Methods for Describing Sets of Data

2.3 Measures of Central Tendency

1. A publisher wants to report the typical earnings of its authors to the public. What measure of central tendency would be best used in this situation: mean, median, or mode?

2. A researcher at a veterinary college of medicine wants to sample domestic short hair house cats in order to determine their typical body weight. Which measure of central tendency would be best in this situation: mean, median, or mode?

3. A florist wants to review her sales records to determine what the typical color of rose is purchased for use in a wedding bouquet. Which measure of central tendency would be best used in this situation: mean, median, or mode?

   Answers:

1. The **median** because some authors like a J.K. Rowling would make millions while the majority of the rest would make far less. The really successful authors would make the mean less representative of the group as a whole.

2. The **mean** because weights of house cats should not have extremes that would end up making the mean unrepresentative.

3. The **mode** since colors cannot be arranged in order to find the median or added and divided to find the mean.