

Basic Course on R: Manipulating / Selecting Data

Karl Brand* and Elizabeth Ribble†

28 Oct - 1 Nov 2019

Contents

1	Manipulating / Selecting Data	2
1.1	Indexing	2
1.1.1	Explicit numeric selection	2
1.1.2	Named element selection	3
1.1.3	Logical and relational filtering	5
1.2	Other useful functions	6

*brandk@gmail.com

†emcclel3@msudenver.edu

1 Manipulating / Selecting Data

1.1 Indexing

Select data from vectors, arrays, lists, rows/columns in matrices and data.frames, using

- Explicit numeric selection
- Named element selection
- Logical and relational filtering

1.1.1 Explicit numeric selection

We can specify positions or *indices* i in numbers of the data we wish to select using square brackets which are the ‘extract’ function, i.e., `object[i]`.

```
x <- c(11, 10, 12, 15)
x[2]

## [1] 10

y <- c(13, 17, 21, 18)
y[c(2, 3)]

## [1] 17 21

m <- matrix(c(x, y), ncol = 2)
m

##      [,1] [,2]
## [1,]   11   13
## [2,]   10   17
## [3,]   12   21
## [4,]   15   18

m[, 1]

## [1] 11 10 12 15

m[c(2, 4), 1:2]

##      [,1] [,2]
## [1,]   10   17
## [2,]   15   18
```

We can also use negative indices to remove/exclude elements we do not want:

```
x[-2]

## [1] 11 12 15

m[, -c(1, 3)]

## [1] 13 17 21 18
```

1.1.2 Named element selection

Here we make use of the `names` attribute:

```
names(x) <- c("a", "b", "c", "d")
x

## a b c d
## 11 10 12 15

str(x)

## Named num [1:4] 11 10 12 15
## - attr(*, "names")= chr [1:4] "a" "b" "c" "d"

x["b"]

## b
## 10

row.names(m) <- LETTERS[1:4]
m

## [,1] [,2]
## A 11 13
## B 10 17
## C 12 21
## D 15 18

m["A", ]

## [1] 11 13
```

Note that this is case sensitive and that `LETTERS` is different from `letters`.

We can even combine the use of numbers and names:

```
m["A", 2]
```

```
## A
```

```
## 13
```

Let's look at an example where row names are gene symbols and column names are sample IDs:

```
mygenes <- data.frame(samp1 = c(33, 22, 12),  
                      samp2 = c(44, 111, 13),  
                      samp3 = c(33, 53, 65))  
row.names(mygenes) <- c("CRP", "BRCA1", "HOXA")
```

```
mygenes
```

```
##      samp1 samp2 samp3  
## CRP      33     44     33  
## BRCA1     22    111     53  
## HOXA      12     13     65
```

```
mygenes["CRP", ]
```

```
##      samp1 samp2 samp3  
## CRP      33     44     33
```

```
mygenes[, "samp1"]
```

```
## [1] 33 22 12
```

```
mygenes[, c("samp1", "samp3")]
```

```
##      samp1 samp3  
## CRP      33     33  
## BRCA1     22     53  
## HOXA      12     65
```

```
mygenes["HOXA", "samp2"]
```

```
## [1] 13
```

Note that we can also change the names of a `data.frame` in the same way we would do so for a `list` using the `names` attribute:

```
names(mygenes) <- c("samp10", "samp20", "samp30")
mygenes

##      samp10 samp20 samp30
## CRP      33     44     33
## BRCA1    22    111     53
## HOXA     12     13     65

## but let's change it back...
names(mygenes) <- c("samp1", "samp2", "samp3")
```

Note that the `colnames` function also performs the same job for data frames.

1.1.3 Logical and relational filtering

Expressions like `<`, `<=`, `|`, and `!=` can also be used to select data:

```
x

##  a  b  c  d
## 11 10 12 15

y

## [1] 13 17 21 18

keep <- c(TRUE, TRUE, FALSE, FALSE, TRUE)
x[keep]

##    a    b <NA>
##   11   10   NA

x[y >= 18]

##  c  d
## 12 15
```

Why?

```

y>=18

## [1] FALSE FALSE  TRUE  TRUE

which(y >= 18)

## [1] 3 4

x[x <= 11 | x == 15]

##  a  b  d
## 11 10 15

x[x != 10]

##  a  c  d
## 11 12 15

```

This works for factors as well:

```

gender <- factor(c("M", "M", "F", "F"))
gender

## [1] M M F F
## Levels: F M

males <- gender[gender == "M"]
levels(males)

## [1] "F" "M"

```

1.2 Other useful functions

Besides square brackets (`[`, `[[`), other useful functions exist for selecting data: `duplicated`, `match()`, `%in%`, `grep`, `is.na` and `$`.

To select e.g. rows that are not duplicated:

```

mm <- matrix(c(x, x, y, y), nrow = 4, byrow = T)

```

```
mm

##      [,1] [,2] [,3] [,4]
## [1,]  11   10  12   15
## [2,]  11   10  12   15
## [3,]  13   17  21   18
## [4,]  13   17  21   18

mm[!duplicated(mm), ]

##      [,1] [,2] [,3] [,4]
## [1,]  11   10  12   15
## [2,]  13   17  21   18
```

The above can also be done with `unique`, but the use of `duplicated` might be more appropriate in more complex situations:

```
unique(mm)

##      [,1] [,2] [,3] [,4]
## [1,]  11   10  12   15
## [2,]  13   17  21   18
```

Calling `match` returns the position of the first match of its first argument in the second argument:

```
match(c("a", "b"), c("a", "c", "a", "b", "a", "b"))

## [1] 1 4
```

whereas `%in%` tells you whether the elements of the first argument appear in the second argument:

```
c("a", "b", "d") %in% c("a", "c", "a", "b", "a", "b")

## [1] TRUE TRUE FALSE
```

Recall our data frame `mygenes`:

```
mygenes

##      samp1 samp2 samp3
## CRP      33    44    33
## BRCA1     22   111    53
## HOXA      12    13    65
```

```
is.data.frame(mygenes)
```

```
## [1] TRUE
```

Note that since `mygenes` is a data frame, it is therefore also an array, which means we can select by the name of the elements in the array:

```
mygenes[match(c("samp1", "samp3"), colnames(mygenes))]
```

```
##      samp1 samp3
## CRP      33    33
## BRCA1     22    53
## HOXA      12    65
```

```
mygenes[colnames(mygenes) %in% c("samp1", "samp4")]
```

```
##      samp1
## CRP      33
## BRCA1     22
## HOXA      12
```

However, in this case we could just use the names...

```
mygenes[c("samp1", "samp3")]
```

```
##      samp1 samp3
## CRP      33    33
## BRCA1     22    53
## HOXA      12    65
```

But this gives an error:

```
mygenes[c("samp1", "samp30")] ## not run
```

where this does not:

```
mygenes[colnames(mygenes) %in% c("samp1", "samp30")]
```

```
##      samp1
## CRP      33
## BRCA1     22
## HOXA      12
```


We can also use functions like `grep` to search for the names we are interested in:

```
mygenes[grep(2, names(mygenes))]  
  
##      samp2  
## CRP      44  
## BRCA1    111  
## HOXA      13  
  
mygenes[grep("A", row.names(mygenes)), ]  
  
##      samp1 samp2 samp3  
## BRCA1     22   111    53  
## HOXA      12    13    65
```

If we want to find or exclude data with missing values, we can use `is.na`:

```
z <- c(1:4, NA, 5:10)  
z  
  
## [1] 1 2 3 4 NA 5 6 7 8 9 10  
  
is.na(z)  
  
## [1] FALSE FALSE FALSE FALSE TRUE FALSE FALSE FALSE FALSE FALSE  
  
which(is.na(z))  
  
## [1] 5  
  
z[!is.na(z)]  
  
## [1] 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
```

Double brackets `[[` and `$` extract *single* elements of objects, whereas `[` can extract multiple elements. Recall that a data frame is a special list, where each column is an element of a list:

```
## retrieve element  
mygenes[[3]]  
  
## [1] 33 53 65
```

```
## retrieve element
```

```
mygenes$samp3
```

```
## [1] 33 53 65
```

```
## subset
```

```
mygenes[3]
```

```
##      samp3
```

```
## CRP      33
```

```
## BRCA1    53
```

```
## HOXA     65
```

These work for lists as well:

```
mygenelist <- list(mygenes = mygenes, mygenes2 = mygenes * 2)
```

```
mygenelist
```

```
## $mygenes
```

```
##      samp1 samp2 samp3
```

```
## CRP      33     44     33
```

```
## BRCA1    22    111     53
```

```
## HOXA     12     13     65
```

```
##
```

```
## $mygenes2
```

```
##      samp1 samp2 samp3
```

```
## CRP      66     88     66
```

```
## BRCA1    44    222    106
```

```
## HOXA     24     26    130
```

```
## retrieve list element
```

```
mygenelist[[1]]
```

```
##      samp1 samp2 samp3
```

```
## CRP      33     44     33
```

```
## BRCA1    22    111     53
```

```
## HOXA     12     13     65
```

```
mygenelist$mygenes
```

```
##      samp1 samp2 samp3
```

```
## CRP      33     44     33
```

```
## BRCA1    22    111     53
```

```
## HOXA     12     13     65
```

```
## subset list
mygenelist[1]

## $mygenes
##      samp1 samp2 samp3
## CRP      33    44    33
## BRCA1     22   111    53
## HOXA      12    13    65
```

And we can even combine \$ with [:

```
mygenelist$mygenes[2]

##      samp2
## CRP      44
## BRCA1    111
## HOXA     13
```

The \$ notation is useful for accessing elements of objects output by functions, e.g. a *t*-test:

```
tt <- t.test(x, y)
names(tt)

## [1] "statistic"  "parameter"  "p.value"    "conf.int"   "estimate"
## [6] "null.value"  "alternative" "method"     "data.name"

tt$p.value

## [1] 0.04342819

tt$estimate

## mean of x mean of y
##      12.00      17.25
```