Table 2-6 Measuring and Describing Variables

Level of measurement		
Nominal *(example: region)*	*Ordinal* *(example: religious attendance)*	*Interval* *(example: hours watching TV)*
Precision:		
Values allow you to: • separate cases into different categories of the characteristic.	Values allow you to: • separate cases into different categories of the characteristic. • rank cases according to the relative amount of the characteristic.	Values allow you to: • separate cases into different categories of the characteristic. • rank cases according to the relative amount of the characteristic. • determine the exact amount of the characteristic.
Central Tendency:		
Mode	Mode Median	Mode Median Mean
Dispersion:		
Low: • one mode prominent • bar chart single-peaked • noticeably fewer cases in nonmodal categories	Low: • mode and median same or similar • bar chart single-peaked • most cases cluster around median, few cases in extreme values	Low: • median and mean similar and clearly "typical" • bar chart single-peaked • cases cluster around mean, few cases in extreme values
High: • bimodal or multiple modes • bar chart not single-peaked • cases spread out across values	High: • mode and median separated by at least one nonmodal value • bar chart not single-peaked • cases spread out across values	High: • median and mean may be different; mean clearly not "typical" • bar chart not single-peaked • cases spread out across values
		Skewness: Negative skew: • mean lower than median • skinnier left-hand tail • using mean would clearly mislead Positive skew: • mean higher than median • skinnier right-hand tail • using mean would clearly mislead