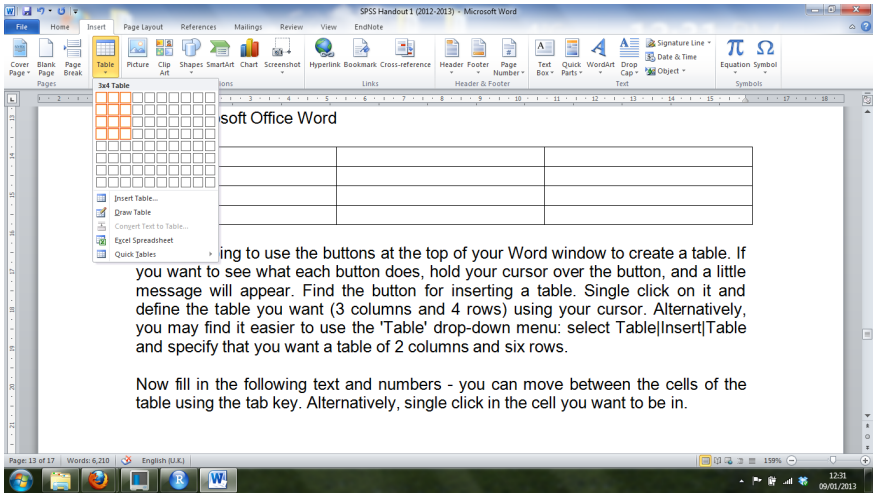
Using Microsoft Word to create a table

You will be expected to write your coursework using Microsoft Word (or any other word editor you know well, but I won't be providing instructions for any other). Word is also particularly useful for creating tables.

As you may have noticed R standard output is not particularly beautiful. When presenting your numerical results you may want to throw some lipstick into it. We have already seen how you can use sjPlot to produce nice tabulations for the results of a regression model. Here we are going to see how you can also produce tables in a more manual way.

Open Microsoft Office Word. We are going to use the buttons at the top of your Word window to create a table. Go to the *Insert Tab*; select *Table* and specify a table with 3 columns and 6 rows (you can do this interactively by moving your cursor or by inputting the values in the dialog box that pops out if you select the Insert Table option).



You should get a table like the one below:

Now we will fill it with the text and numbers we obtained running a hypothetical frequency distribution- you can move between the cells of the table using the tab key. Alternatively,

single click in the cell you want to be in. We will also input the total number of countries by adding those in the different categories.

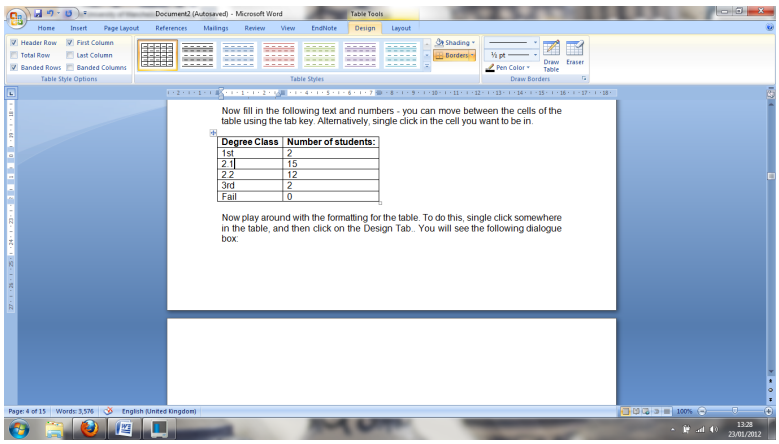
We will also write down a title (with italic fonts) that explains what the table contains and a little label (with italic fonts and a smaller font size, say 10 if you are using 12 elsewhere) explaining the source of the data. **Using a title and a label in this way is good professional practice that you need to follow in your homework and essay.**

Table 1. Human development 2010.

	Counts	Percent
Very high HDI	51	27.27%
High HDI	56	29.95%
Medium HDI	44	23.53%
Low HDI	36	19.25%
Total	187	100%

Source: United Nations Development Program.

Now we need to format the table in a more professional manner. That means getting it to the standard expected in publishable journal articles. To do this, single click somewhere in the table, and then click on the *Design Tab*.



You will see the selected format is the so-called "Table Grid" the first that appears. You need to select the first to the right of this, it is called "Light Shading". It should result in a table that looks like this:

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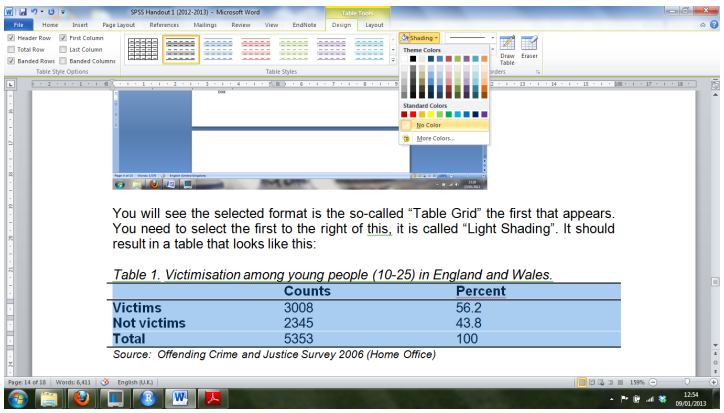
We're almost there now! The only thing that remains is to get rid of that annoying greyish background and to correct the font type inside the table. In tables and graphics you want the minimum amount of ink required.

You can do the latter (removing the bold fonts) yourself. For getting rid of the background colour, select the entire table with the left button in your mouse and then in the Design tab select the Shading option. Once you open this box select no colour. That will get rid of the grey background that appears in some of the rows.



You should now have a table that looks like this:

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We expect all frequency distribution tables that you present to be formatted in this manner using informative, but brief and succinct descriptions. You need a clear title that makes it easy to understand the content of the table; you need a note identifying the source of the information so that readers can fact-check the data; and you need a table that is formatted in a clean informative way.

Klass (2012) argues that a data is unambiguous when:

"Whether the information in a table is unambiguous depends largely on the descriptive text contained in the titles, headings, and notes. The table title, column and row headings and subheadings, and footnotes should convey the general purpose of the table, explain coding, scaling, and definition of the variables, and define relevant terms or abbreviations"

In a table it needs to be very clear what each number represents and you should never use more than two decimal points. Also, you should use the same consistent formatting in your

writing. You also need to remember that tables are used for efficiency in presentation. A paragraph with more than four or five numbers usually cries out for a table[1].

1 For more good table manners you can read Klass (2012, Chapter 5) or pages 126-129 of Marsh and Elliott (2008). The publication manuals of the *American Psychological Association* and of the *American Sociological Association* also provide recommendations for table construction that are taken as their guidelines for most scientific journals in our field.