

Best Form

5.6

Recall: There are several ways to describe a relationship in mathematics. So far, we have

discussed ^(when x ↑ by..., y ↓ by...) a Sentence, a Table of Values,
an equation and a graph.

- Each form of this description has its strengths and weaknesses.

Form	Sentence	Table of Values	Equation	Graph
Strengths	Easy to understand if the relationship is simple.	Good for a quick reference and to see how many data points are available.	Convenient for quick and exact calculations.	Easy for a quick reference to see a trend/relationship. Good for estimates – extrapolation and interpolation.
Weaknesses	It can become rather confusing if the relationship is complex.	It can become overwhelming if too much data is listed. It may not be large enough to detect a pattern/relationship.	It may be difficult to find the equation without technology.	It may be difficult to draw a graph without technology. It may be deceiving if only a few points are known.

In summary:

- If you need an exact value, use an equation.
- If you need a quick estimate, use a graph.
- If you need a convenient reference, use a table.