



## Addition Formula

$$P(A \cup B) = P(A) + P(B) - P(A \cap B)$$

The construction  $P(\ )$  represents the “probability of... occurring” so  $P(A)$  is the probability of  $A$  occurring.  $P(A \cup B)$  means the probability of  $A$  or  $B$  or both occurring, whereas  $P(A \cap B)$  means the probability of both  $A$  and  $B$  occurring.  $A \cup B$  is also the entire area enclosed by  $A$  and  $B$ ,  whereas  $A \cap B$  is the area of overlap between  $A$  and  $B$  .

From the diagram to the right, we can see that

$$P(A) = 0.1 + 0.3 = 0.4$$

$$P(B) = 0.15 + 0.3 = 0.45$$

$$P(A \cup B) = 0.1 + 0.3 + 0.15 = 0.55$$

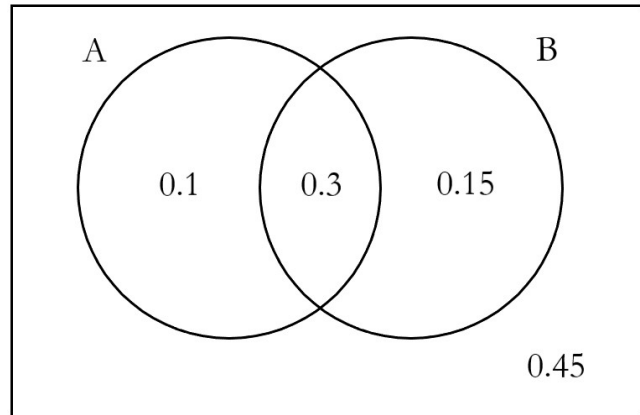
$$P(A \cap B) = 0.3$$

And we can confirm our equation

$$P(A \cup B) = P(A) + P(B) - P(A \cap B)$$

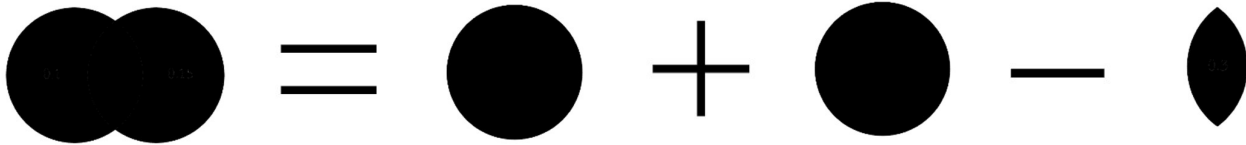
$$0.55 = 0.4 + 0.45 - 0.3$$

Which is true.



### Proof

Here is a visual proof, as there is no particular proof for this – it merely requires some careful thought.



It should be obvious that the silhouettes on the right hand side are equal to the silhouette on the left. If we were to overlap  $A$  and  $B$  (represented by the two full circles) we would create  $A \cup B$  but with an extra area, which is counteracted by the minus of the  $A \cap B$ .

### See also

- Multiplication Formula

### References

Attwood, G. et al. (2017). *Edexcel A level Mathematics - Statistics and Mechanics - Year 2*. London: Pearson Education. p.27.