

Scatterplots, model residuals and predictions

SAT · SAT · SAT

Scope and prerequisites

Digital SAT framework; original paper practice is nonadaptive and gives no scaled-score prediction.

- Interpret slope and intercept of a fitted model in context
- Calculate a residual and distinguish interpolation from extrapolation
- Choose linear or exponential patterns from equal-step data

Prerequisites: Linear functions; signed subtraction; scatterplot labels.

Explain and choose the method

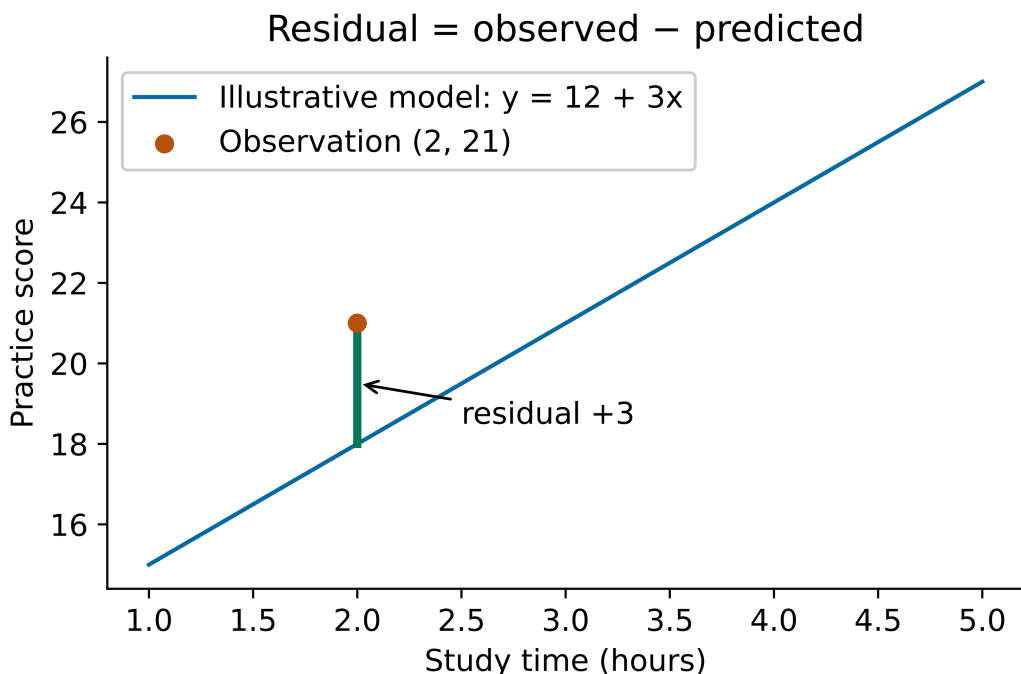
A scatterplot pairs two quantitative variables, one point per paired observation. A fitted line summarises a trend rather than connecting each point. In a model $y=a+bx$, b predicts the change in y for one-unit increase in x ; its units are y -units per x -unit. The intercept a predicts y when $x=0$, which may lie outside the data range.

A residual is observed y minus predicted y . Positive means the observation lies above the model; negative means below. Substitute the observed x into the model before subtracting. A large residual marks a poor prediction for that point, not automatically an error in measurement or proof that the trend is absent.

Interpolation predicts inside the observed x -range; extrapolation goes beyond it and needs stronger caution because the relationship may change. Use a model's contextual domain as well as its algebraic form. A negative predicted travel time, for example, can reveal an unjustified extrapolation rather than a physically possible outcome.

For equal input steps, nearly constant output differences suggest a linear model; nearly constant output ratios suggest an exponential model. Scatter can make either pattern approximate. Association does not identify a cause: both variables may reflect a third factor. A fitted trend is evidence about prediction, not by itself about intervention.

A residual is observed minus predicted output. A journey model $T = 5 + 2d$ uses minutes for T and kilometres for d . $T(4) = 5 \text{ min} + (2 \text{ min/km})(4 \text{ km}) = 13 \text{ min}$. For observed time 16 minutes, $e = T_{\text{obs}} - T_{\text{pred}} = 16 \text{ min} - 13 \text{ min} = 3 \text{ min}$.



Original worked example from existing native teaching; transfer tasks use their own data.

Existing worked example: For study time x hours and predicted practice score $y=12+3x$, the slope is 3 score points/hour. At $x=2$ the prediction is 18. If the observed score is 21, $\text{residual}=21-18=3$. With x -values observed from 1 to 5, predicting at $x=3$ interpolates and $x=12$ extrapolates. Outputs 5,10,20,40 at equal input steps suggest factor-two exponential growth.

Complete original context

Every transfer question states all data it needs.

Independent practice and checked reasoning

■ Transfer 1

A fitted delivery model is $T = 8 + 1.5d$ minutes for observed distances 2–10 km. Interpret both parameters. At 6 km the observed time is 15 minutes; find its residual.

Reasoning: The intercept predicts 8 minutes at zero distance; zero lies outside the observed range, so this interpretation is extrapolated. The slope predicts an extra 1.5 minutes per kilometre. $T(6) = 8 \text{ min} + (1.5 \text{ min/km})(6 \text{ km}) = 17 \text{ min}$. Residual $e = 15 \text{ min} - 17 \text{ min} = -2 \text{ min}$, below the line.

■ Transfer 2

Predictions are requested at 7 km and 20 km. Classify each, and explain why a fitted slope does not prove distance alone causes all time variation.

Reasoning: Seven is inside 2–10, so interpolation. Twenty is outside, so extrapolation with weaker support. Traffic, loading and other conditions can influence time; a fitted association does not isolate their effects.

■ Transfer 3

At equally spaced inputs 0,1,2,3, outputs are 6,18,54,162. Choose a simple linear or exponential rule and predict at 4, stating the assumption.

Reasoning: Ratios are all 3, while differences vary. The exponential rule is $y = 6(3)^x$. Under continued factor-three growth, $y(4) = 6(3)^4 = 486$. This is a model-based extrapolation, not a guaranteed next observation.

Limits and next use

Keep observed minus predicted in that order. Do not turn a model slope into a causal treatment effect.

All tasks here are public original practice with authored guidance. They are not official questions or fresh diagnostics. Existing protected tests and mocks remain separate.