

SPSS GRAPHS

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Instructions

There are three principal ways to create graphs in SPSS. The two simplest techniques utilize (1) Chart options with Descriptive Statistics or (2) Legacy Dialogs. The most complex technique builds graphs using the Chart Builder tool. For categorical data, an alternative to SPSS would be using Microsoft graphs into which one would enter data from SPSS output. Working through all the possible scenarios with any of these techniques is an onerous task, so in this instruction sheet only options are summarized with the user being encouraged to either search for detailed instructions on the Web or work through graph options on a trial-by-error basis.

Most techniques allow the user to edit the graph using the Chart Editor. The Chart Editor can be opened by double clicking on the graph once it is formed in the SPSS Output window.

Most graphs can be moved to Microsoft Word by right clicking on the graph and using one of the Copy commands in the menu. If the user engages in a simple Copy, the graph is stored in the Clipboard, from where it can be pasted into a Microsoft product just like any copy-and-paste in Microsoft.

Descriptive Statistics

The simplest figures can be generated as part of Descriptive Statistics commands:

- **Analyze>Descriptive Statistics>Frequencies** has a Charts option that can produce bar charts, pie charts, and histograms.
- **Analyze>Descriptive Statistics>Explore** has a Plots option that can produce stem-and-leaf plots, histograms, and normality plots.

Legacy Dialogs

Graphs>Legacy Dialogs provide a menu-driven approach to create a variety of graphs. There are more options than available through Descriptive Statistics, and many users may find them easier to use than the Chart Builder tool.

Chart Builder

Graphs>Chart Builder is the most complex tool for creating figures in SPSS. The top half of the dialog box has two parts: (1) a box with the list of variables and (2) the chart preview window. The bottom of the dialog box has tabs for the Gallery, Basic Elements, and other options. To use this tool, follow these steps:

1. Start with the Gallery in the bottom half of the dialog box. Select the type of graph to be made.
2. Pictures of graphs. Click on the picture of the graph that best represents the graph to be made, and slide the graph to the chart preview window above. A graph will appear in the preview window, and box to control properties of the graph will appear on the right.
3. In the list of variables, highlight the variable to be used and slide it on to the graph to the place where the variable is to be used. This action should be repeated if the graph has two variables. The complete graph is not shown—only its general structure.
4. Manipulate any Basic Elements in the bottom half of the dialog box and in the Properties box on the right. If the graph is to be used in an APA manuscript, remove the title in the Titles tab in the lower half of the dialog box.
5. Once the basic structure of the graph is set, click the OK button at the bottom. This action creates the graph in the output window.
6. In the Output window, further changes can be made in the graph by double clicking on the graph, which opens the Chart Editor. Here further changes can be made to finalize the graph.
7. Close the Chart Editor when done.
8. The graph can be copied into a Word document. Right click on the graph to find options for copying it. The copied graph goes into the Clipboard, and from there it can be pasted into a Word manuscript.

Considerations for Presentation

1. Remember the graphs should be simple and neat. Users made need to use the Chart Editor to fix the graph for presentation purposes.
2. Graph axes and pie slices should be clearly labeled or have a legend. A legend is usually redundant on a bar or column graph and should be turned off unless it is a double-bar graph.
3. APA rules provide rules about titling graphs and table. If the graph is to be placed in an APA manuscript, turn off or delete the title in the SPSS graph and follow set up the title in the manuscript using APA rules, then paste the graph into the manuscript.
4. Font and font sizes should make sense given the nature of the document or presentation. Getting this right is an iterative process because a graph looking good in the SPSS output window might look power in a manuscript. When possible, fonts in a graph should be similar to fonts in the body of the text.
5. Graphs used in Powerpoint presentations usually should include source footnotes, which can be added as part of the graph or in Powerpoint itself, usually below the group.