

**Block 1: From questionnaire to SPSS saved file****1.3.3.1: Preparing the ground**

[Updated 1 September 2010]

**Previous reading:** [1.1.2 The Nature of Survey Data](#) (essential)  
(recommended) [1.1.3 Introduction to the use of computers in survey analysis](#)

**Previous exercises:** 1: Download, print up and complete the [pre-course questionnaire](#)  
2: Download, print up and complete the [data transfer sheet](#)  
3: Open Word, type in data from transfer sheet and save as **mydata.txt**  
4: Familiarisation with data layout and questionnaires [**1.2.3** and **1.2.4**]

If you haven't yet done these exercises, or anything similar in the past, go back and do them before you go any further, especially the data typing exercise. You will need to have at least tried it before tackling your first SPSS exercise.

**Before you start.**

It will be easiest if you have your own computer with a licenced copy of SPSS (even if it's only Base or Gradpack) but if you are working on another computer or network (eg at college or at work) you may need to keep your work on a CD or a remote server. Either way, you should **always back up your work** to a CD or to a secure remote server.

Even if you don't have access to a licenced copy of SPSS, you can still follow or download the tutorials. I'm using **SPSS/PASW-18, MS-Word** and **Windows XP**. If you're using SPSS-15 (or even earlier versions back to SPSS 11) and Vista or Windows 7, all exercises should work, but the [screenshot displays](#) will differ from those appearing here.

So let's get ourselves properly set up.

**Step 1:** In your Windows Desktop, create a new folder **myclass** (or load a floppy to drive **a:** or a RW CD into drive **e:** and create folder **myclass** on that)

**Step 2:** Download the cumulative raw data file [myclass.txt](#) (7 kb) from this website and scroll up and down to see what it looks like. There are 169 cases, one line of data for each (see extract of data for first 10 cases below).

**Extract from raw data file [myclass.txt](#) for pre-course questionnaire as entered on computer**<sup>1</sup>  
(first 10 cases only, one line per case)

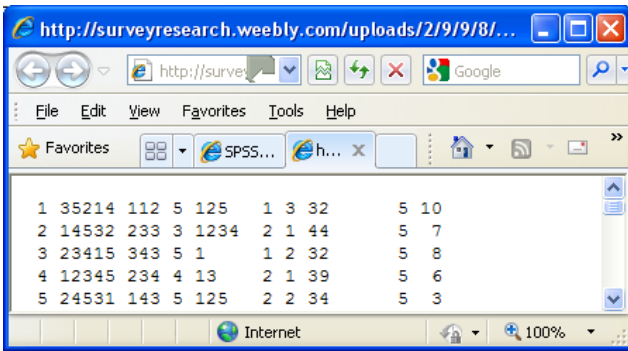
```

1 35214 112 5 125    1 3 32    5 10
2 14532 233 3 1234  2 1 44    5 7
3 23415 343 5 1     1 2 32    5 8
4 12345 234 4 13    2 1 39    5 6
5 24531 143 5 125   2 2 34    5 3
6 15243 213 4 1235  2 1 27    5 5
7 15342 212 5 12    1 4 26    5 11
8 25431 212 5 1     1 1 26    5 3
9 14523 222 5 123   2 1 31    5 4
10 15324 323 4 3     2 1 22    5 3

```

<sup>1</sup> The above data set had blanks deliberately inserted (on the transfer sheet) to make it clearer. Most raw data sets in 80-column format will have no blanks, except possibly just after the serial number and around column 40 on an 80-column line. This use of blanks is advisable because, on visual inspection, the blanks will show up as vertical white lines and certain kinds of data entry errors will then be clearly visible.

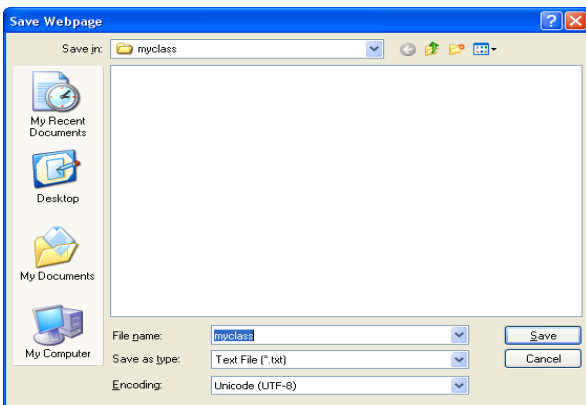
The data set will appear on your screen like this:



Cumulative data in file **myclass.txt**

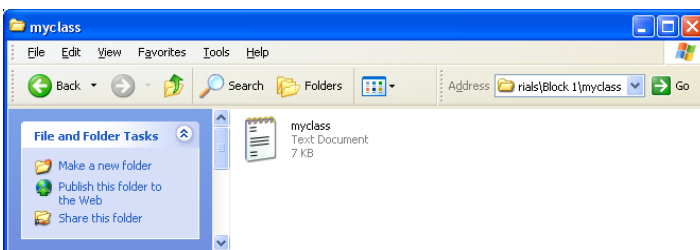
I've reduced the screenshot a bit, but, if you can't read any of the screenshots in this document you can always drag the corners diagonally. Look in the top left corner and click on **File** > **Save As ..**

Navigate to your new folder **myclass** and write **myclass.txt** in the file name box.



Folder **myclass** (currently empty)

Click on **Save** ...and a copy of the cumulative data file will appear:



Folder **myclass** with **myclass.txt** saved

Depending on which method you used, the computer address of this file is now:

**'a:\myclass\myclass.txt'** or **'e:\myclass\myclass.txt'** or  
**'c:\Documents and Settings\Owner\Desktop\myclass\myclass.txt'**

We shall need this address later. Because it's simpler to specify, I use **a:** in the next exercise. The logic of subsequent steps is the same: just substitute **e:** for **a:**. It's best to use **c:**, but it's a more complex address. On my computer SPSS can write directly to **a:** and **c:** but not to **e:**

That was a bit fiddly, but we are now ready to move on to SPSS proper

**Next session: 1.3.3.2 First shot at writing in SPSS syntax**

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