GENERAL

hardy weinberg practice problems worksheet with answers

Published: September 3, 2026 | Index ID: #-

Introduction

When studying genetics, one of the most foundational concepts is the **Hardy–Weinberg equilibrium**. It provides a mathematical framework that allows students, researchers, and educators to predict genotype frequencies in a population that is not evolving. Despite its elegance, mastering the calculations can be challenging, especially when the problems involve multiple alleles, sex-linked traits, or real-world data. That's why **Hardy–Weinberg practice problems worksheet with answers**is a vital resource for anyone looking to deepen their understanding and sharpen their problem solving skills.

In this article, we'll explore why practice is essential, break down the structure of an effective worksheet, walk through a complete set of practice problems with step by step solutions, and share strategies for tackling even the most complex scenarios. By the end, you'll have a solid toolkit to confidently apply the Hardy–Weinberg principle in both academic and professional settings.

What Is Hardy–Weinberg Equilibrium?

The Hardy–Weinberg principle, named after Godfrey Hardy and Wilhelm Weinberg, describes a state in which allele and genotype frequencies in a population remain constant from generation to generation, provided that certain conditions are met. These conditions are:

- No mutation
- No migration (gene flow)
- No natural selection
- Random mating
- Infinitely large population size (no genetic drift)

When these assumptions hold, the genotype frequencies can be predicted from allele frequencies using the binomial expansion:

$p^2 + 2pq + q^2 = 1$

where **p** is the frequency of one allele, **q** is the frequency of the other allele, and **$p + q = 1$**. This simple equation is the cornerstone of population genetics, enabling researchers to test whether a population is evolving and to infer evolutionary forces at play.

Why Practice Problems Are Essential

Understanding theory is one thing; applying it is another. The Hardy–Weinberg principle involves algebraic manipulation, careful interpretation of data, and an awareness of underlying assumptions. Practice problems help students:

- Translate biological scenarios into mathematical equations.
- Develop precision in calculations and rounding.
- Recognize when assumptions are violated.
- Build confidence for exams and research projects.

Moreover, a well structured worksheet provides instant feedback through answers, allowing learners to identify mistakes and correct misconceptions early on.

Types of Practice Problems

Hardy–Weinberg exercises come in various flavors:

1. Basic allele frequency calculations – Determining allele frequencies from genotype counts.
2. Genotype prediction – Using allele frequencies to compute expected genotype counts.
3. Testing for equilibrium – Comparing observed and expected frequencies.
4. Multiple alleles and sex linked traits – Extending the principle to more complex genetic systems.
5. Real world data analysis – Applying the principle to epidemiological studies or conservation genetics.

How to Use a Worksheet Effectively

When approaching a **Hardy–Weinberg practice problems worksheet with answers**, consider the following steps:

1. Read the problem carefully – Identify the data given and the question asked.
2. Define variables – Assign p, q (and r if needed) to the alleles.
3. Apply the equation – Use $p^2 + 2pq + q^2 = 1$ or its extensions.
4. Compute expected values – Multiply by the total population size.
5. Compare with observed data – Use chi square or other statistical tests if required.
6. Check your work – Verify that p + q = 1 and that all frequencies are between 0 and 1.

After solving, refer to the provided answers to confirm accuracy and understand any discrepancies.

Sample Hardy–Weinberg Practice Problems Worksheet with Answers

Below is a curated set of practice problems that cover a range of difficulty levels. Each problem is followed by a detailed solution. Use this worksheet to test your skills and gain confidence.

Solution:

- Allele A frequency (p) = (2×80 + 90) / (2×200) = (160 + 90) / 400 = 250 / 400 = 0.625.
- Allele a frequency (q) = 1 – p = 0.375.
- Expected AA = $p^2 \times 200 = 0.625^2 \times 200$ "H 78.13.
- Expected Aa = $2pq \times 200 = 2 \times 0.625 \times 0.375 \times 200$ "H 93.75.
- Expected aa = $q^2 \times 200 = 0.375^2 \times 200$ "H 28.13.

Problem 2: A biologist observes the following genotype counts for a gene with two alleles: 150 AA, 120 Aa, 30 aa. Test whether the population is in Hardy–Weinberg equilibrium using a chi square test at ; Ò ã Rà

Solution:

- Calculate allele frequencies: p = (2×150 + 120) / (2×300) = 420 / 600 = 0.70; q = 0.30.
- Expected counts: AA = $p^2 \times 300 = 0.49 \times 300 = 147$; Aa = $2pq \times 300 = 0.42 \times 300 = 126$; aa = $q^2 \times 300 = 0.09 \times 300 = 27$.
- Chi square statistic: <{" Ò £ (Observed – Expected)² / Expected = $(150–147)^2/147 + (120–126)^2/126 + (30–27)^2/27$ "H 0.068 + 0.285 + 0.333 = 0.686.
- Degrees of freedom = 1 (k–1). Critical value at 0.05 = 3.841.
- Since 0.686

Problem 3: In a population of 500, the frequency of allele R is 0.4. Assuming Hardy–Weinberg equilibrium, what proportion of the population will be heterozygous (Rr)?

Solution:

- q = 1 – p = 0.6.
- Heterozygote frequency = 2pq = 2×0.4×0.6 = 0.48.
- Proportion of 500 = 0.48 × 500 = 240 individuals.

Problem 4: A population has a gene with three alleles: A, B, and C. The observed genotype counts are: AA = 60, AB = 40, AC = 20, BB = 50, BC = 30, CC = 70. Determine the allele frequencies.

Solution:

- Total individuals = 60+40+20+50+30+70 = 270.
- Number of A alleles = 2×60 + 40 + 20 = 140.
- Number of B alleles = 2×50 + 40 + 30 = 170.
- Number of C alleles = 2×70 + 20 + 30 = 190.
- Allele frequencies: p(A) = 140 / (2×270) = 140 / 540 "H 0.259; p(B) = 170 / 540 "H 0.315; p(C) = 190 / 540 "H 0.352.

Problem 5: A sex linked trait is observed in a population of 400 females and 400 males. Among females, 320 are homozygous recessive (yy), 80 are heterozygous (Yy). No males show the recessive phenotype. Calculate the allele frequency of Y in the population.

Solution:

- Allele Y frequency in females: p = (2×(400–320) + 80) / (2×400) = (2×80 + 80) / 800 = 240 / 800 = 0.30.
- Allele y frequency in females: q = 0.70.
- Because males are hemizygous, the allele frequency in males equals the proportion of Y alleles among male gametes, which is 1 (all males carry Y).
- Weighted allele frequency in the entire population: p_total = (0.30×400 + 1×400) / (400+400) = (120 + 400) / 800 = 520 / 800 = 0.65.

Problem 6: A population of 1000 individuals has an observed genotype distribution for a disease allele: 800 wild-type (AA), 150 carriers (Aa), and 50 affected (aa). Test whether the population deviates from Hardy–Weinberg equilibrium.

Solution:

- Allele frequencies: p = (2×800 + 150) / (2×1000) = 1750 / 2000 = 0.875; q = 0.125.
- Expected counts: AA = p^2×1000 = 0.7656×1000 "H 766; Aa = 2pq×1000 = 0.2188×1000 "H 219; aa = q^2×1000 = 0.0156×1000 "H 16.
- Chi square: $(800–766)^2/766 + (150–219)^2/219 + (50–16)^2/16$ "H 1.41 + 2.26 + 70.31 = 74.0.

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