ALT/FNDATA ACADEMY · FACILITATOR GUIDE

Facilitator guide: Module 1, Alternative data in finance

A teacher-facing companion to Module 1. The module is the full lesson; this guide adds the facilitation layer: a preparation checklist, timing cues, guidance for the discussion questions, and notes on what to emphasize and where students get stuck. Slides and a printable version are below.

At a glance

- **Length:** 75 minutes. A 50 minute and a 90 minute variant are noted under Teaching notes.
- **Level:** undergraduate juniors and seniors, MBA, or graduate finance. No data or coding background required.
- **Access:** the no-code sandbox at sandbox.altfndata.com only. No API key is needed. Students self-register with a work or school email and are approved automatically.
- **Goal of the session:** students leave able to define alternative data, name where auction and resale pricing fits, and run their own first query in the sandbox.

Before class

- Register your own sandbox account and run both demo queries end to end, so you have known-good results on screen.
- Open the coverage browser on "watches" once beforehand; note the brand and vendor counts you see so you can point to real numbers live.
- Load the slides and confirm the projector or screen share shows the sandbox clearly. The SQL editor text should be readable from the back of the room.
- Optional: assign the Evaluation Guide at docs.altfndata.com/use-cases.html as a pre-read so students arrive with the vocabulary.
- Have students register their sandbox accounts before class if you can, to save the 5 minutes of setup.

Timed agenda with cues

Time	Segment	What to do	Watch for
0 to 10	What is alternative data	Contrast traditional data (filings, price feeds, estimates) with alternative data (satellite, web traffic, card panels, transactional pricing). Ask for examples before you give yours.	Students conflating "alternative" with "informal." Stress that it is simply data outside the traditional trio.
10 to 20	Where auction and resale data fits	Introduce the coverage (watches, jewelry, art, wine, cars, and more) and that every record has a pre-sale estimate, a realized price, a vendor, and a brand.	Keep it concrete: show a single record's fields rather than listing categories abstractly.
20 to 30	Sandbox orientation	Students register and open the sandbox together. Walk the SQL editor, coverage browser, and data dictionary tabs.	Registration email typos. Have a backup shared account ready in case one student cannot get in.

Time	Segment	What to do	Watch for
30 to 55	Guided demo	Run the demo below live, narrating each query and result. Change the brand filter and re-run to show the comparison.	Do not rush the first query. Let students read the columns and find the highest and lowest price themselves.
55 to 70	Student exploration	In pairs, students run a demo query against a different brand or category and note what changes.	Pairs that pick a brand with very few rows. Nudge them to check the row count first.
70 to 75	Wrap-up and homework	Restate the one-sentence takeaway and hand out the homework.	Leave 2 minutes for the homework logistics, not zero.

Guidance for the discussion questions

Use these as the "what to listen for" behind each question in the module. They are talking points, not a graded key.

1. **Alternative vs traditional data, and why demand has grown.** Listen for: alternative data sits outside filings, price feeds, and analyst estimates; demand grew because those traditional sources are widely available and slow, so investors seek an edge in data that is harder to get and closer to real behavior.

2. **Risks of uneven or gappy coverage.** Listen for: a signal that looks like a trend may just be changing coverage. Connect this directly to the recency caveat that recurs across the course.

3. **Why sale_date matters for point-in-time correctness.** Listen for: using the actual sale date, not the ingestion date, keeps a backtest honest, since you must only use what was knowable at the time. The wrong date leaks future information.

4. **What actual-paid data tells you that a preference survey does not.** Listen for: revealed preference. What someone paid is a stronger signal of demand than what they say they prefer.

5. **Why capture unsold lots, not only sales.** Listen for: without the unsold lots you cannot compute sell-through, and a prices-only view is survivorship-biased toward what happened to sell.

6. **What auction data tells an analyst that filings do not.** Listen for: brand-level, near-real-time demand behavior; filings are consolidated, lagged, and accrual-based.

7. **Ethics and privacy of public auction records.** Listen for: these are public sale records rather than private consumer data, which lowers the privacy concern, but coverage and representativeness are still fair game to question.

Teaching notes

• **Most common misconception:** students treat a `designer LIKE '%Rolex%'` result as the whole market for a brand. Show the vendor-count query from the module's Going deeper section so they see how few auction houses a result can rest on.

• **Second misconception:** confusing the pre-sale high estimate with the realized price. Put the two fields side by side on one record and say plainly which is a forecast and which is what was paid.

• **50 minute variant:** drop the paired student exploration and shorten the opening discussion to 6 minutes; keep the live demo intact, since it is the load-bearing part.

• **90 minute variant:** after the demo, have pairs each pick a different category and briefly report back, then run the vendor-concentration query as a class to set up the coverage-bias theme.

- **If the sandbox is slow or blocked on the room network:** fall back to the pre-run screenshots you captured in preparation, and have students run the queries themselves as the homework instead.

For the full lesson content, queries, and homework, see Module 1. Questions or a class API key: info@altfndata.com.