

Handout for January 2018 Newsletter

Mapping Unemployment Levels and Rates in GeoFRED®

Purpose.

1. Create state-level geographical maps of unemployment levels and rates.
2. Edit the maps by modifying their colors.
3. Interpret the economic information displayed in the maps.

Pedagogical Rationale. This assignment requires that you first search for data online, select a particular series, and display it in the form of a geographical map. Next, you will edit the format of the map. Lastly, you will interpret the economic information displayed in the map. These tasks will develop your proficiency in searching for, transforming, and interpreting data.

Grading. Your grade will be determined by (a) how precisely you complete the search and manipulation data tasks and (b) how accurately you interpret the data.

Steps to Search for and Manipulate the Data. Follow these steps:

1. Access <https://geofred.stlouisfed.org> and click on “Build New Map.”
2. Click on “Tools” and under “CHOOSE DATA > Region Type:” select “State.”
3. Click on “Data:” select “Unemployment level” and “Not Seasonally Adjusted, Quarterly, Persons, 4-Quarter Moving Average.”
4. Click on “CHOOSE COLORS” and select from “Multi Hue” the right-most color scheme from the second row (tagged “ylorrd”).
5. (EXTRA CREDIT) Click on “DOWNLOAD,” select “Download Type: Spreadsheet,” and sort the data by the fourth column in descending order.
6. Open a new browser tab.
7. Access <https://geofred.stlouisfed.org> and click on “Build New Map.” Click on “Tools” and under “CHOOSE DATA > Region Type:” select “State.”
8. Click on “Data:” select “Unemployment rate,” “Not Seasonally Adjusted, Monthly, Percent,” and “Frequency: Quarterly.”
9. Click on “CHOOSE COLORS” and select from “Multi Hue” the right-most color scheme from the second row (tagged “ylorrd”).
10. (EXTRA CREDIT) Click on “DOWNLOAD,” select “Download Type: Spreadsheet,” and sort the data by the fourth column in descending order.

Discussion Prompts. Answer the following questions:

1. Name 4 states with unemployment levels above 400,000 persons.
2. Name the 3 states, in addition to the District of Columbia, registering the highest unemployment rates.
3. Briefly explain why the answers to questions 1 and 2 are different. Explain why news outlets report unemployment figures in rates instead of in levels.