

SPSS 8 for Windows: The Basics

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Additional information regarding SPSS for Windows can be found at:

http://www.nyu.edu/acf/pubs/SPSS_Win/SPSSwindoc_ToC.html,
<http://unr.edu/homepage/maddux/stat/cep740/spsswiin.html> and
http://statlab.stat.yale.edu/statlab/software/SPSS_Windows.html

To Load SPSS

Double click the **SPSS 8.0 for Windows** folder on the Windows 95 Desktop and click the **SPSS 8.0 for Windows** Web link on the SPSS Web page.

To Open an Existing a File

Select the **Open an existing file** option from the initial **SPSS for Windows** dialog box or click **File** from the menu bar and click **Open** from the pull down menu to bring up the **Open File** dialog box. Select the drive that contains your document [3 2 Floppy (A:)] from the **Look in** box in the top left-hand section of the screen, click the file's name in the middle of the dialog box, and click the **Open** button on the right-hand side of the window.

To Create a New File

Select the **Type in data** option from the initial **SPSS for Windows** dialog box or click **File** from the menu bar, click **New** from the pull down menu, and select **Data** from the pop out menu.

To Save a File

Select **File** from the menu bar and click **Save As** from the pull down menu to bring up the **Save Data As** dialog box. If you wish to save the data file in a different format (as a Microsoft Excel file for example) select the format from the **Save as type** option in the bottom left-hand corner of the dialog box. Select the drive that contains your file [3 2 Floppy (A:)] from the **Save in** box in the top left-hand section of the screen, click one time in the **File name** box in the bottom left-hand corner, type the name you wish to give to your file, and click the **Save** button in the bottom right-hand corner. If you don't have a disk, you can save to the AShared K:@ drive (the server hard drive), but keep in mind that the K: drive is periodically cleaned off. Once you have saved your file, saving can be done by selecting **File** from the menu bar and clicking **Save** from the pull down menu. Remember to **SAVE YOUR WORK OFTEN!** (NOTE: **Save As** should be used when either saving your work for the first time or when renaming a file. **Save** should be used once the file has been initially saved.)

To Use Help

The Help menu option in SPSS is an important function. The **Topics** menu option under **Help** gives you many options to choose from when trying to figure out how to perform an operation in SPSS. If you know what you want to do, but don't know how to do it or where to locate that menu option, you may want to select the **Index** tab option by selecting **Help** and **Topics** and type in the word you're interested in looking up. Once you have typed in the word, click the **Display** button to read information about that topic. Before asking someone else for help, check out the **Help** menu option and see if you can help yourself.

To Define Variables

Click **Data** from the menu bar and select **Define Variable** from the pull down menu or right click on the variable=s column header and select **Define Variable** from the floating menu. Assign the variable a name that is no longer than 8 characters. Click the **Type** button to define the type of variable you are creating (numeric, date, dollar, etc.), the width of the variable, and the number of decimal places the variable will hold. Click the **Missing Values** button to specify whether the variable will contain missing values and what to do with missing values. Click the **Labels** button to assign a more descriptive name to the variable (**Variable Label**) which will appear in the SPSS output and to assign values and value labels to entries (Example: f=Afemale@ and m=Amale@). Click the **Column Format** button to define the width of the column containing the variable and to set up alignment for the values placed in that column. Finally, define the measurement of the variable as either **Scale** (unlimited values), **Ordinal** (limited numeric values), or **Nominal** (limited alphabetic values).

To Insert and Delete Variables

Place the cursor in the column where you would like to insert the variable (SPSS will take the column your cursor is in and move it to the right). Select **Data** from the menu bar and click **Insert Variable** from the pull down menu or right click on the variable=s column header and select **Insert Variable** from the floating menu. To delete a variable (or column) click one time on the variable=s column header so that the entire column is selected or highlighted and press the <Delete> key on the keyboard.

To Create a Graph

Select **Graph** from the menu bar and click the type of graph you would like to create from a long list in the pull down menu. Click the **Define** button to describe the type of graph you would like to create. The **Titles** button will allow you to create two main titles and two subtitles for the graph. Select from the listed variables on the left-hand side of the screen to define how the variable(s) should be represented in the graph. It is often easier to create the graph on computer after you have first drawn the graph on paper and understand how the graph should ultimately look.

To Statistically Analyze the Data

Select **Statistics** from the menu bar and click the type of statistical analysis you would like to conduct from a long list in the pull down menu. Most often, you will want to perform some type of summary analysis like frequency and descriptive statistical analysis. Select **Summarize** from the pull down menu to find either of these two options. Select from the listed variables on the left-hand side of the screen to define which variables should be included in the analysis. Buttons are provided to make additional specifications regarding the type of analysis to be conducted.

To Create a Computed Variable

You can create new variables that are computations of existing variables or of mathematical functions. Select **Transform** from the menu bar and click **Compute** from the pull down menu. Give the new variable a variable name and create an expression that mathematical functions. Select **Transform** from the menu bar and click **Compute** from the pull down menu. Give the new variable a variable name and create an expression that represents the computation necessary to create the new variable. Alf statements@ can also be used in generating the new variable.

To Print a File

To print the data file, click **File** from the menu bar and select **Print** from the pull down menu. To print the output file, click the sections of the output you would like to print in the left-hand window (or select none of the sections to print all of the output), select **File** from the menu bar, and select **Print** from the pull down menu.

To Exit SPSS

Click **File** from the menu bar and select **Exit** from the pull down menu. If you haven't already saved your file (or the changes to your file), SPSS will ask if you would like to save now. If you would like to save, click **Yes** and refer to the **To Save a File** section of this handout. Otherwise, click **No** to exit SPSS and you will return to the Windows 95 desktop.