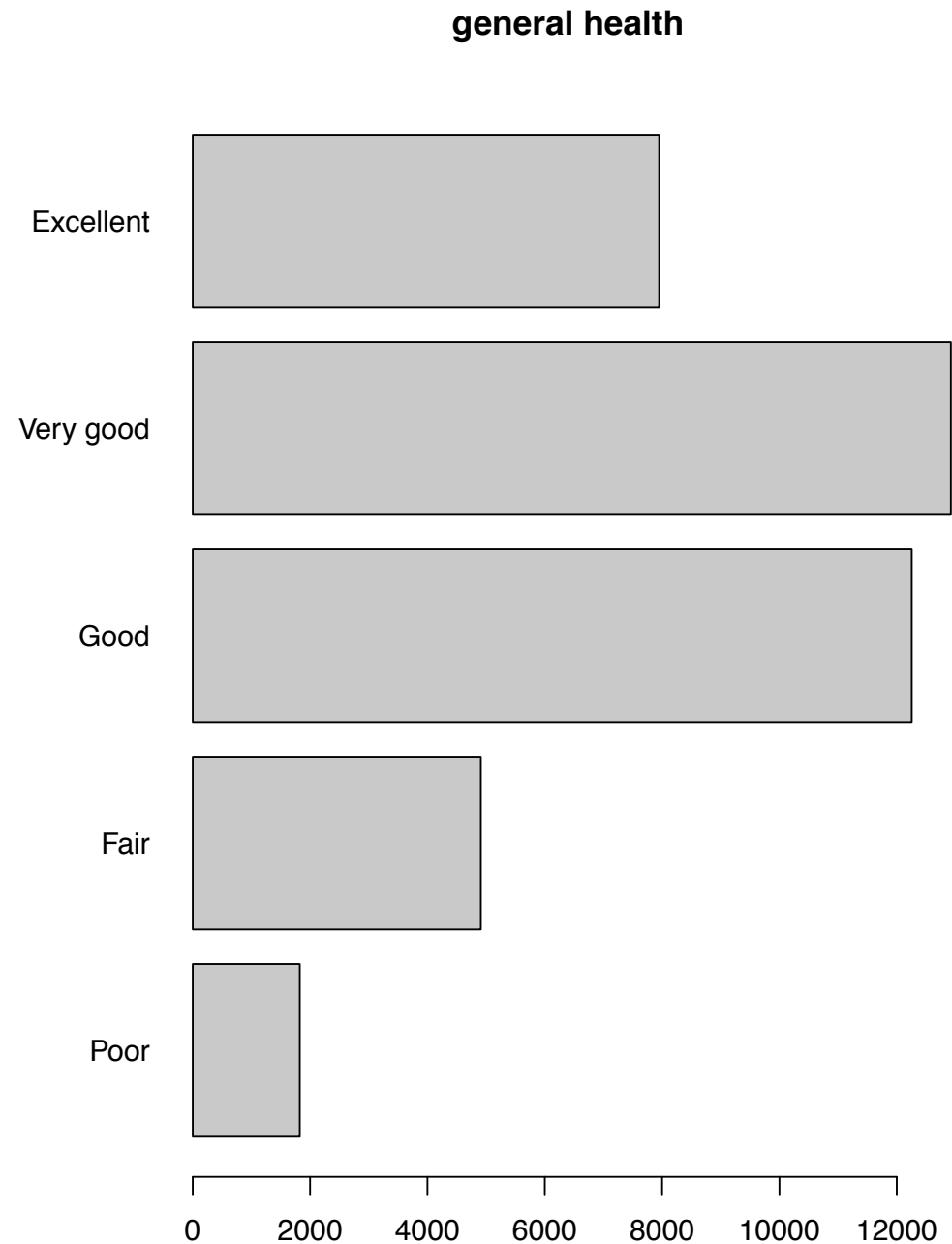
?barplot
```


Graphical displays

Some have argued that comparisons are better made when the bars run horizontally*

The code on the previous slide skips ahead a fair bit, but don't worry, we'll cover all this

* Cleveland, W. S. (1993), *Visualizing Data*, Hobart Press



Questions

While these one-dimensional summaries are interesting, they can't address certain questions we might bring to the data; for example, does exercise have any effect on what people feel about their general health?

For this, we might consider tabular displays

Tables

Here is a two-by-two table (also referred to as a **contingency table**) describing how respondents answered both the question of how good they feel and whether or not they exercise; we have added **row and column sums** to this display also

What do we see?

```
> table(brfss$genhlth,brfss$exerany)
```

	1	2
Excellent	6880	1065
Very good	10561	2353
Good	8649	3590
Fair	2811	2089
Poor	732	1091
Don't know/Not Sure	36	24
Refused	57	21

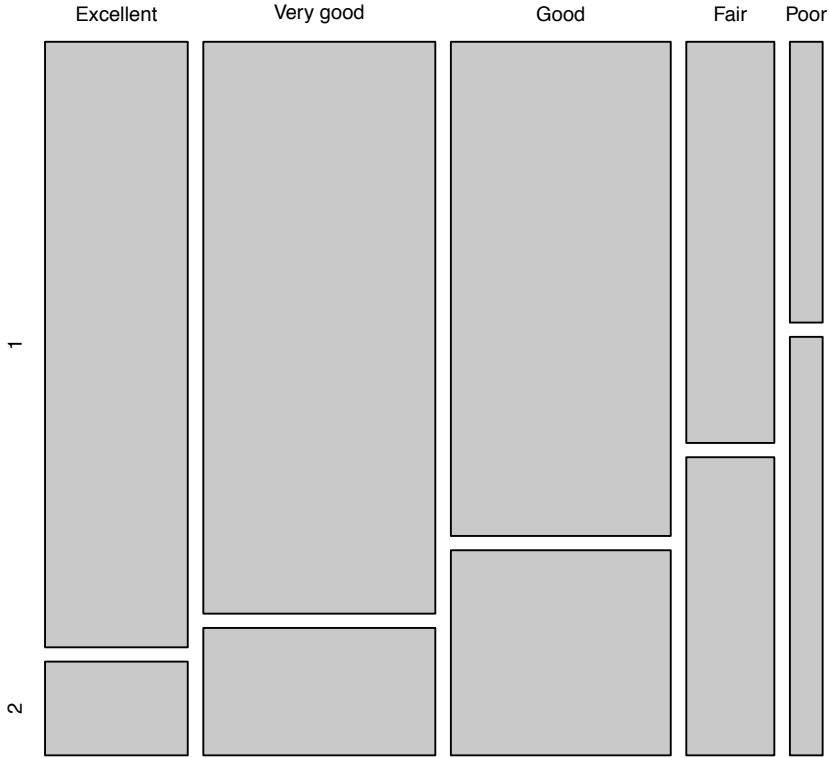
Mosaic plots

These displays represent the counts in a contingency table by tiles whose size (area) is proportional to the cell count

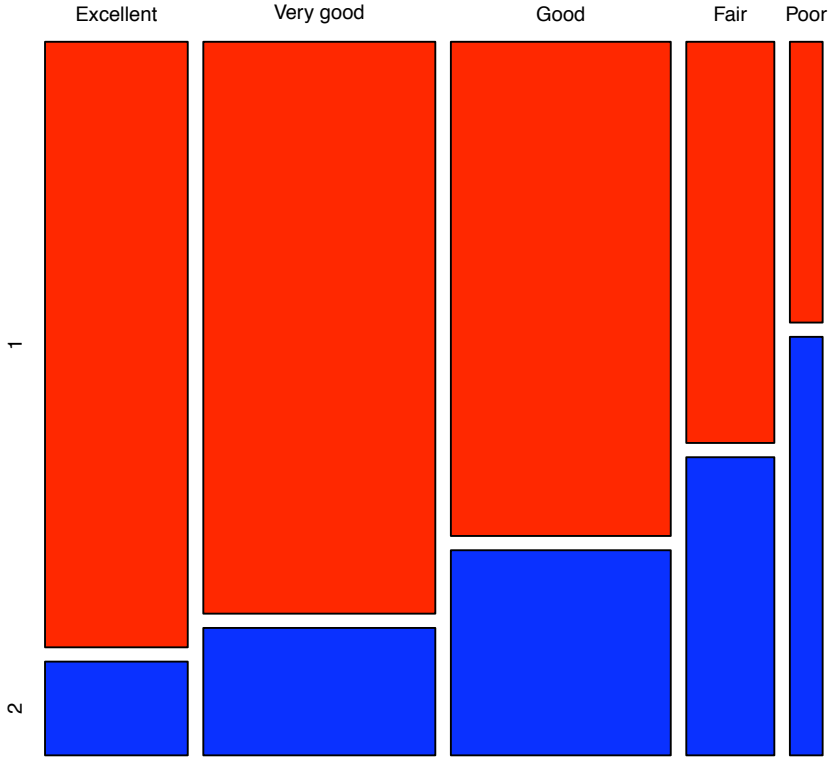
It is also possible to extend these displays to tabulations with more than two variables; how might this work?

Hartigan, J.A., and Kleiner, B. (1984) A mosaic of television ratings.
The American Statistician, **38**, 32-35

general health by exerany



general health by exerany



```
# let's start with tabular output

table(brfss$genhlth,brfss$exerany)

# a high-level plot routine

ta = table(brfss$genhlth,brfss$exerany)
ta = ta[1:5,]

mosaicplot(ta,main="general health by exerany")

# colors!

mosaicplot(ta,color=c("red","blue"))
```

Creating new variables

BMI (Body Mass Index) is defined to be

$$\text{BMI} = 703 \times \frac{\text{weight in pounds}}{(\text{height in inches})^2}$$

We can derive this from our data set and create a new quantitative variables

The CDC interprets these limits as follows

BMI	Weight Status
Below 18.5	Underweight
18.5 – 24.9	Normal
25.0 – 29.9	Overweight
30.0 and Above	Obese


```
bmi = 703*brfss$weight/brfss$height^2

bmicat = (bmi > 0) + (bmi >= 18.5) + (bmi >= 25) + (bmi >= 30)

levs = c("underweight","normal","overweight","obese")
bmicat = factor(levs[bmicat],levels=levs)

ta = table(brfss$genhlth,bmicat)
ta = ta[1:5,]

mosaicplot(ta,main="general health by exerany")

mosaicplot(ta,color=heat.colors(4),
            main="general health by exerany")
```

Quantitative data

In the BMI example, we generated an ordinal variable from our computed BMI; in general, “seeing” the values of a quantitative variable (whether it be continuous or discrete with a large number of values) can be hard

But the idea of grouping comes to our rescue in the form of **grouped frequency displays or histograms**

Histograms

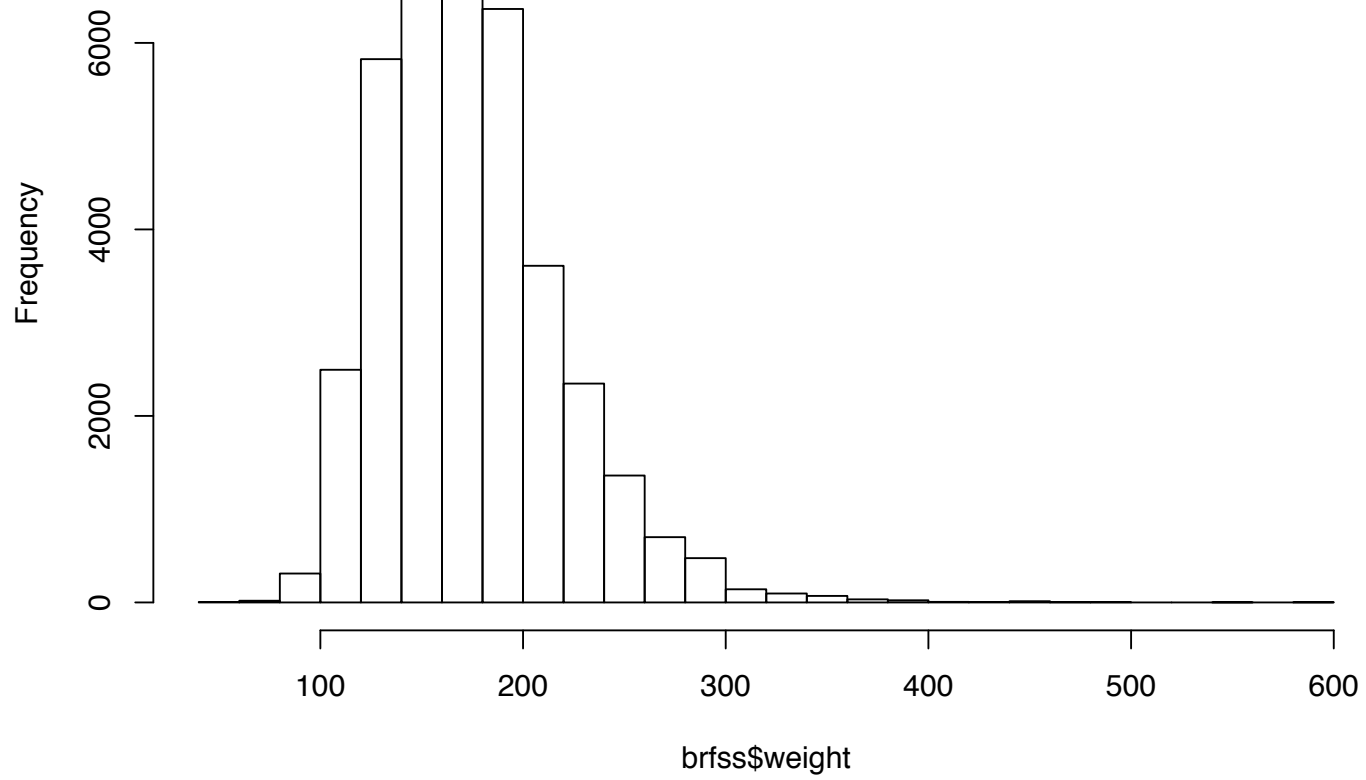
A histogram groups or bins the data and, like a barplot, presents the number of data points that fall into each group

This display involves a “tuning parameter”; that is, we are free to choose how many bins we want to make the display -- this is what I meant before by there being both tuning in terms of the aesthetics (colors, fonts) as well as the underlying methodology that generates the display

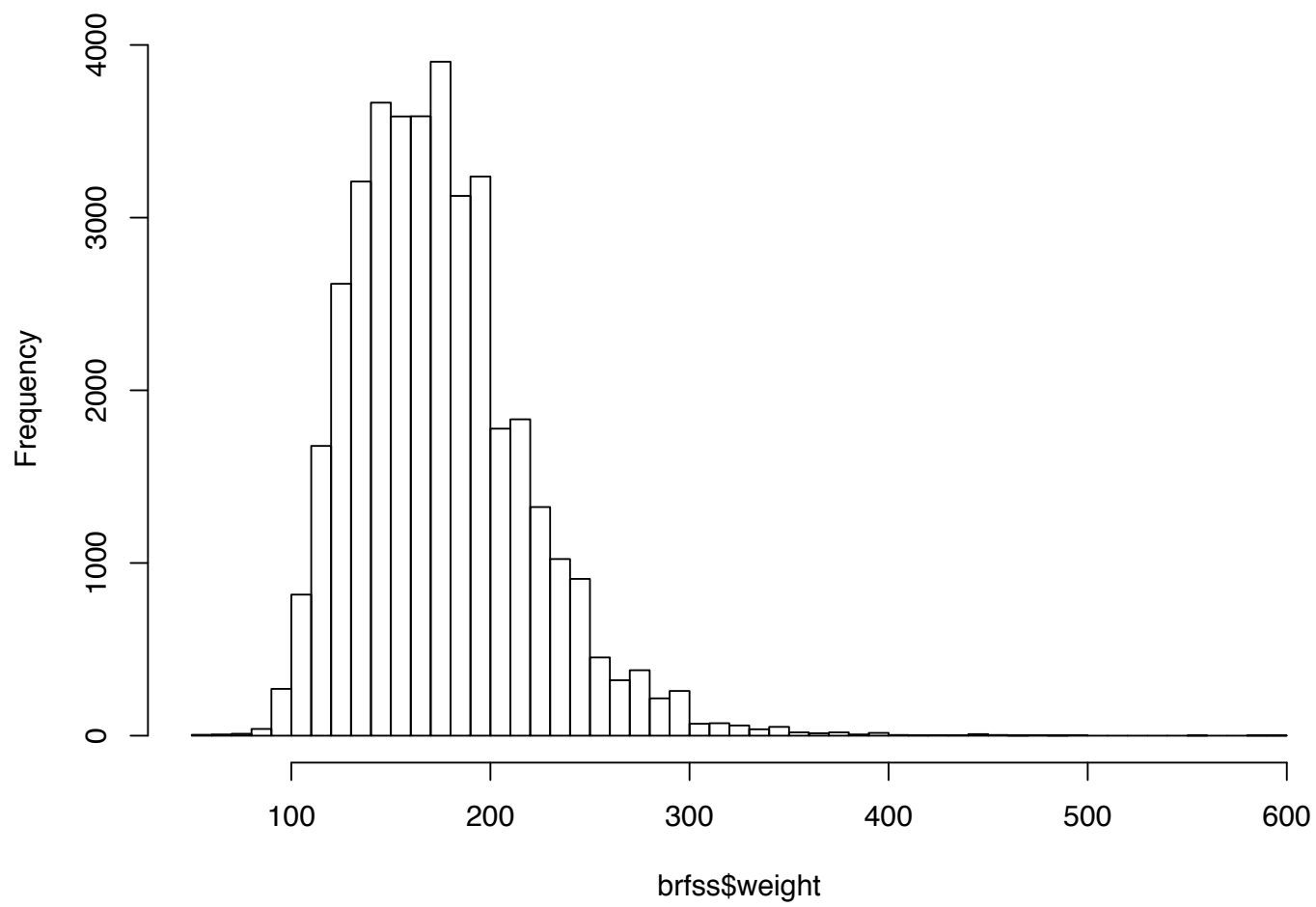
In situations like this, **it is always good to vary the number of bins and examine the plot for any structure that emerges**; in so doing, we want to get a sense of the “shape” of the data

What do we see?

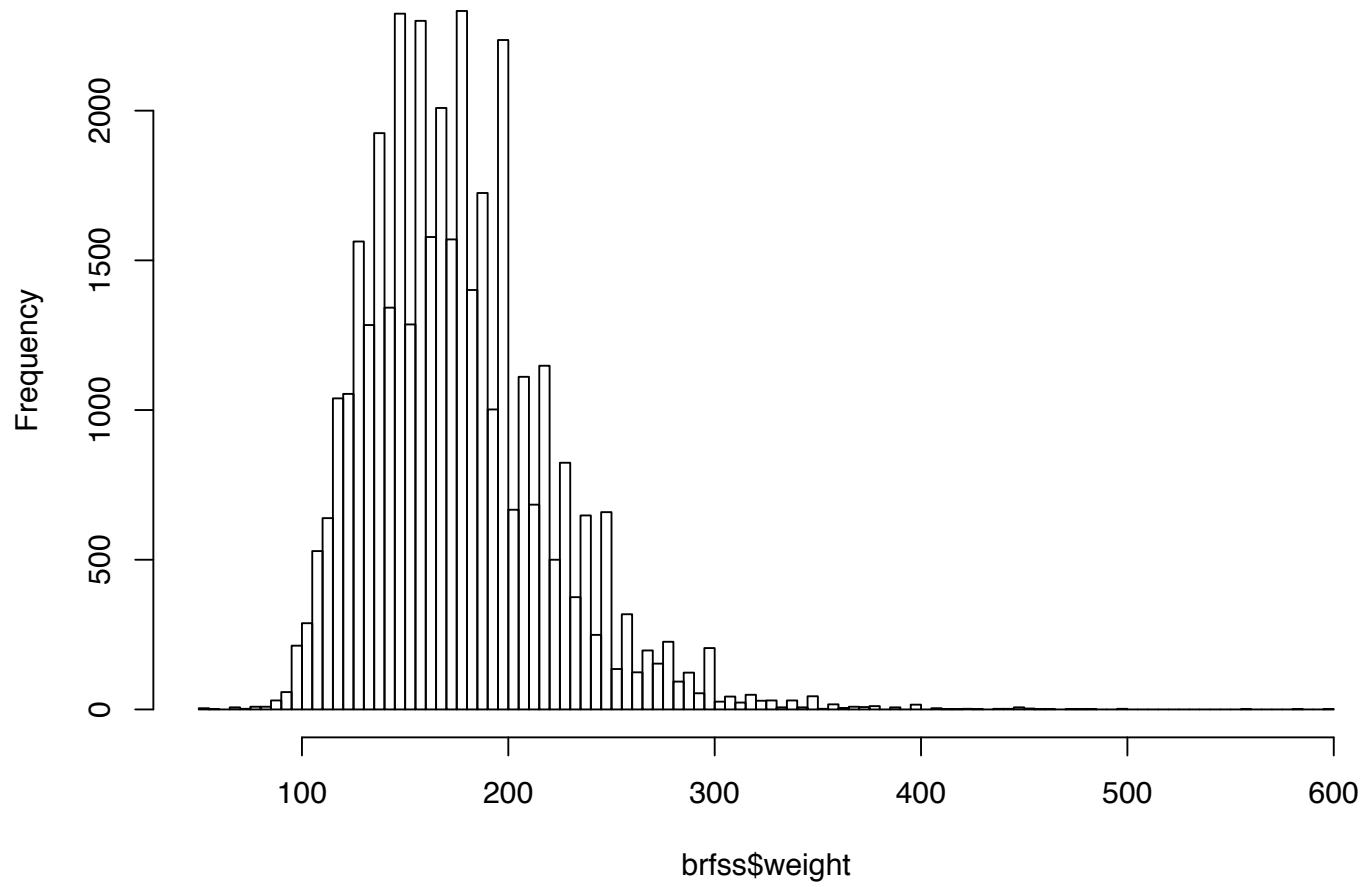
weight of respondents



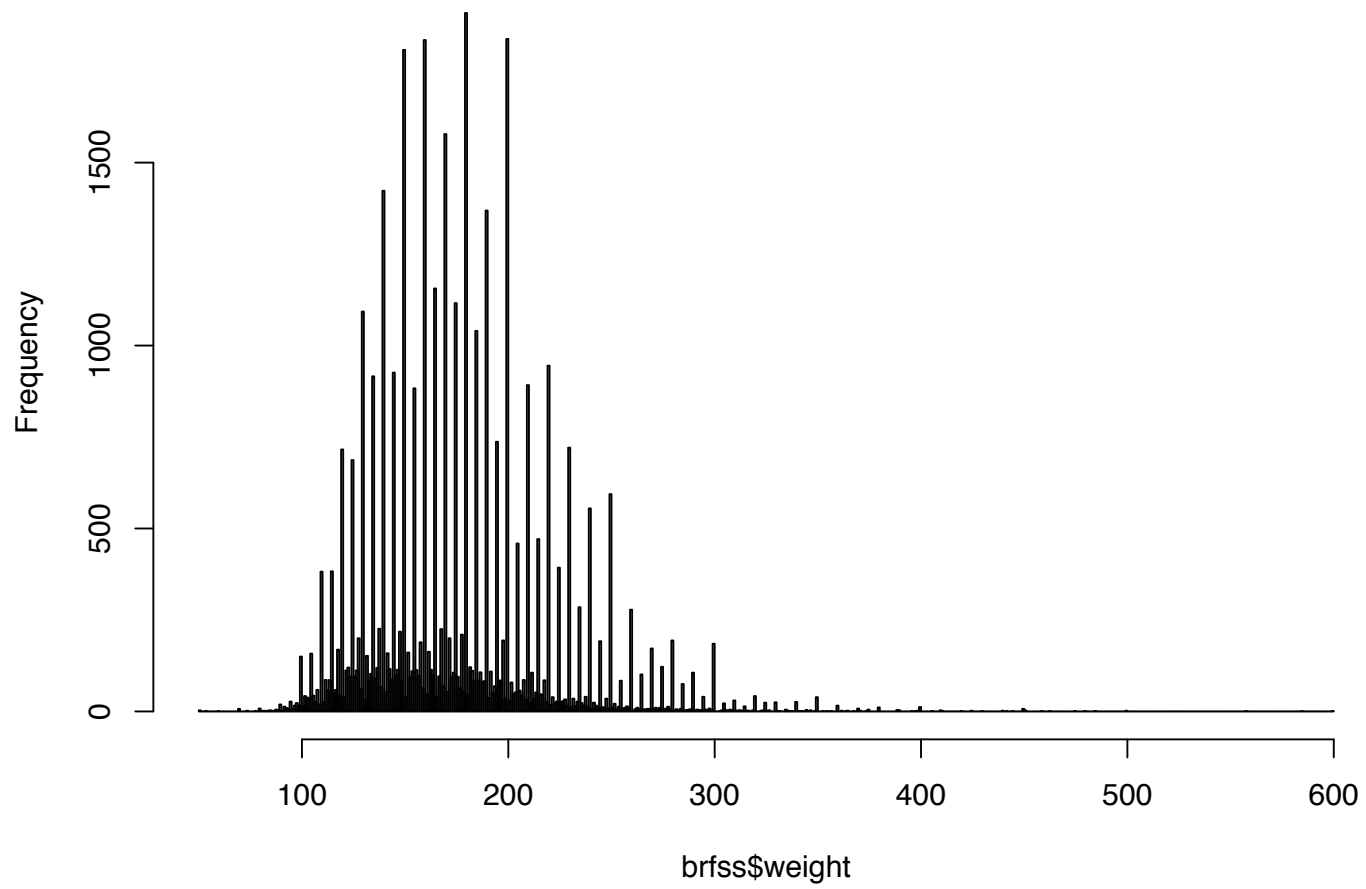
weight of respondents



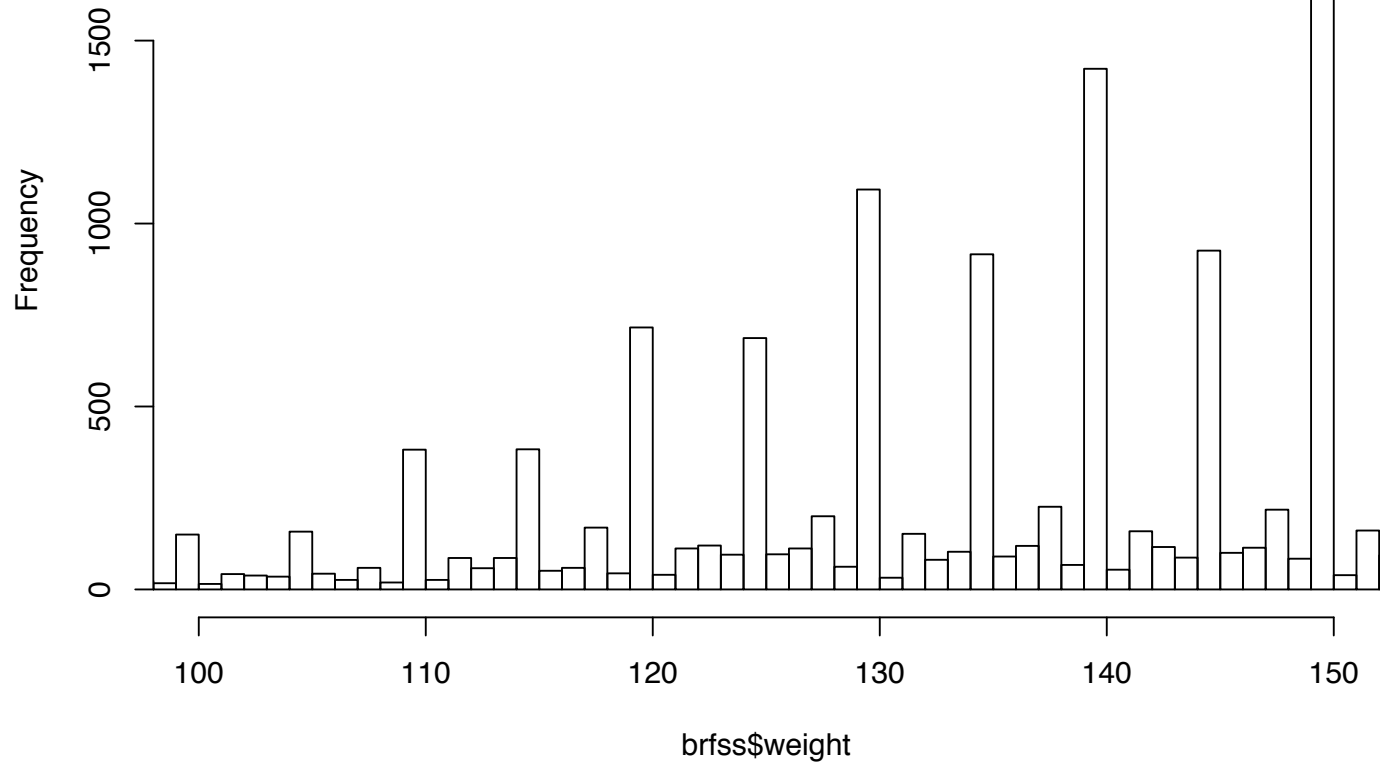
weight of respondents



weight of respondents

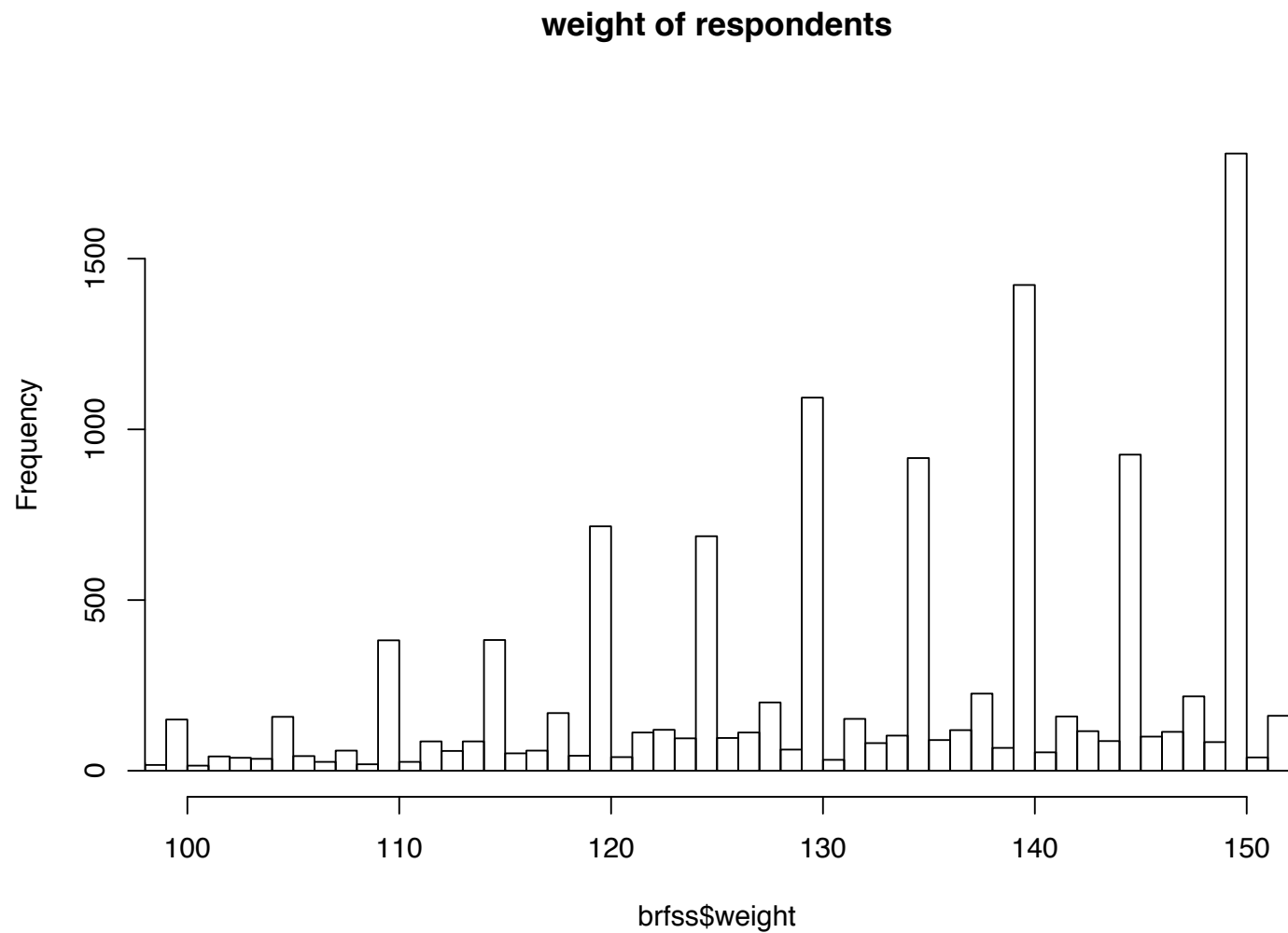


weight of respondents



Varying bin sizes

By changing the bin size, we can uncover features in the data; in this case we uncover a basic fact about how people report their weights



```
hist(brfss$weight,breaks=20,main="weight of respondents")
```

```
hist(brfss$weight,breaks=50,main="weight of respondents")
```

```
hist(brfss$weight,breaks=100,main="weight of respondents")
```

```
hist(brfss$weight,breaks=500,main="weight of respondents")
```

```
hist(brfss$weight,breaks=500,main="weight of respondents",xlim=c(100,150))
```

Default bin size

It is often the case that we don't want to think very hard about how many bins or groups to use when drawing a histogram; the `hist()` function in R uses a rule of thumb for setting the number of bins based on our sample size

$$\text{number of bins} \approx \log_2(n) + 1$$

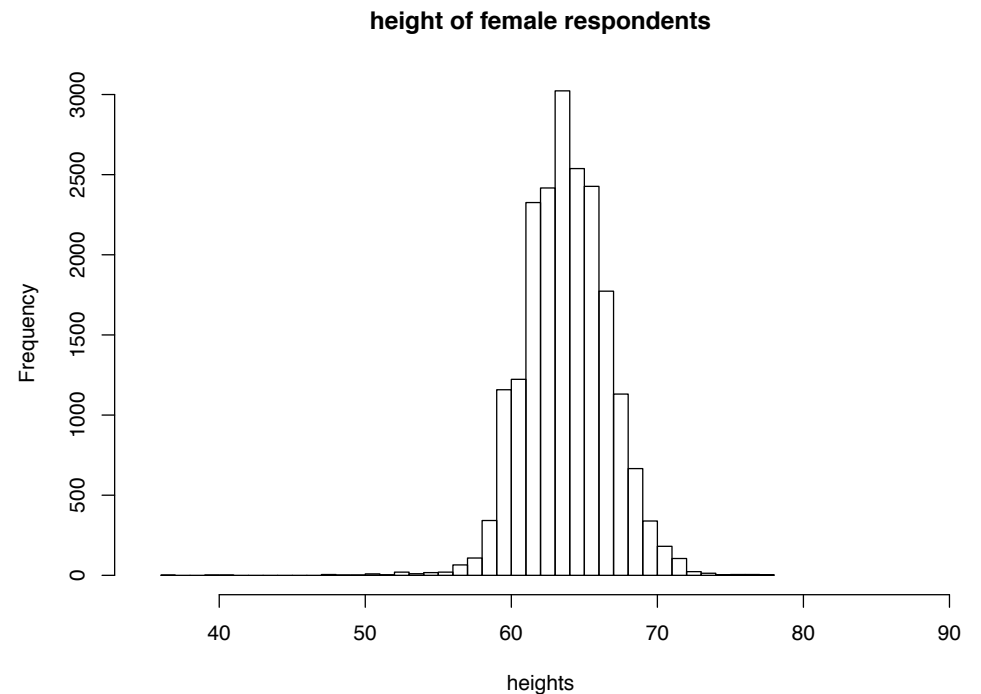
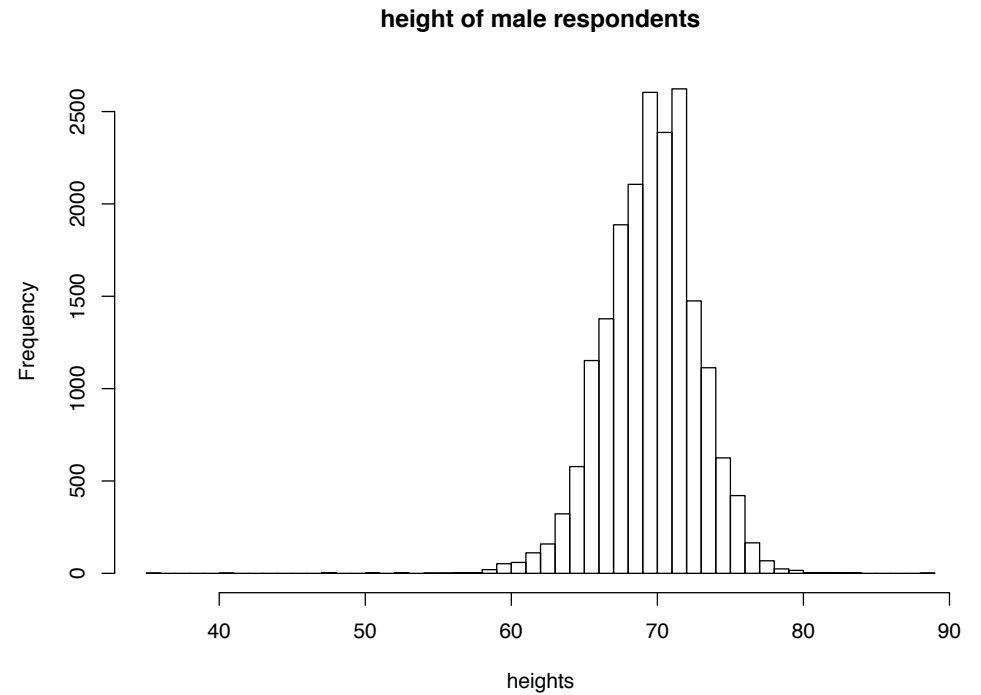
Where might a rule like this come from?

Comparing distributions (I)

We can use these displays to compare distributions

At the left we have separate histograms of the heights of males and females in the sample

What do you see?



```
# compare two histograms...
```

```
# first, a common range...
```

```
ra = range(brfss$height,na.rm=T)  
ra
```

```
# and now, the high-level command...
```

```
hist(brfss$height[brfss$sex=="male"],  
     breaks=50,main="height of male respondents",xlim=ra,xlab="heights")
```

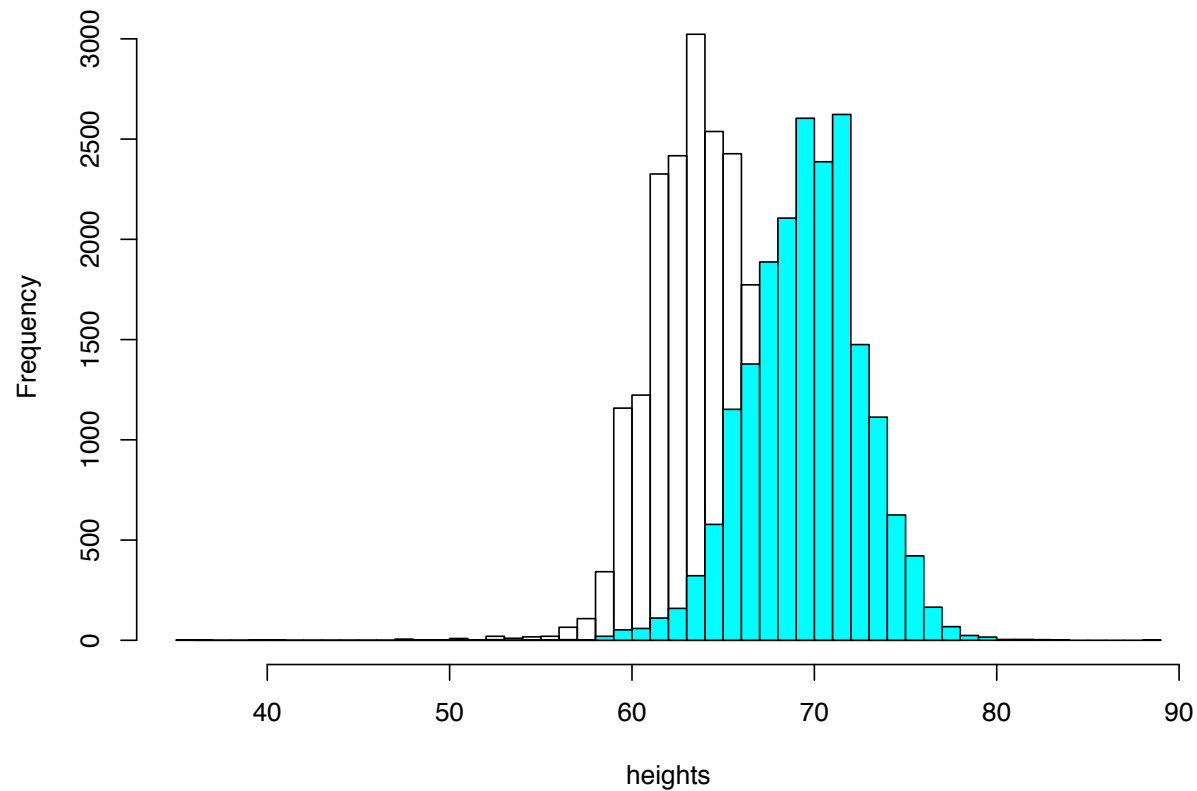
```
hist(brfss$height[brfss$sex=="female"],  
     breaks=50,main="height of female respondents",xlim=ra,xlab="heights")
```

Comparing distributions (I)

A more effective strategy would be to simply overlay one histogram over the other, perhaps adding a snappy color

At this point it should be clear how helpful it is to have a good rule of thumb for picking the number of bins

heights of respondents (cyan/male, white/female)



```
# compare two histograms...

# first, a common range...

ra = range(brfss$height,na.rm=T)
ra

# and now, the high-level command...

hist(brfss$height[brfss$sex=="male"],
      breaks=50,main="height of male respondents",xlim=ra,xlab="heights")

hist(brfss$height[brfss$sex=="female"],
      breaks=50,main="height of female respondents",xlim=ra,xlab="heights")

# overlay!

hist(brfss$height[brfss$sex=="female"],breaks=50,
      main="heights of respondents (cyan/male, white/female)",xlim=ra,xlab="heights")

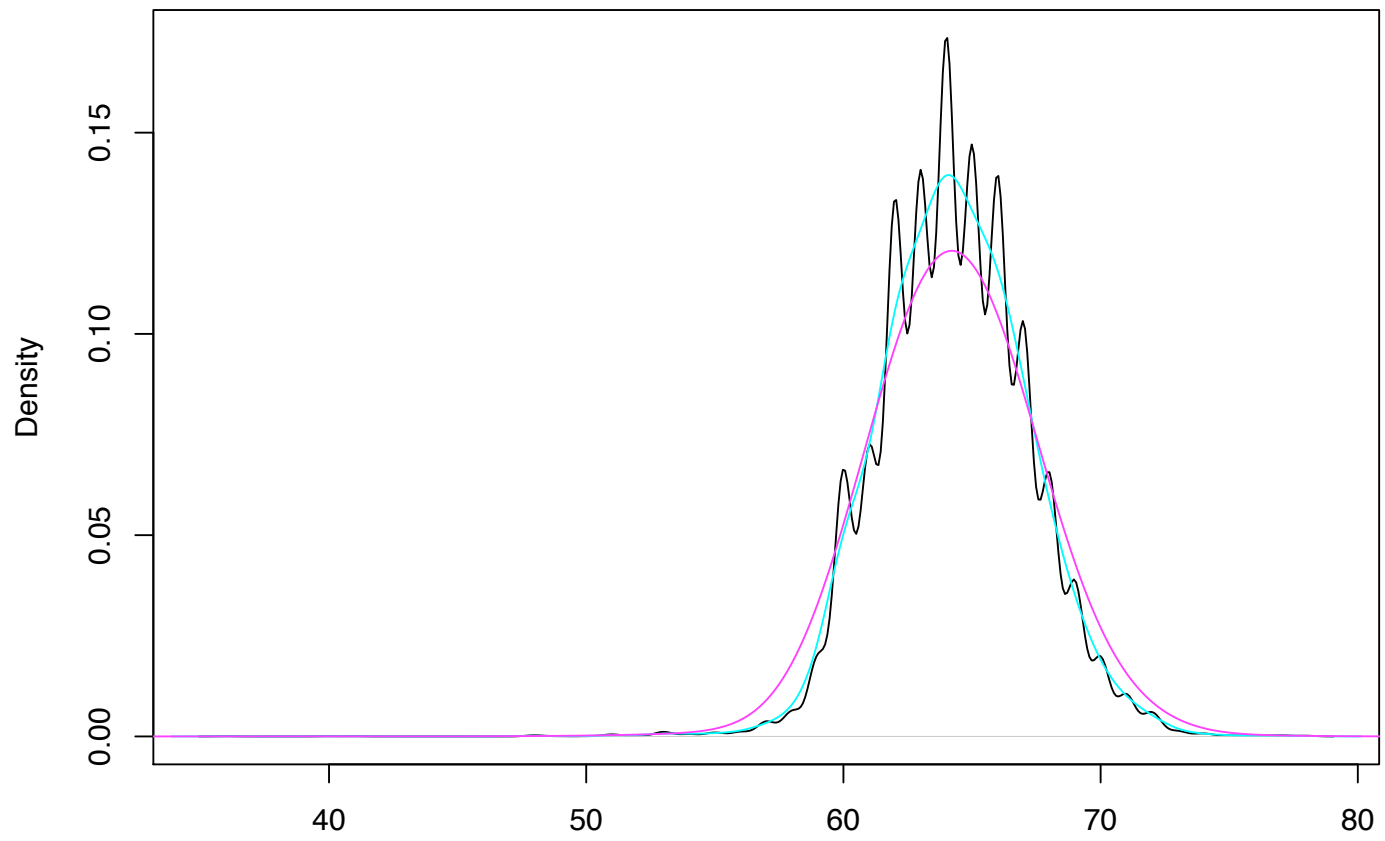
hist(brfss$height[brfss$sex=="male"],breaks=50,add=T,col="cyan")
```

Smoothed histograms

Overlaying histograms can get tricky if we aren't careful; one can obscure the features of the other -- here we're lucky in that both distributions are essentially unimodal

Another approach, however, is to create a simpler view; a smoothed histogram (technically, a kernel density estimate) is one such device

female heights, smoothed histogram



N = 19963 Bandwidth = 0.355

```
fsmooth = density(brfss$height[brfss$sex=="female"],na.rm=T)

plot(fsmooth,main="female heights, smoothed histogram")

fsmooth = density(brfss$height[brfss$sex=="female"],na.rm=T,adjust=2)
lines(fsmooth,col="cyan")

fsmooth = density(brfss$height[brfss$sex=="female"],na.rm=T,adjust=5)
lines(fsmooth,col="magenta")

# overlay!

fsmooth = density(brfss$height[brfss$sex=="female"],na.rm=T,adjust=1.5)
msmooth = density(brfss$height[brfss$sex=="male"],na.rm=T,adjust=1.5)

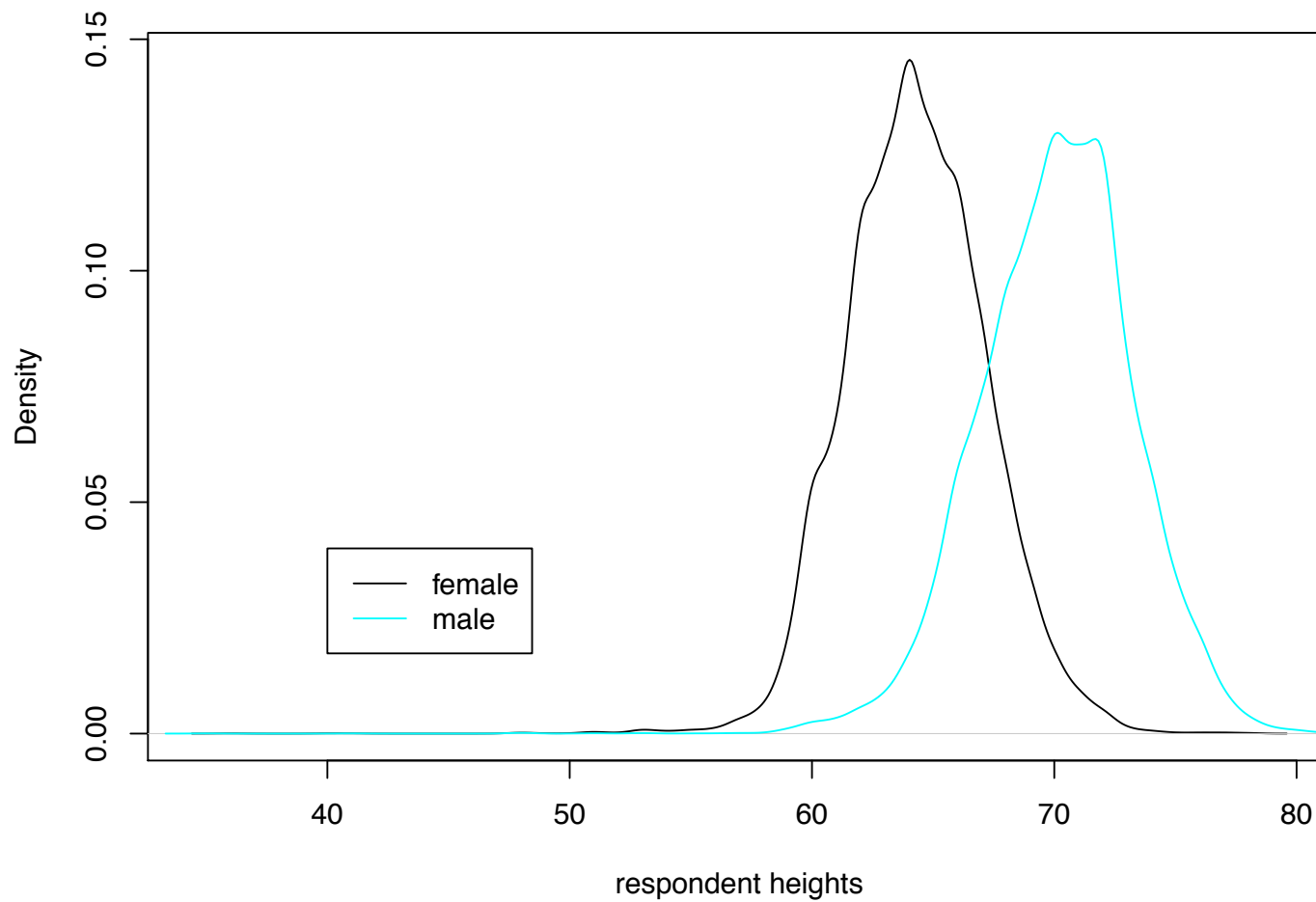
plot(fsmooth,main="respondent heights, smoothed histograms",
     xlab="respondent heights")

lines(msmooth,col="cyan")

# add a legend!

legend(40,0.04,col=c("black","cyan"),legend=c("female","male"),lty=c(1,1))
```

respondent heights, smoothed histograms



A graphical measure

Often, we find ourselves asking if the distribution of data in question is normal or not; statisticians in the late 1800s were obsessed with finding normal curves in groups of body measurements

Histograms are one way to assess normality (does it look bell-shaped or not?) but a qqplot is a more refined measuring device...


```
# normal quantile-quantile plot
```

```
qqnorm(brfss$height[brfss$sex=="male"],main="normal qq plot, male heights")
```

```
# add a guide line
```

```
qqline(brfss$height[brfss$sex=="male"])
```

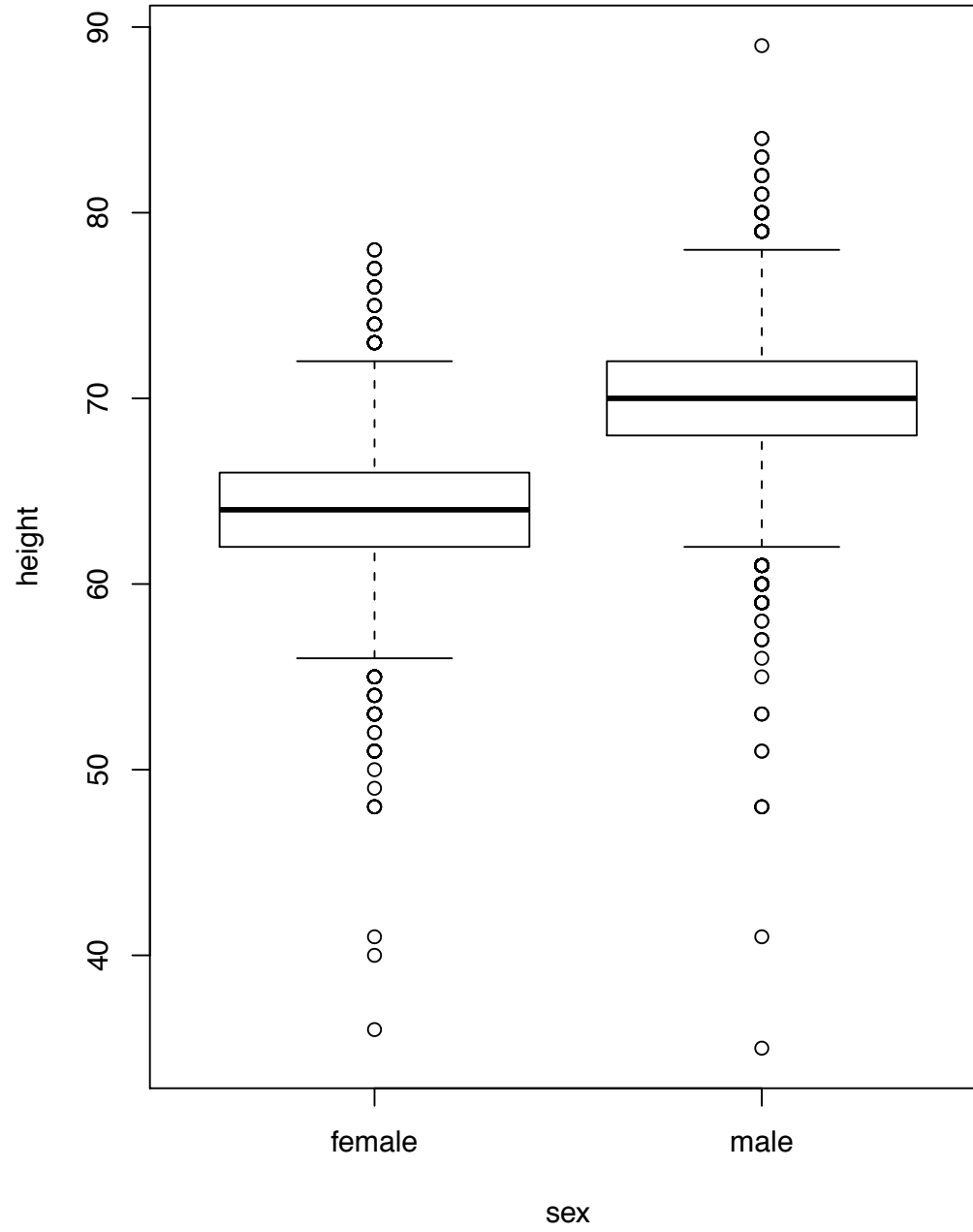
Boxplots

In many cases, we don't need to examine the complete distribution, but we can instead look at just a thumbnail sketch -- we're sort of creeping up on that idea as we simplify the smooth histograms

Boxplots are one form of thumbnail, focusing on the so-called five number summary; they were developed by one of the big thinkers in EDA, John Tukey

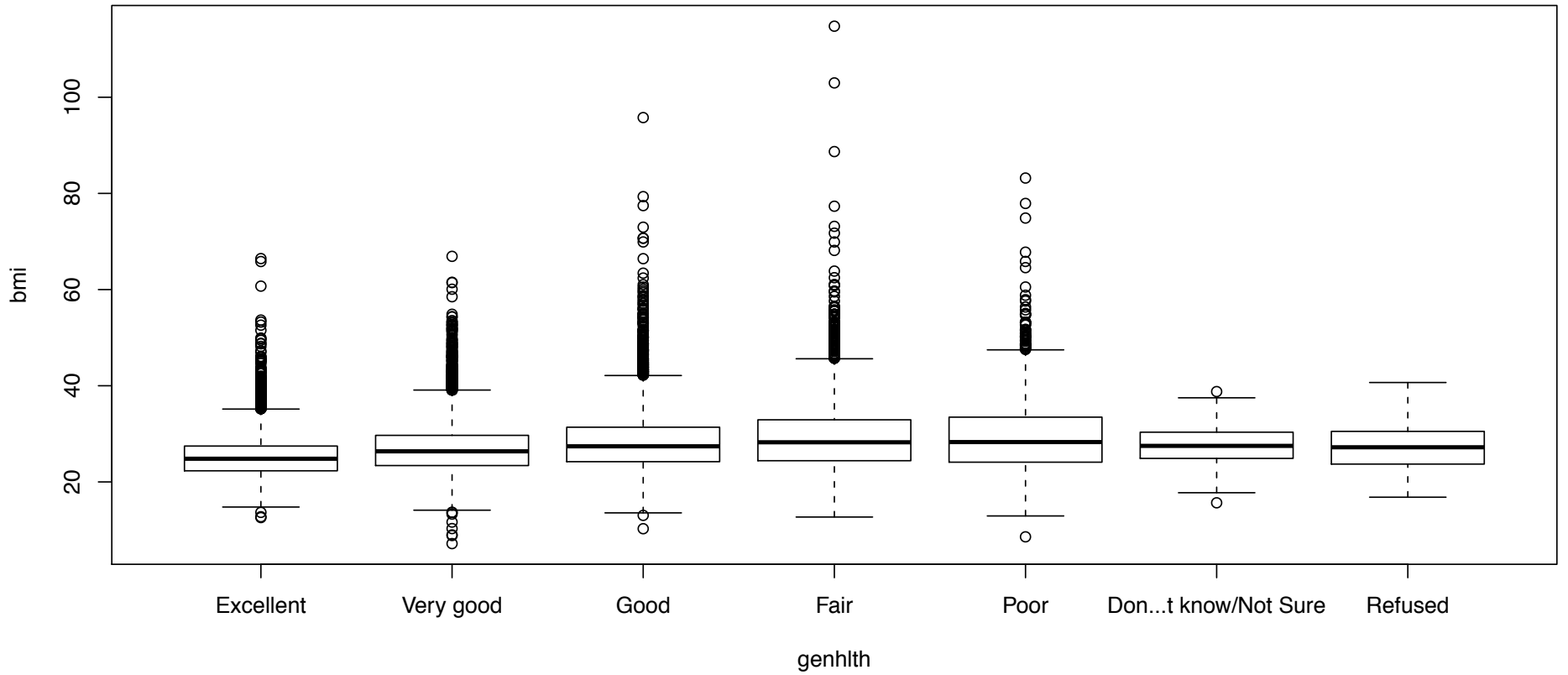
These plots let us relate a categorical and a continuous variable...

respondent heights




```
boxplot(brfss$height[brfss$sex=="female"],brfss$height[brfss$sex=="male"])  
  
# another way to generate the same plot...  
  
boxplot(height~sex,data=brfss, main="respondent heights")  
  
# ... and yet another way  
  
plot(height~sex,data=brfss,main="respondent heights")  
  
# and another...  
  
plot(bmi~genhlth,data=brfss,main="bmi by general health")
```

bmi by general health



Graphics in R

We have seen some high-level plots; box plots, histograms, smoothed histograms, bar plots and mosaic plots

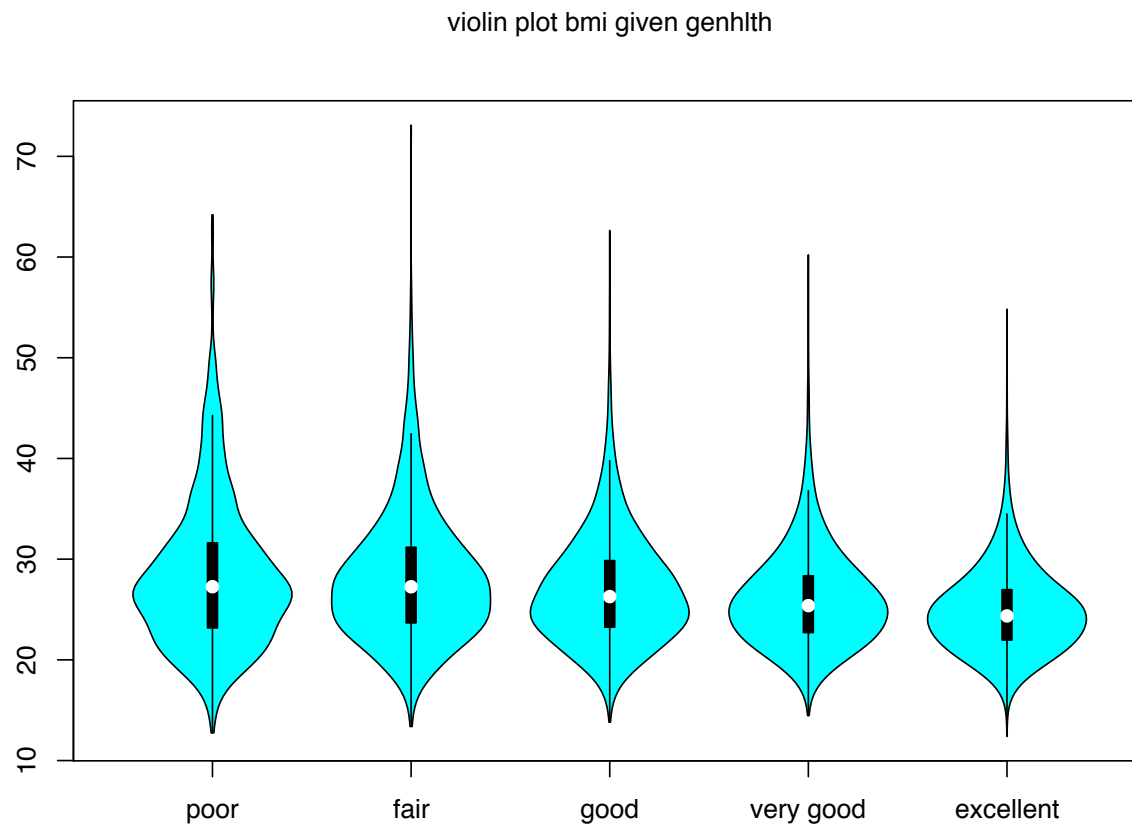
These were all called by special functions that execute one kind of graphical display; we started to see, however, that the function `plot()` itself, was a fairly flexible character -- we'll come back to that shortly

Now, these are by no means the only high-level functions out there; people are actively contributing all manner of interesting high-level, specialty plots

Violin plots

The so-called violin plot might be more artistry than data analysis; but it uses the smoothed histogram tipped on its side and mirrored left and right in place of a box

Compare this plot to the boxplot three slides back; what do you think?

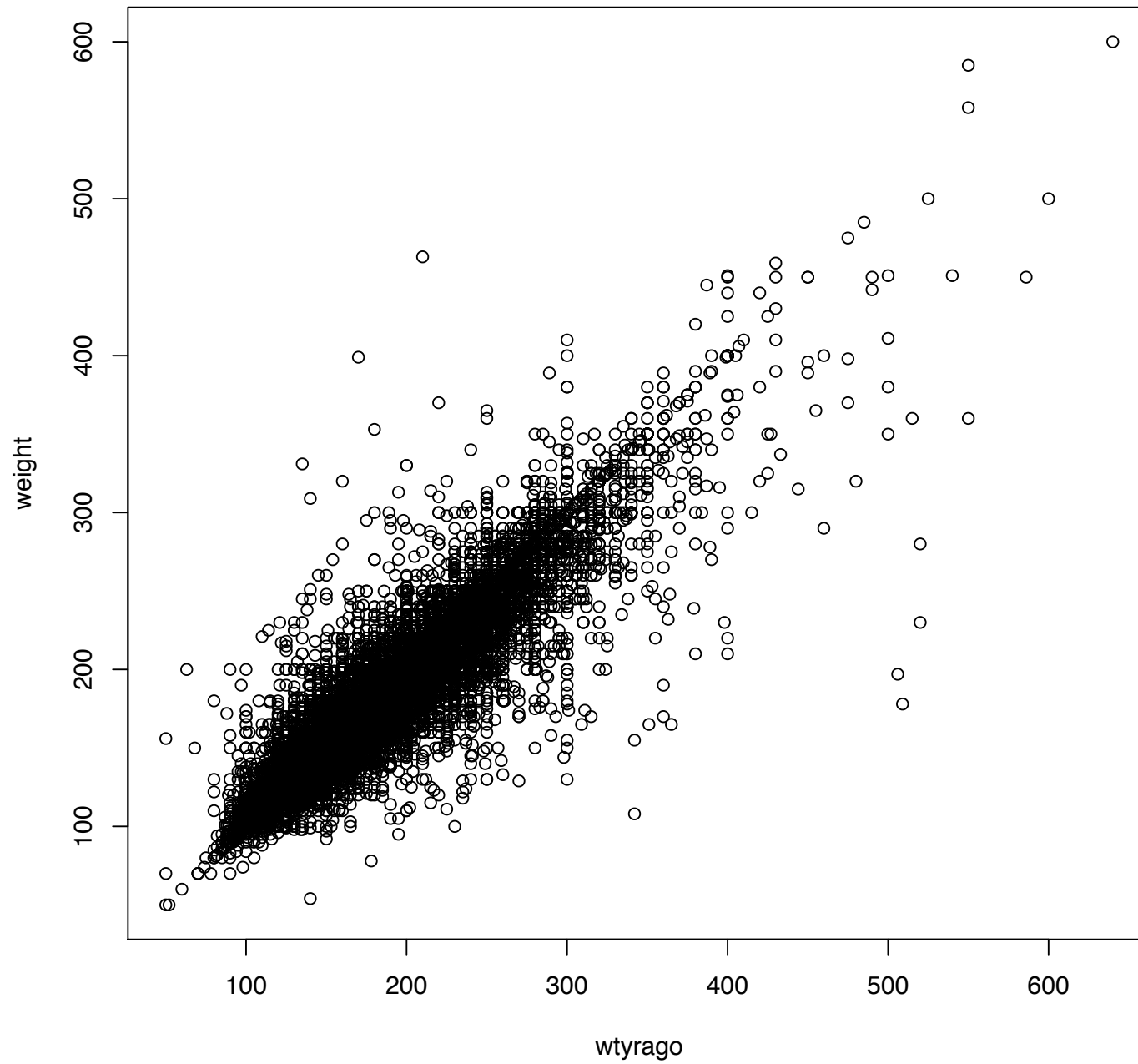


Weighty matters

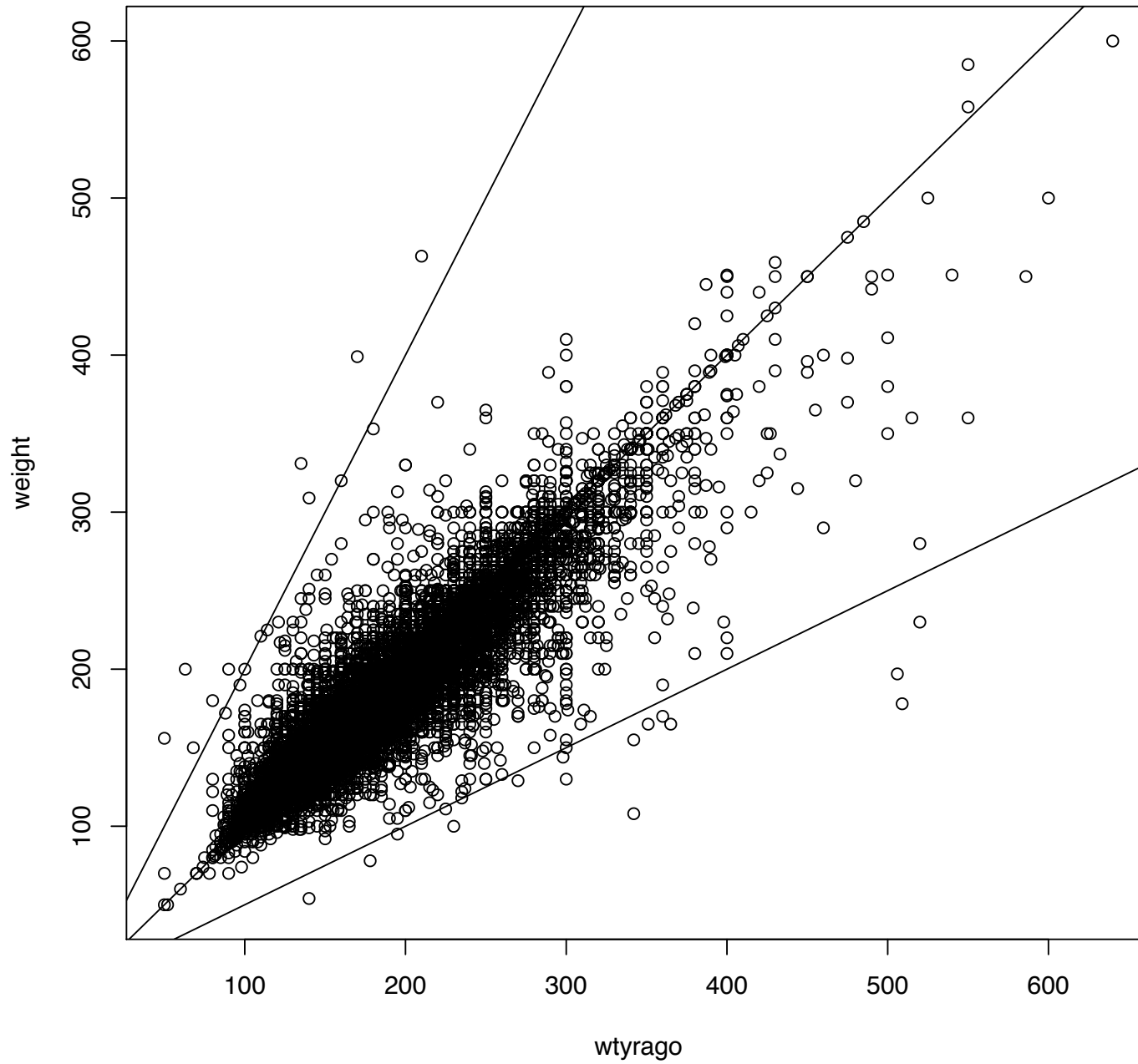
To relate two continuous variables, we could consider a scatterplot (by rights, in any sane graphics introduction, this would come first)

Let's look at people's weights this year to their weights last year...

weights then and now



weights then and now



```
# the many faces of plot!  
  
plot(brfss$weight,brfss$wtyrigo,main="weights then and now")  
  
# or...  
  
plot(weight~wtyrigo,data=brfss,main="weights then and now")  
  
# add another guide line...  
  
abline(0,1)  
  
abline(0,2)    # people who are twice as heavy  
  
abline(0,0.5)  # people who are twice as heavy
```



```
library(hexbin)

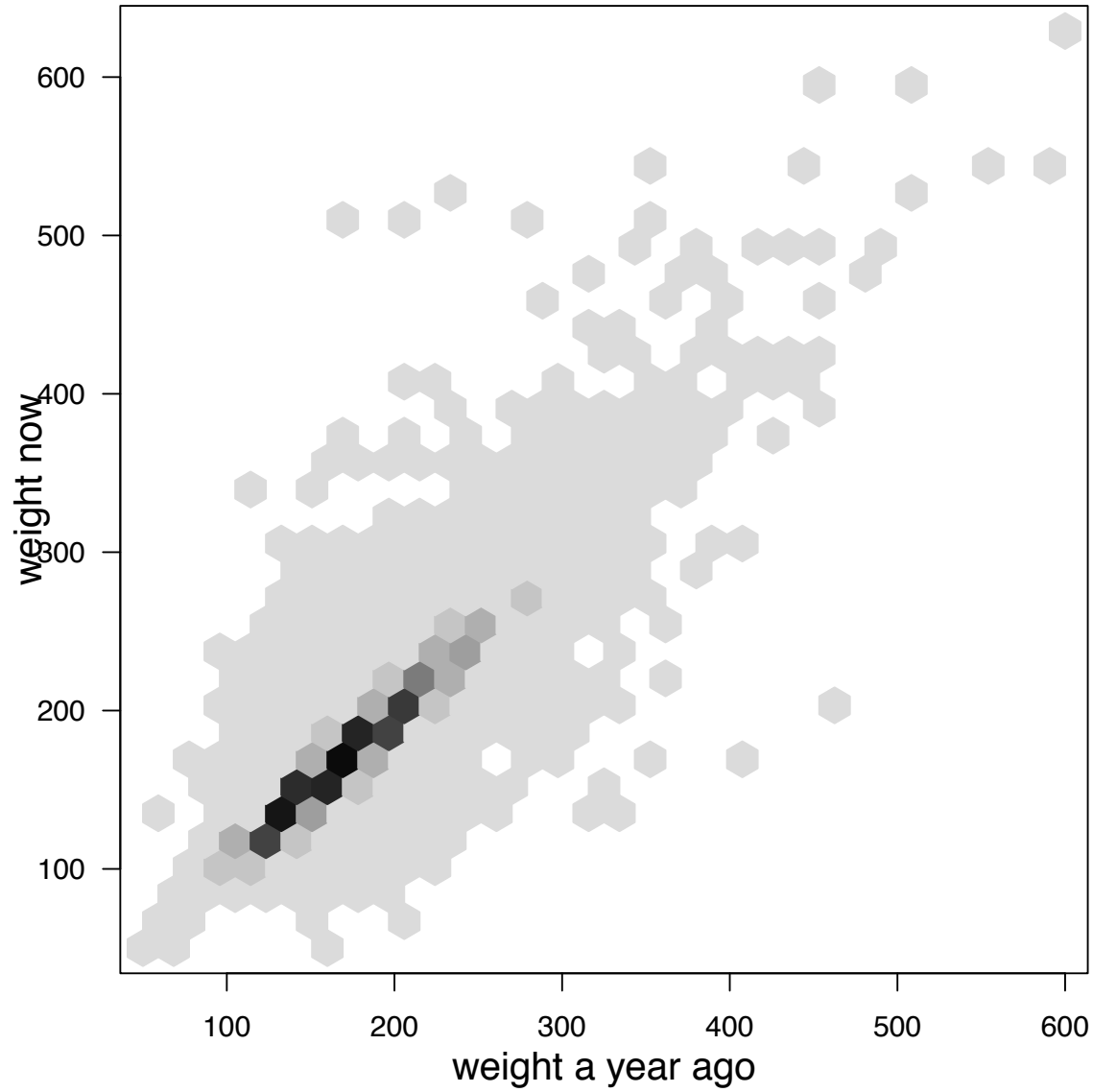
# create a hexagonal grid over the data and count the points falling
# in each cell

h = hexbin(brfss$weight,brfss$wtyrago)

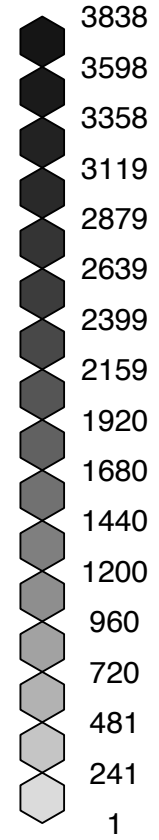
plot(h,main="weights then and now")

# look again what plot's doing!!
```

weights then and now



Counts



To sum up

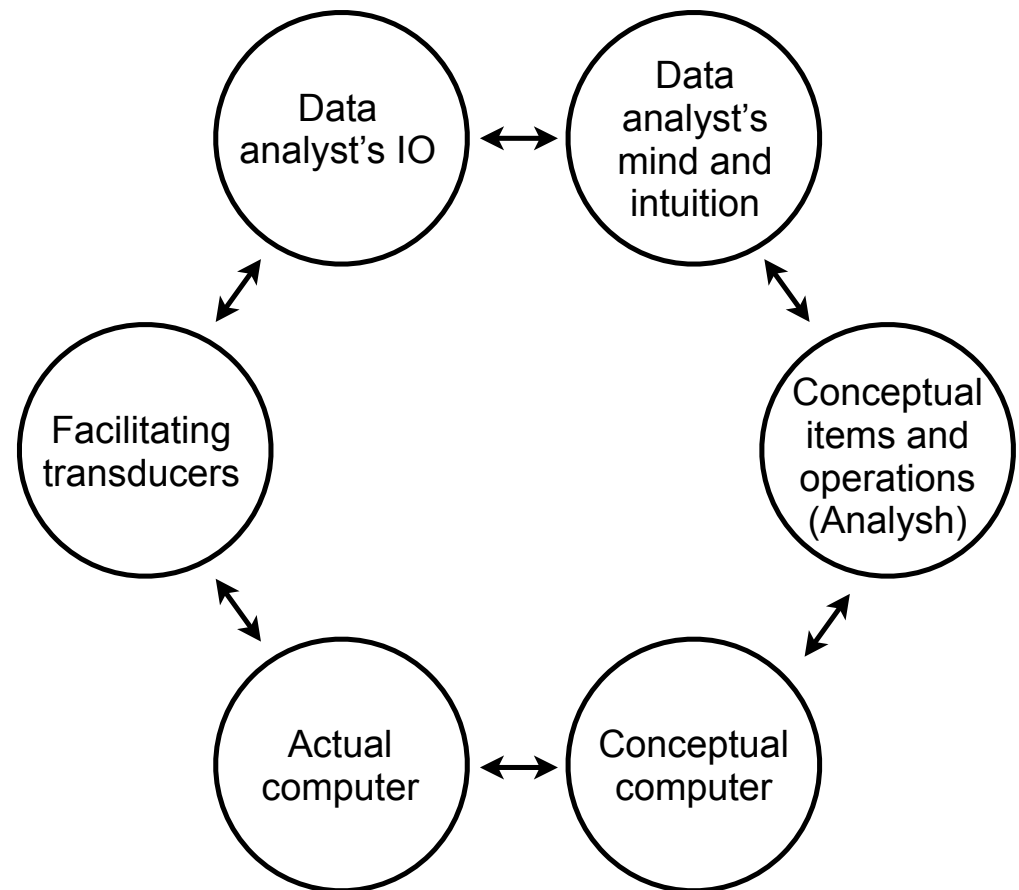
So far, we've executed some simple high-level commands to make basic plots in R; there are many such functions that we will encounter over the week

Notice that for the most part the basic high-level commands do the right thing; they were designed to be part of a data analysis pipeline that Tukey and others envisioned where you go back and forth with plots and computation

We have started customizing these plots by adding annotations and graphical elements, and we'll talk more about that after the break -- we will also spend more time with the basic anatomy of an R plot

Follow the arrows clockwise from the Mind and Intuition block. Tukey's notion is that data analysts have an arsenal of operations applicable to data, which they describe to themselves and to each other in a combination of mathematics and (English) words, for which he coins the term Analysh. These descriptions can be made into algorithms (my term, not his) -- specific computational methods, but not yet realized for an actual computer (hence the conceptual computer). Then a further mapping implements the algorithm, and running it produces output for the data analyst. The output, of course, stimulates further ideas and the cycle continues. (The facilitating transducers I interpret to mean software that allows information to be translated back and forth between internal machine form and forms that humans can write or look at -- a transducer, in general, converts energy from one form to another. So parsers and formatting software would be examples.)

Taken from Chambers (2000)



Adapted from Chambers (2000)



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Seismogram Display

M4.7 - Greater Los Angeles Area, California

Monday, May 18, 2009 at 03:39:36 UTC
Sunday, May 17, 2009 at 20:39:36 Local

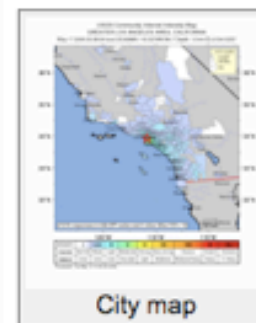
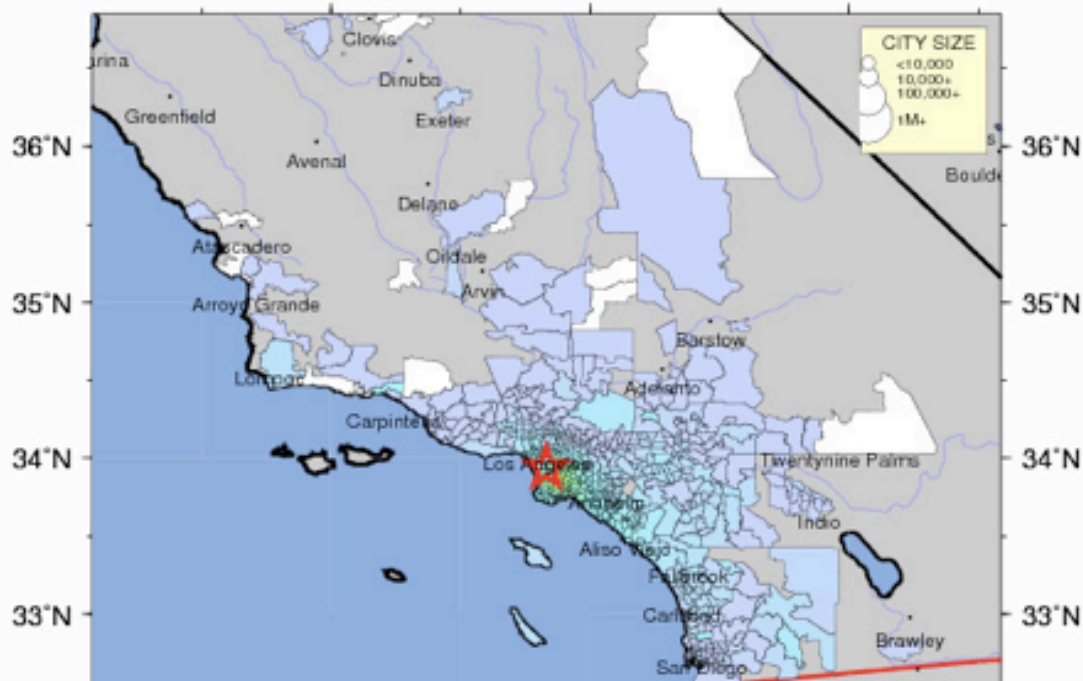


33.94°N 118.34°W
Depth: 13km

Maps Graphs Responses Downloads [Did You Feel It? — Tell Us!](#)

USGS Community Internet Intensity Map GREATER LOS ANGELES AREA, CALIFORNIA

May 17 2009 20:39:36 local 33.9396N 118.3378W M4.7 Depth: 13 km ID:ci10410337



U.S. Census Bureau

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Cartographic Boundary Files

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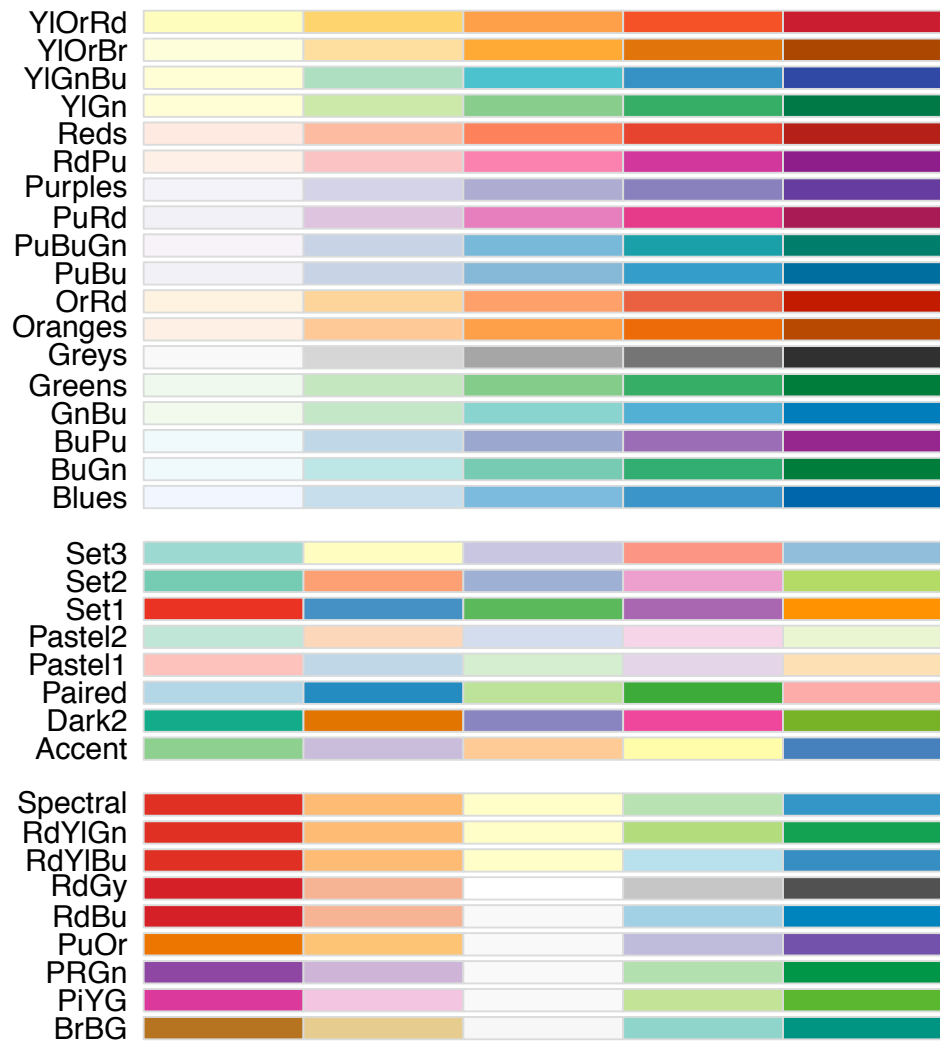
Census 2000 5-Digit ZIP Code Tabulation Areas (ZCTAs) Cartographic Boundary Files

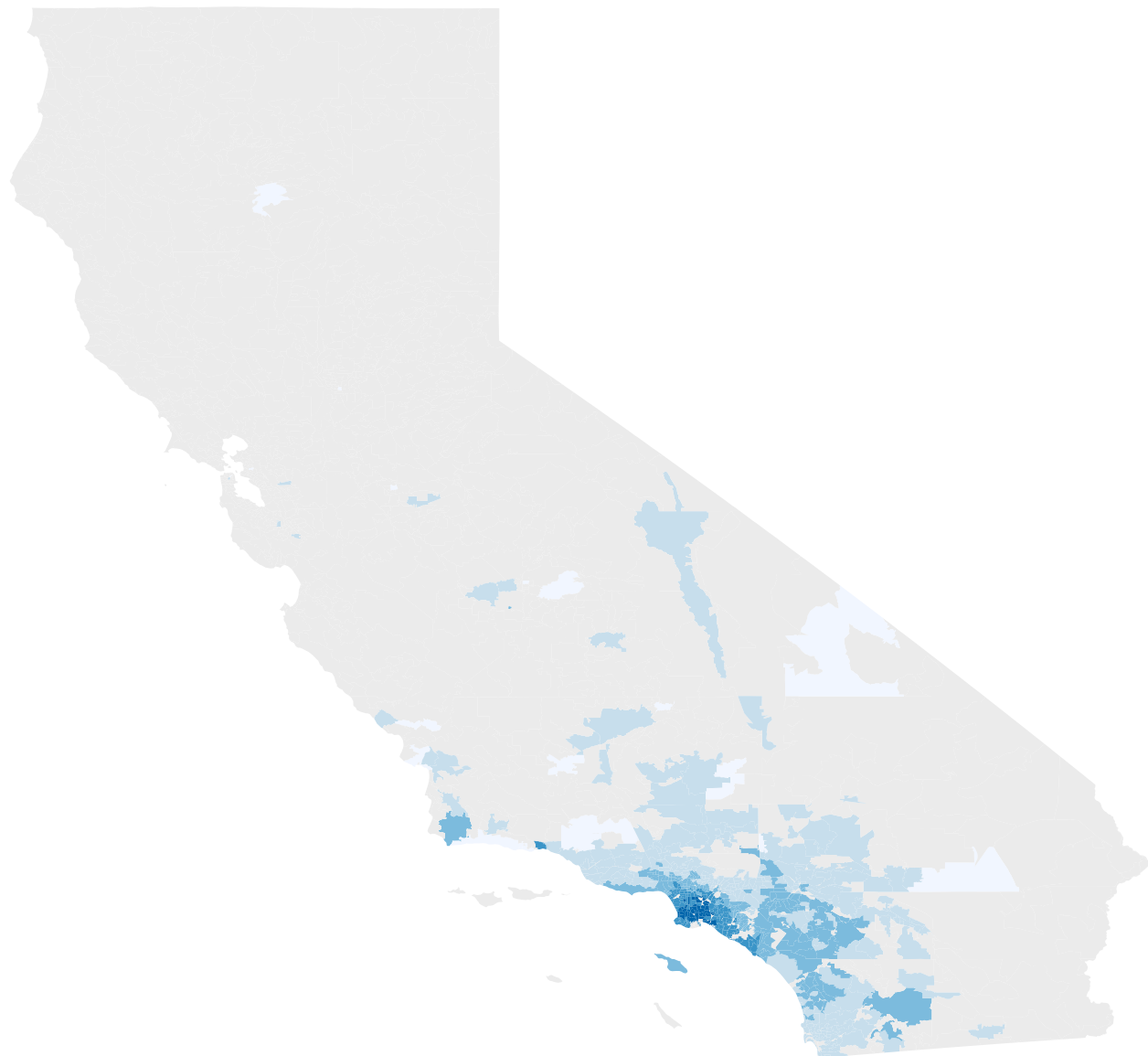
[ARC/INFO Export \(.e00\)](#) | [ArcView Shapefile \(.shp\)](#) | [ARC/INFO Ungenerate \(ASCII\)](#)

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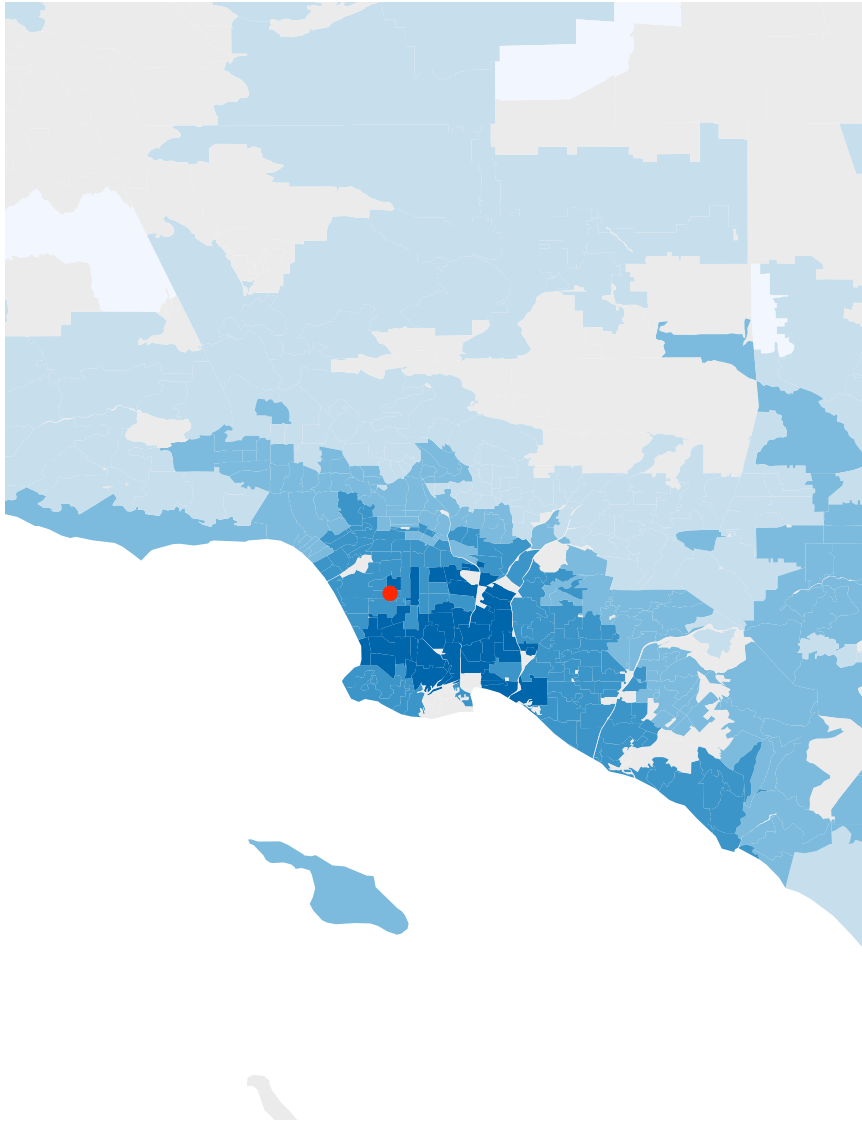
Census 2000 5-Digit ZIP Code Tabulation Areas (ZCTAs) in ARC/INFO Export (.e00) format

- Alabama - [zt01_d00_e00.zip](#) (939,702 bytes)
- Alaska - [zt02_d00_e00.zip](#) (1,634,983 bytes)
- Arizona - [zt04_d00_e00.zip](#) (482,399 bytes)
- Arkansas - [zt05_d00_e00.zip](#) (805,069 bytes)
- California - [zt06_d00_e00.zip](#) (1,868,987 bytes)
- Colorado - [zt08_d00_e00.zip](#) (525,215 bytes)
- Connecticut - [zt09_d00_e00.zip](#) (178,620 bytes)
- Delaware - [zt10_d00_e00.zip](#) (68,765 bytes)
- District of Columbia - [zt11_d00_e00.zip](#) (12,289 bytes)
- Florida - [zt12_d00_e00.zip](#) (1,182,978 bytes)
- Georgia - [zt13_d00_e00.zip](#) (943,514 bytes)
- Hawaii - [zt15_d00_e00.zip](#) (101,248 bytes)
- Idaho - [zt16_d00_e00.zip](#) (629,742 bytes)
- Illinois - [zt17_d00_e00.zip](#) (1,036,995 bytes)
- Indiana - [zt18_d00_e00.zip](#) (582,147 bytes)
- Iowa - [zt19_d00_e00.zip](#) (701,864 bytes)
- Kansas - [zt20_d00_e00.zip](#) (526,709 bytes)
- Kentucky - [zt21_d00_e00.zip](#) (854,491 bytes)
- Louisiana - [zt22_d00_e00.zip](#) (1,474,449 bytes)
- Maine - [zt23_d00_e00.zip](#) (670,663 bytes)
- Maryland - [zt24_d00_e00.zip](#) (420,863 bytes)
- Massachusetts - [zt25_d00_e00.zip](#) (326,474 bytes)
- Michigan - [zt26_d00_e00.zip](#) (948,937 bytes)
- Minnesota - [zt27_d00_e00.zip](#) (1,141,294 bytes)





MMI Responses, Sunday's EQ in Los Angeles

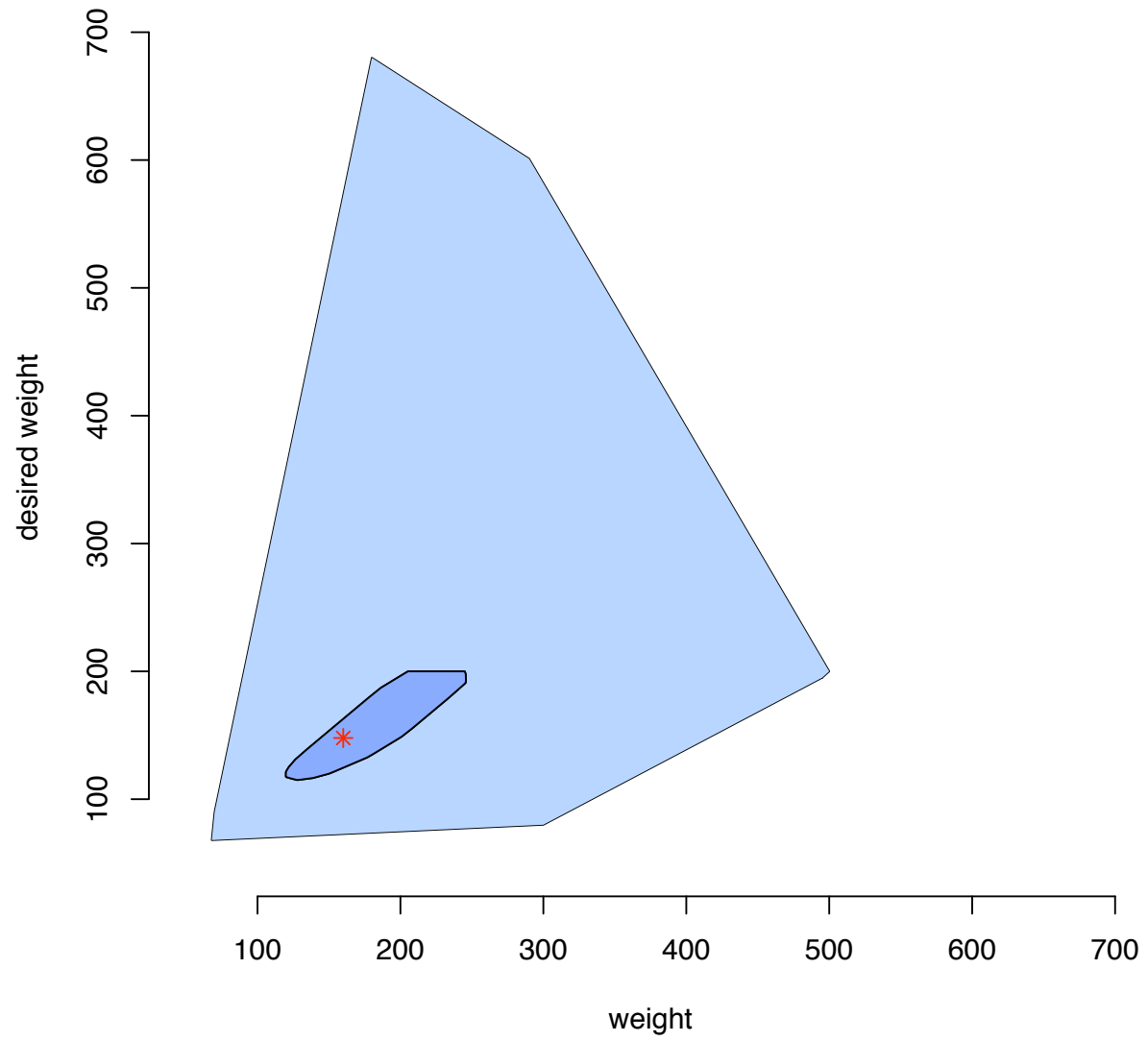


Scatterplots

We've added a line with unit slope to the plot; Why? What do you notice? What strikes you as expected? Unexpected?

Now, suppose we want to create something like a boxplot for these data; what concepts do we have to extend?

bagplot of weight and desired weight



Bagplots

Bagplots are another Tukey innovation (along with the boxplot), but somehow they haven't caught on; why?

Can you see this being useful? Under what circumstances? How might they be interesting for our data?