

# BREAKING DOWN THE DATASET

Being presented with new datasets and visualizations can sometimes be intimidating. Here is a 6-step approach to breaking down an unfamiliar dataset and finding stories in the numbers.

<p><b>Recall</b></p> <p>Define the parameter of the dataset</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where is the data from? What is the source of the data? If there are multiple sources, identify all of them. How was the data collected? Who is publishing the dataset?</li> <li>• What is included in the dataset?</li> <li>• Make note of any calculated numbers including percentages. Define how they are being calculated.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Understand</b></p> <p>Recognize the story</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Locate any missing data points. What is not included in the dataset? Identify the limitations of using the dataset for analysis.</li> <li>• Pretend you are describing the dataset to someone who can't see it, how would you describe it?</li> <li>• Report which data point(s) stand out to you in the dataset. Explain why it stands out.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Apply</b></p> <p>Using the data</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which data points yield useful comparisons?</li> <li>• What's the most interesting question you want to ask the dataset you are looking at? Do you need any other datasets to answer this question? How could you get the other data you need to answer this question?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Analyze</b></p> <p>Drawing connections</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewing the available data, make a statement about the data.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Evaluate</b></p> <p>Hypothesize</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Form an opinion on the dataset.</li> <li>• Justify your opinion.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Create</b></p> <p>Experiment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can we experiment to test our hypothesis? What data points can we monitor and evaluate?</li> <li>• Investigate If other data points may be needed.</li> </ul>