Project Check-In

# Materials Due: Friday, March 24

# Presentations Assigned: Monday, March 27

# Presentations Delivered: Friday, March 31

As part of your final project, you will turn in a preliminary paper and code near the end of March, explaining the data and central question of your project, along with how you’ve used R to prepare your data for analysis. You will then be assigned the paper and R Code from *another student*, which you will use to present a short presentation (about 10 minutes) due the last Friday of March. This method of presenting a colleague’s work will help you to better understand how to write technical papers and code that other people can follow, a key component of the peer-reviewed research process. (This is also the format used at several economic conferences, including those hosted by NBER.)

This project will not only help you to organize your thoughts for the final project, it will also form the basis of the final paper. This is not expected to be a formal, polished technical paper, rather it is meant to be a well-written overview of your project.

Your Project Check-in will count for 20% of your Final Project Grade. Consult the final project assignment document for a breakdown of the grading.

## The Paper

The paper is expected to be a short (5-8 pages), technically written paper that explains the central question your final project will answer, and how your dataset will help you answer that question. At a minimum, the paper should include:

* The question, and why it is an important question to answer
* The data set you are using, and the datasets you used to build it
* Where you sourced your data from
* Why this data will help you answer your question
* Key summary statistics
* Graphs/Tables as appropriate to help elaborate on the above

NOTE: There is a very hard rule that whoever presents your paper will not be able to generate any tables or graphs independently. If you think your colleague will need a particular visual aid to explain your dataset in a 10 minute presentation, you MUST include it in your paper.

**This is NOT an analytical paper. It is a primer on what your topic is, and what your data is. You will not turn in any regressions or other analytical results in this paper. It is just an overview of your project, not the results.**

You will also submit **all code that you used to prepare the data**, including (but not limited to) any merges, reshapes, summarizations, etc that you performed to make your data ready for presentation. It is expected that if we download your data untouched, run it through your R code, and only your R code, the end result will be your final dataset. The person presenting your data will use this codebook to explain how you cleaned your data in R, so you will need to follow good coding standards and style including indenting your code and commenting your code.

You should submit the following: the paper -a simple Word Document, the code - .R files, any raw data sets you downloaded and the final dataset (as csv). **Everything should be submitted in a zipped folder labeled lastname\_firstname\_checkin.**

Your grade for the write-up will be based on the following:

* Codebook
  + Does the code run? Does the output of the scripts match the final output you use for the write-up?
  + Code formatting and readability. Can people read your code and easily understand what you are doing? Is your code concise? How clear and useful are your comments?
* Writeup
  + Content – Does this paper do an effective job in setting the stage for the final project by providing us with background on your question, relevant data, etc. Do you include all of the topics discussed above?
  + Did you include graphs and R output where necessary/appropriate? Do the graphs, code, and output included in the document add to the message and understanding or are they an unnecessary distraction?
  + Validity and Readability – Does the project make sense, does your dataset make sense to use in answering your question? Do your cleaning methods make sense?

## The Presentation

You will be given the paper and R codebook from another student of our choosing. Using these files, you will prepare a PowerPoint presentation, no more than 10 minutes, which covers at least the following topics:

* What the central question is
* Where the data came from
* Relevant summary statistics
* How R was used to prepare the data set, including specific data manipulation packages and functions used

As above, you are not expected to provide any results from analysis. This is an overview of the central question and data used to answer that question, along with specifics on how R is being used to prepare the data.

As noted above, any graphs and/or tables you use in your presentation must be pulled straight out of the Word document that you are given. You cannot create any visual aids independently to explain the data. The only “original” material that will be in your PowerPoint presentation will be the bullet points on the slides.

The presentation is expected to cover the data/central question and the R code in equal amounts (ie, dedicate about 5 minutes to data presentation, and 5 to the R code used).

For your presentation, you will be graded based on how you present the information you are given (i.e. you will not lose points if you are assigned a paper that included no graphs, or incomplete code). The grade for your presentation will be made up of two categories:

* Oral Delivery
  + Do you know the presentation and understand the material?
  + Are you able to answer basic questions from audience?
* Written PowerPoint
  + Does your presentation flow from topic to topic?
  + Does your presentation cover all the aspects of the project needed to be covered in the write-up?
  + Does the presentation make sense?

Note that you may not write any new code as part of creating the presentation document. Be sure to keep this in mind while creating your own paper and code, and make sure you include quality tables and charts in your own write-up. This write-up is the only location that your presenter may go for graphics to aid them in the creation of their PowerPoint. The inclusion of appropriate graphics in your own write-up will also be part of the grade for your paper.