

Introduction to SPSS

Entering data:

SPSS starts with a spreadsheet in **data view**. Each vertical column is for a variable. Each row is for an observation/measurement. Be sure to save your work often.

1. Define your variables.
 - a. Click **Variable view** tab in the lower left corner of the spreadsheet.
 - b. In each row, type the **name** of a single variable.
 - variable names must start with a letter and can't include punctuation
 - distinguish between variables and levels: Major is a variable; Psychology and Political Science are not, they are levels of the variable Major
 - c. You may explore the other options in the variable view screen, but I usually leave **type, width, and decimals** at the default values.
 - d. Finally, for all nominal (categorical) variables, you will want to use **values to dummy code**.

Dummy coding works like this for the variable Major:

1 = Psychology 2 = Biology 3 = English

This simply allows SPSS to recognize nominal values. The numbers used are arbitrary (Biology could = 1 and Psychology could = 2).

How to: Click the box in a Value cell and it will ask you to give the value (1) and the label (Psychology), and then add it to the list. Do this for all levels.

You may also provide value labels for any other variable that has a limited number of discrete observations.
2. Click the data view tab in the lower left corner of the spreadsheet to return to the data screen.
 - a. The columns now have your variable names at the top.
 - b. Enter data values with each individual observation on a different row.
3. Save often.
 - a. Note that the data file and the output file (where your analyses will appear) are separate files and need to be saved separately.

In general:

1. Save all data before starting analysis, just to be safe.
2. Click the analyze menu and choose the category of analysis you would like.
3. Variables will always be presented in a window for you to select for analysis.
4. There are always a few options to make your analysis more specific.
5. Some analyses, such as descriptive statistics, can be handled through multiple functions.