



SPSS Tip 4.2

Wide format data entry

When using the wide format, there is a simple rule: data from different things go in different rows of the data editor, whereas data from the same things go in different columns of the data editor. As such, each person (or mollusc, goat, organization, or whatever you have measured) is represented in a different row. Data within each person (or mollusc, etc.) go in different columns. So, if you've prodded your mollusc, or human, several times with a pencil and measured how much it twitches as an outcome, then each prod will be represented by a column.

In experimental research this means that variables measured with the same participants (a repeated measure) should be represented by several columns (each column representing one level of the repeated-measures variable). However, any variable that defines different groups of things (such as when a between-group design is used and different participants are assigned to different levels of the independent variable) is defined using a single column. This idea will become clearer as you learn about how to carry out specific procedures.