

## 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 is not a variable, and neither is Political Science. These 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 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. In other words, 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 value 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. After defining your variables, save your file just to be safe.
3. Click the data view tab in the lower left corner of the spreadsheet to return to the data screen. Notice the columns have your variable names there. Start entering the values with each individual observation on a different row.
4. Save often. You can lose data just like you could lose a term paper if the computer crashes.

### 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.