Table Design

When to Use Tables

- You need to show precise values
- Users need to look up specific values rather than comparing them or finding patterns
- You need to show data with more than one unit of measure
- You need to show individual data as well as summaries
- The information is most efficiently represented as a table

Good Tables

- Are self-explanatory
- Provide context
- Are formatted consistently
- Are easy to use
- Provide units
- Show their data sources
- Show the statistical models used
- Define their terms, abbreviations

White Space

	Stuff	Nonsense
Monday	1.0	2.0
Tuesday	3.5	4.2
Wednesday	2.9	3.1
Thursday	31.2	32.0
Friday	2.1	0.8

	Stuff	Nonsense
Monday	1.0	2.0
Tuesday	3.5	4.2
Wednesday	2.9	3.1
Thursday	31.2	32.0
Friday	2.1	0.8

Rules

	Stuff	Nonsense
Monday	1.0	2.0
Tuesday	3.5	4.2
Wednesday	2.9	3.1
Thursday	31.2	32.0
Friday	2.1	0.8

	Stuff	Nonsense
Monday	1.0	2.0
Tuesday	3.5	4.2
Wednesday	2.9	3.1
Thursday	31.2	32.0
Friday	2.1	0.8

Rules Used for Grouping

		Stuff	Nonsense
Week 1	Monday	1.0	2.0
	Tuesday	3.5	4.2
	Wednesday	2.9	3.1
	Thursday	31.2	32.0
	Friday	2.1	0.9
Week 2	Monday	1.0	2.0
	Tuesday	3.4	4.2
	Wednesday	2.8	3.1
	Thursday	31.2	21.0
	Friday	2.1	0.6

Rules Used for Emphasis

	Stuff	Nonsense
Monday	1.0	2.0
Tuesday	3.5	4.2
Wednesday	2.9	3.1
Thursday	31.2	32.0
Friday	2.1	0.8
Total	30.7	42.1

Color for Rows

	Stuff	Nonsense
Monday	1.0	2.0
Tuesday	3.5	4.2
Wednesday	2.9	3.1
Thursday	31.2	32.0
Friday	2.1	0.8

Color for Grouping

		Stuff	Nonsense
Week 1	Monday	1.0	2.0
	Tuesday	3.5	4.2
	Wednesday	2.9	3.1
	Thursday	31.2	32.0
	Friday	2.1	0.9
Week 2	Monday	1.0	2.0
	Tuesday	3.4	4.2
	Wednesday	2.8	3.1
	Thursday	31.2	21.0
	Friday	2.1	0.6

Color for Emphasis

		Stuff	Nonsense
Week 1	Monday	1.0	2.0
	Tuesday	3.5	4.2
	Wednesday	2.9	3.1
	Thursday	31.2	32.0
	Friday	2.1	0.9
Week 2	Monday	1.0	2.0
	Tuesday	3.4	4.2
	Wednesday	2.8	3.1
	Thursday	31.2	21.0
	Friday	2.1	0.6

Text Alignment

Age at First Marriage

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Age at First Marriage

Numeric Alignment

Unaligned Decimals (Arial)	Aligned, Monospaced (Arial)	Aligned, Variable Spaced (Comic Sans)
.25	0.25	0.25
33.11	33.11	33.11
87	87.00	87.00
9.8	9.80	9.80
1.00	1.00	1.00
0.1	0.10	0.10

Dates

Week of	Stuff	Nonsense
12/05/13	1.0	2.0
12/12/13	3.5	4.2
12/19/13	2.9	3.1
12/26/13	31.2	32.0
01/02/14	2.1	0.8

Emphasis

	Stuff	Nonsense
Monday	1.0	2.0
Tuesday	3.5	4.2
Wednesday	2.9	3.1
Thursday	31.2	32.0
Friday	2.1	**0.8**

Columns vs. Rows

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Stuff	1.0	3.5	2.9	31.2	2.1	0.2	0.5
Nonsense	2.0	4.2	3.1	32.0	0.8	0.3	0.3

Columns vs. Rows

Place	5K Time
1st	19:27:33
2nd	19:28.02
3rd	19:28.04
4th	19:28.20
5th	19:29.17
6th	19:30.36
7th	19:32.08

Column Ordering

	Stuff	Nonsense
Monday	1.0	2.0
Tuesday	3.5	4.2
Wednesday	2.9	3.1
Thursday	31.2	32.0
Friday	2.1	0.8

Derived Values

Place	Points	5K Time
1st	5	19:27:33
2nd	3	19:28.02
3rd	1	19:28.04
4th	0	19:28.20
5th	0	19:29.17
6th	0	19:30.36
7th	0	19:32.08

Row Sequence

Sort!

Facilitate the Right Comparisons

	Week	Stuff	Nonsense
Monday	1	1.0	2.0
	2	3.5	4.2
Tuesday	1	2.9	3.1
	2	31.2	32.0
Wednesday	1	2.1	0.8
	2	5.7	11.0
Thursday	1	1.0	2.0
	2	3.5	4.2
Friday	1	2.9	3.1
	2	31.2	32.0

Present Data Efficiently

	Week	Stuff
Monday	1	1.0
	2	3.5
Tuesday	1	2.9
	2	31.2
Wednesday	1	2.1
	2	5.7
Thursday	1	1.0
	2	3.5
Friday	1	2.9
	2	31.2

Week	1	2
Monday	1.0	3.5
Tuesday	2.9	31.2
Wednesday	2.1	5.7
Thursday	1.0	3.5
Friday	2.9	31.2

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