

Block 1: From questionnaire to SPSS saved file

1.5 Utilities

1.5.2 Exercise: Checking your data file

[Draft only: 29 May 2013]

Previous tutorial [1.5.1 Checking SPSS \(saved\) data files](#)

Exemplar: [ql4gb1975.sav](#) (Quality of Life in Britain 1975: click to download)

There are various ways of using SPSS to check the content and structure of your data files. Some are available in both the GUI and syntax, some in syntax only, some in GUI only. Some produce output, some don't. If you don't want any output you can simply to eyeball the Data Editor. Another is to produce frequency counts and/or descriptive statistics. Some produce syntax and output, others are only available in syntax, others but, for preferably nominal or ordinal variables, or scale variables with not too many values the GUI provides a particularly useful and very quick way to check your variable labels, measurement levels, variable types, data values, value labels and raw counts. This facility produces no syntax and no output

This example looks at four questions on housing from the 1975 Quality of life in Britain survey

QA.1	In what year was this (house/flat) built? (GET BEST ESTIMATE IF RESPONDENT DOES NOT KNOW EXACT DATE)	CODE	O.U.O.
	(IF NECESSARY PROMPT): Was it.....? →	{ 1899 or earlier 1900-1918 1919-1944 1945-1964 1965 or later (Don't know)	1 ( 7 ) 2 3 4 5 9
QA.2	How many years have you been living in this (house/flat)? (RECORD NUMBER OF COMPLETE YEARS, IF LESS THAN ONE YEAR, WRITE '0'. IF "BORN HERE", TICK BOX)	WRITE IN _____	O.U.O. (8)-(9)
		"Born here" <input type="checkbox"/>	
QA.3	FOR EACH ITEM BELOW ASK: (A) Do you have.....? IF "YES" ASK: (B) Is it shared with another household? a) a fixed bath or shower with a hot water supply b) a flush toilet inside the house c) a kitchen separate from living rooms.	(A) Do you have?	(B) Is it shared?
		No Yes	Yes No
		0 ASK B	1 2 (10)
		0 ASK B	1 2 (11)
		0 ASK B	1 2 (12)
QA.4	How often, if at all, do (any of) you ever eat main meals in the kitchen or use it as a living room? (RING CODE)	CODE	( 13 )
		Always Most times Sometimes Rarely Never Can't/kitchen too small No separate kitchen/ Not applicable (Don't know)	1 2 3 4 5 6 8 9

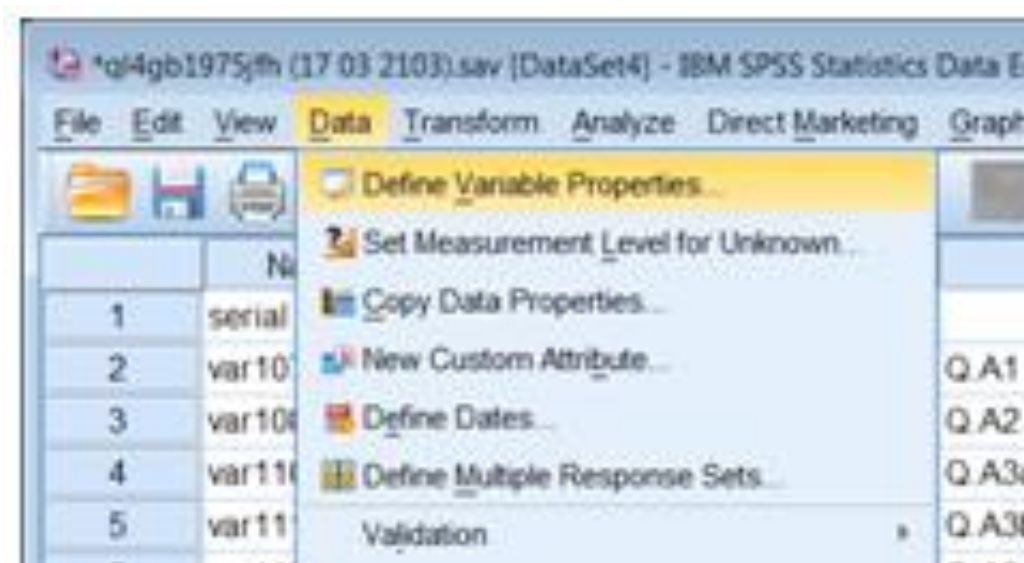
Data were entered as numeric in columns 7 - 13 on record 1 (one column per variable for QA1, QA3 and QA4 and two columns for QA2) using the **positional** naming convention to yield var107, var108, var110 to var113.

With the Data Editor open:

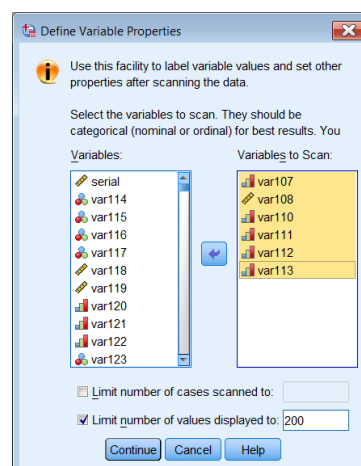
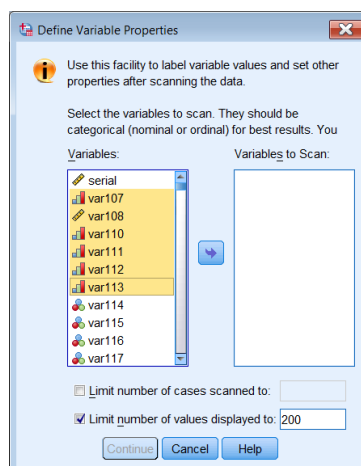
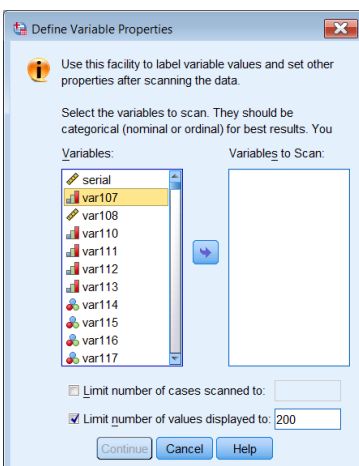
	Name	Type	Width	Decimals	Label
1	serial	Numeric	4	0	
2	var107	Numeric	1	0	Q.A1 Year dwelling built
3	var108	Numeric	2	0	Q.A2 Years resided in dwelling
4	var110	Numeric	1	0	Q.A3a Fixed bath or shower with hot water
5	var111	Numeric	1	0	Q.A3b Flush toilet inside dwelling
6	var112	Numeric	1	0	Q.A3c Separate kitchen
7	var113	Numeric	1	0	Q.A4 Kitchen used for meals
8	var114	Numeric	1	0	Q.A5a How get hot water for kitchen
9	var115	Numeric	1	0	Q.A5b How get hot water for bath

Click on: **Data** > **Define Variable Properties**

[Full specs on: [Help](#) > [Core System](#) > [Data preparation](#) > [Defining Variable Properties](#)]



For a single variable click on it in the left pane and transfer it to the right pane by clicking on the blue arrow. For contiguous variables, click on the first one, then scroll down and [SHIFT] click on the last one. For non-contiguous variables click on the first variable, then [CTRL] click on the others. These are contiguous, so:



Clicking on a variable in the left pane enables you to check which values (if any) have been declared as missing, how many cases there for each value and whether the values have labels.

Define Variable Properties

Scanned Variable List

Unl...	Me...	Role	Variable
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	var107
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	var111
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	var113
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	var115

Current Variable: var107 Label: Q.A1 Year dwelling built

Measurement Level: Ordinal Suggest Type: Numeric Width: 1 Decimals: 0

Role: Input Unlabeled values: 1

Value Label grid: Enter or edit labels in the grid. You can enter additional values at the bottom.

	Changed	Missing	Count	Value	Label
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	129	1	1899 or earlier
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	110	2	1900 - 1918
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	288	3	1919 - 1944
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	245	4	1945 - 1964
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	124	5	1965 or later
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	36		9
7	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			

Cases scanned: 932 Value list limit: 200

Copy Properties: From Another Variable... To Other Variables... Unlabeled Values: Automatic Labels

OK Paste Reset Cancel Help

Define Variable Properties

Scanned Variable List

Unl...	Me...	Role	Variable
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	var107
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	var108
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	var110
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	var111
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	var112
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	var113

Current Variable: var108 Label: Q.A2 Years resided in dwelling

Measurement Level: Scale Suggest Type: Numeric Width: 2 Decimals: 0

Role: Input Unlabeled values: 61

Value Label grid: Enter or edit labels in the grid. You can enter additional values at the bottom.

	Changed	Missing	Count	Value	Label
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	57	0	
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	38	1	
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	65	2	
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	78	3	
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	69	4	
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	65	5	
7	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	40	6	
8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	38	7	
9	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	28	8	
10	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	22	9	

Cases scanned: 932 Value list limit: 200

Copy Properties: From Another Variable... To Other Variables... Unlabeled Values: Automatic Labels

OK Paste Reset Cancel Help

Scroll down to see full range of values for years lived in house:

Define Variable Properties

Scanned Variable List

Unl...	Me...	Role	Variable
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	var107
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	var108
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	var110
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	var111
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	var112
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	var113

Current Variable: var108 Label: Q.A2 Years resided in dwelling

Measurement Level: Scale Suggest Type: Numeric Width: 2 Decimals: 0

Role: Input Unlabeled values: 61

Value Label grid: Enter or edit labels in the grid. You can enter additional values at the bottom.

	Changed	Missing	Count	Value	Label
54	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	56	
55	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	57	
56	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	58	
57	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	60	
58	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	61	
59	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	62	
60	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	66	
61	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6	99	
62	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			

Cases scanned: 932 Value list limit: 200

Copy Properties: From Another Variable... To Other Variables... Unlabeled Values: Automatic Labels

OK Paste Reset Cancel Help

Define Variable Properties

Scanned Variable List

Unl...	Me...	Role	Variable
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	var107
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	var111
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	var113
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	var115

Current Variable: var111 Label: Q.A3b Flush toilet inside dwelling

Measurement Level: Ordinal Suggest Type: Numeric Width: 1 Decimals: 0

Role: Input Unlabeled values: 2

Value Label grid: Enter or edit labels in the grid. You can enter additional values at the bottom.

	Changed	Missing	Count	Value	Label
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	70	0	None
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	19	1	Shared use
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	825	2	Exclusive use
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	0	8	
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	18	9	
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			

Cases scanned: 932 Value list limit: 200

Copy Properties: From Another Variable... To Other Variables... Unlabeled Values: Automatic Labels

OK Paste Reset Cancel Help

Define Variable Properties

Scanned Variable List

Unl...	Me...	Role	Variable
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	var110
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	var111
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	var112
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	var113
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	var114
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	var115

Current Variable: var113 Label: Q.A4 Kitchen used for meals

Measurement Level: Ordinal Suggest Type: Numeric Width: 1 Decimals: 0

Role: Input Unlabeled values: 2

Value Label grid: Enter or edit labels in the grid. You can enter additional values at the bottom.

	Changed	Missing	Count	Value	Label
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	189	1	Always
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	116	2	Most times
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	140	3	Sometimes
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	56	4	Rarely
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	371	5	Never
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	55	6	Kitchen too small
7	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5	8	
8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	0	9	
9	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			

Cases scanned: 932 Value list limit: 200

Copy Properties: From Another Variable... To Other Variables... Unlabeled Values: Automatic Labels

OK Paste Reset Cancel Help

Define Variable Properties

Scanned Variable List

Unl...	Me...	Role	Variable
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	var110
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	var111
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	var112
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	var113
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	var114
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	var115

Current Variable: var114 Label: Q.A5a How get hot water for kitchen

Measurement Level: No... Suggest Type: Numeric Width: 1 Decimals: 0

Role: Input Unlabeled values: 2

Value Label grid: Enter or edit labels in the grid. You can enter additional values at the bottom.

	Changed	Missing	Count	Value	Label
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	589	1	Central tank
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	302	2	Geyser
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	38	3	Heat it by self
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	4	Other
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	0	8	
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	0	9	
7	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			

Cases scanned: 932 Value list limit: 200

Copy Properties: From Another Variable... To Other Variables... Unlabeled Values: Automatic Labels

OK Paste Reset Cancel Help

End of exercise 1.5.2: **Checking your data file**

[\[Back to Block 1 menu\]](#)

or

[\[Forward to Block 2 menu\]](#)