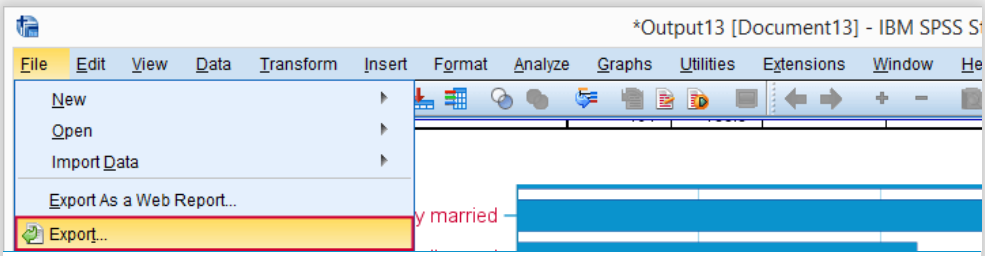
S Output – Basics, Tips & Tricks

- SPSS Output Tables
- SPSS Output Charts
- SPSS Output to WORD
- SPSS Output to Excel
- SPSS Output Tricks



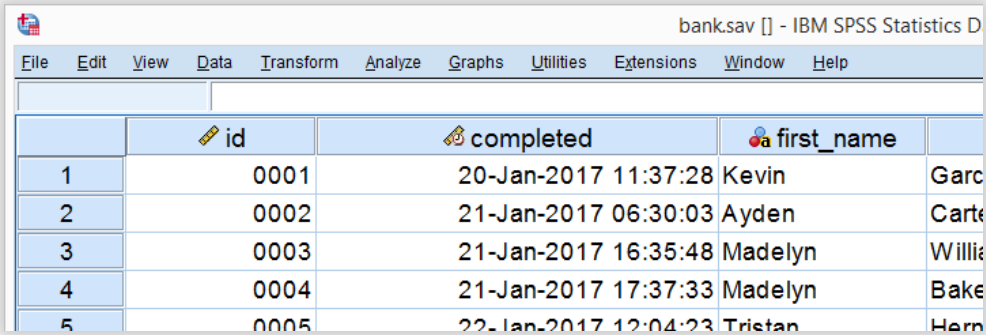
Exporting SPSS output is usually easier and faster than copy-pasting

SPSS Output Introduction

In SPSS, we usually work from 3 windows. These are

- the data editor window;
- the syntax editor window;
- the output viewer window.

Our previous tutorials discussed the data editor and the syntax editor windows. So let's now take a look at the output viewer. We suggest you follow along by downloading and opening bank.sav, part of which is shown below.



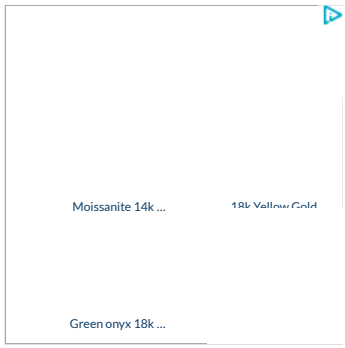
SPSS Output - First Steps

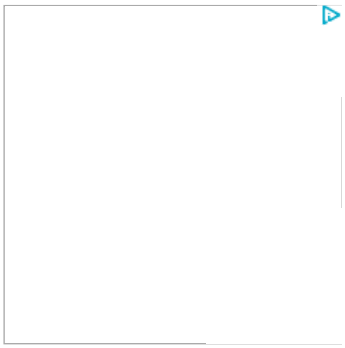
Right. So with out data open, let's create some output by running the syntax below.

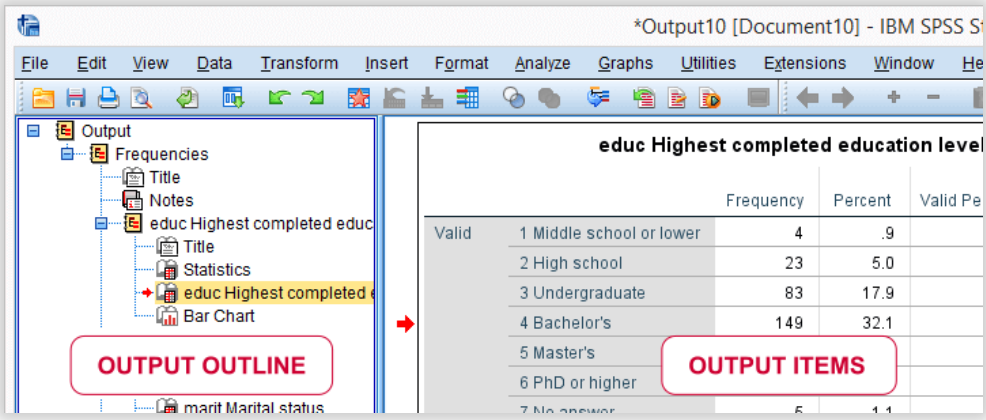

```
*Run frequency tables and bar charts on 3 variables.

frequencies educ marit jtype
/barchart
/order variable.
```

Running this syntax opens an output viewer window as shown below.







As illustrated, the SPSS output viewer window always has 2 main panes:

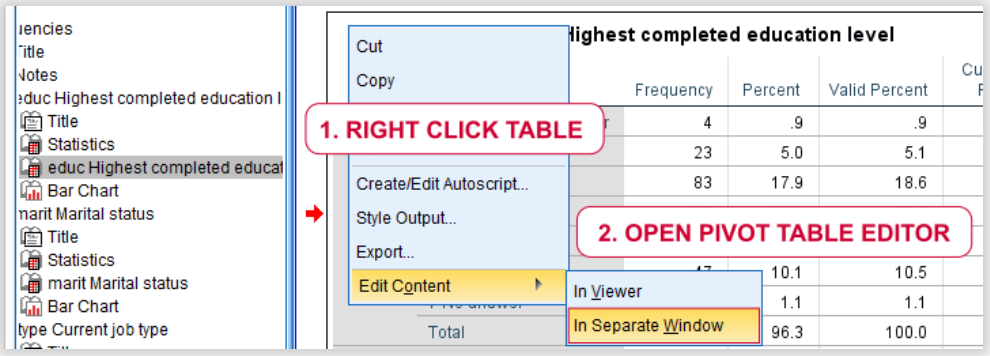
- the **output outline** is mostly used for navigating through your output items and
- the actual **output items** -mostly tables and charts- are often exported to WORD or Excel for reporting.

In the output outline, you can also **delete** output items -SPSS often produces way more output than you ask for. Use the `ctrl` key to select multiple items. A faster way for deleting a selection of output items is OUTPUT MODIFY.
You can also collapse and reorder output items in the outline but I don't find that too useful. So let's turn to the actual output items. The most important ones are **tables** and **charts** so we'll discuss those separately.

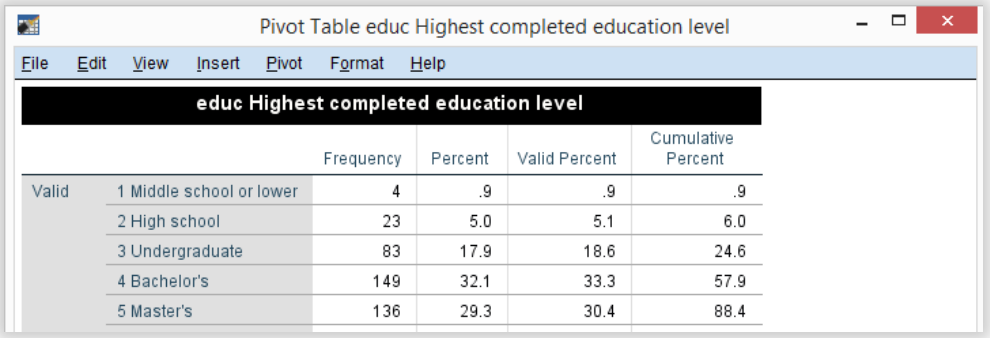
SPSS Output - Tables

We'll usually want to make some adjustments to our output tables. One option for doing so is right-clicking the table and selecting Edit content

In Separate Window as shown below.



The pivot table editor window (shown below) allows us to adjust basically anything about our table.



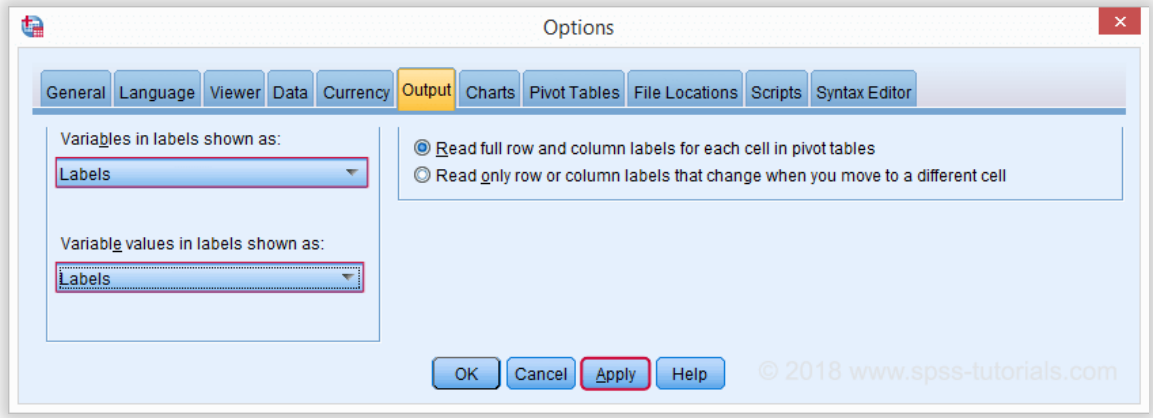
That being said, we recommend you

only use the pivot table editor if everything else fails.

One reason is that you can't replicate and rerun whatever you do in the pivot table editor. And more importantly, there are faster options with which you can adjust many tables in one go. So let's explore some of those.

Variable and Value Labels in Output Tables

When I'm inspecting my data, I want to see variable **names and labels** in my output. The same goes for values and value labels because I want to know how my variables have been coded.
However, I want to see **only labels** in the final tables that I'll report. One way for doing so is navigating to Edit ▸ Options and selecting the Output tab.



Oddly, the options dialog has no Paste button. This is because it creates very messy syntax. A much better option for this than the crappy menu is just running the syntax below.

```
*Show only value labels and variable labels in output
set
tnumbers labels
tvars labels.
```

- TVARS is short for "table variables". It sets how variables are shown in tables: names, labels or both;

- TNUMBERS is short for “table numbers”. It sets how values are shown in tables: values, labels or both.

Running this syntax is a much **better option** than using the aforementioned menu. After doing so, all output tables we'll run will show only variable and value labels.

SPSS Table Templates

Another thing I don't like about these tables is their styling: grey fonts with grey backgrounds. The best way to fix this is setting a table template before running any tables. Running

```
set tlook 'C:\Program Files\IBM\SPSS\Statistics\24\Looks\Original.stt'.
```

does the trick for me. On *your* computer, you may need a slightly different path. If I now rerun my frequency distributions, they'll look much nicer as shown below.

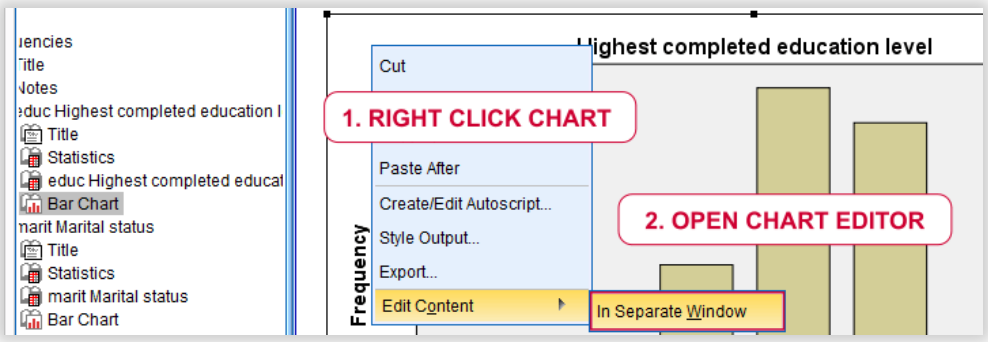
Highest completed education level

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Middle school or lower	4	.9	.9	.9
	High school	23	5.0	5.1	6.0
	Undergraduate	83	17.9	18.6	24.6
	Bachelor's	149	32.1	33.3	57.9
	Master's	136	29.3	30.4	88.4
	PhD or higher	47	10.1	10.5	98.9
	No answer	5	1.1	1.1	100.0
	Total	447	96.3	100.0	
Missing	System	17	3.7		
Total		464	100.0		

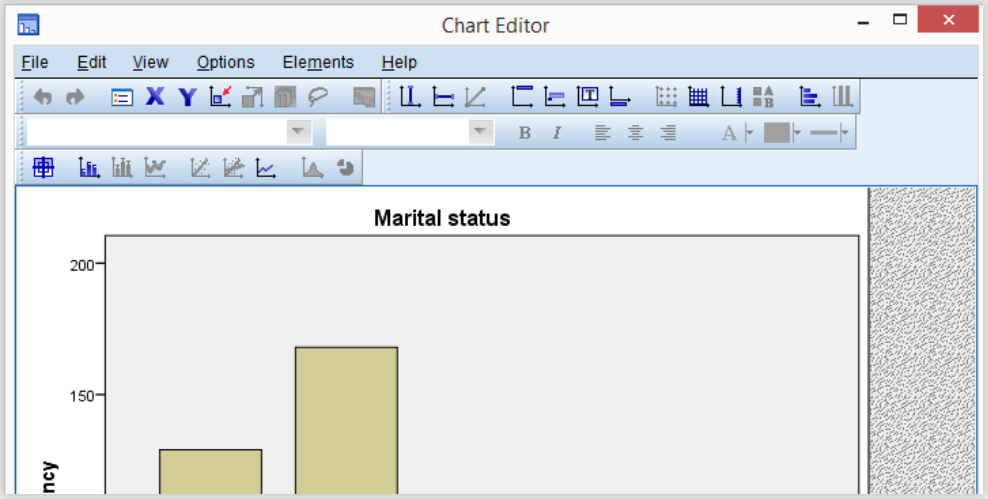
Right. So those are the main basics regarding output tables. Let's now turn to our charts.

SPSS Output - Charts

First off, you can adjust basically anything about charts in the chart editor window. You can open one by right clicking a chart as shown below.



This opens a chart editor window as shown below.



As a rule of thumb,

only use the chart editor if everything else fails.

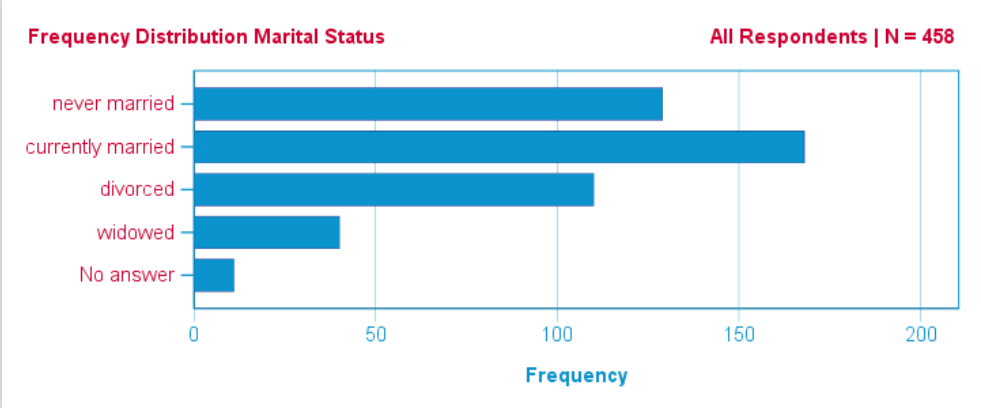
There's better ways to adjust charts than using the chart editor window. So let's explore some of those.

SPSS Chart Templates

You can apply styling -colors, borders, sizes and so on- to charts by setting a chart template *before* running any charts. The proper way to do so is running something like

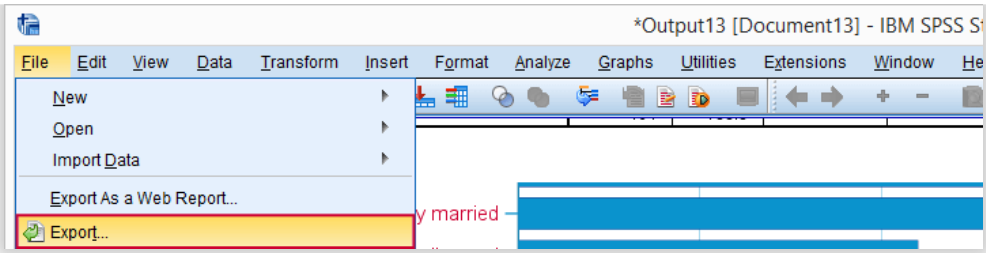
```
SET CTEMPLATE 'C:\Program Files\IBM\SPSS\Statistics\24\Looks\sometemplate.sgt'.
```

After doing so, *all* of our bar charts look as shown below. If you have some nice chart templates, it's a **matter of seconds** to have all of your charts look great.

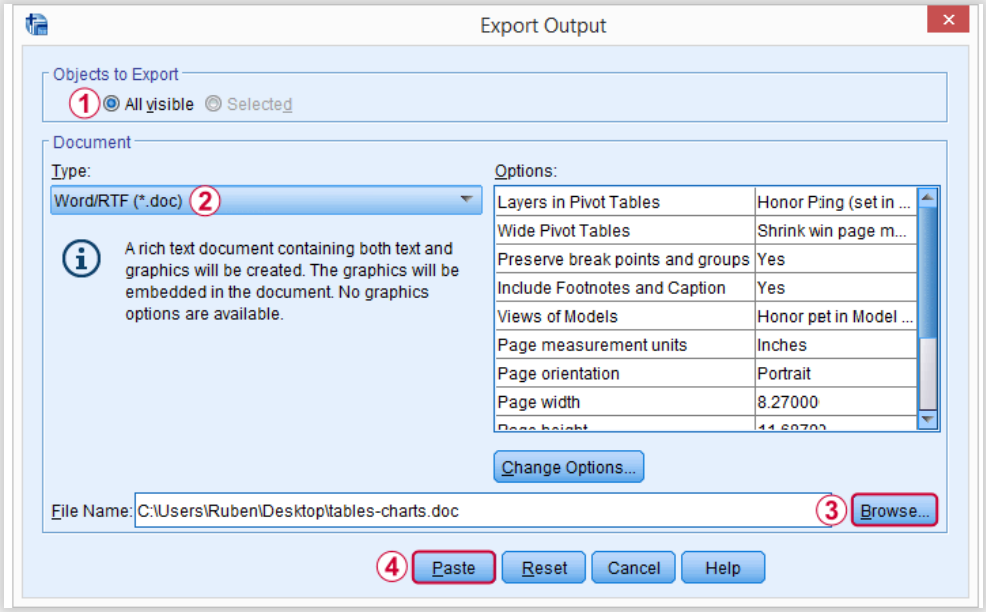


SPSS - All Output to WORD

A great way to convert SPSS output to WORD is exporting all contents of the output viewer in one go. You can do so by navigating to File ▸ Export as shown below.



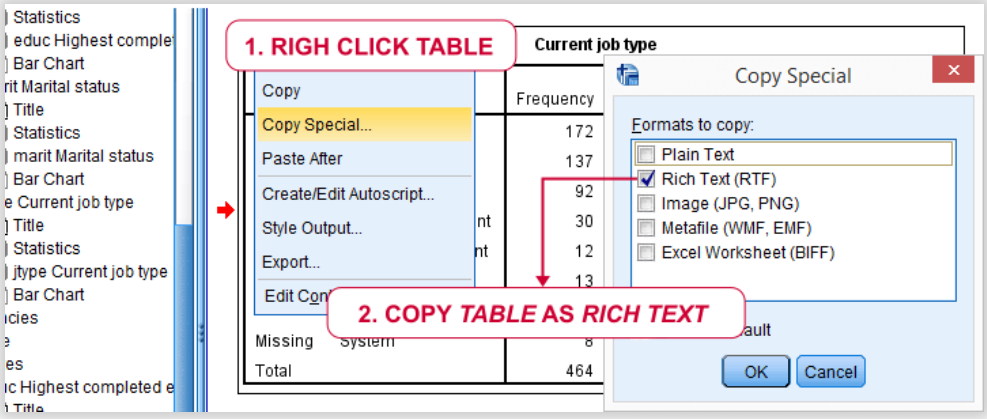
Selecting the options below results in a WORD document containing *all* tables and charts shown in your output viewer. This is the **ideal starting point** for writing your report.



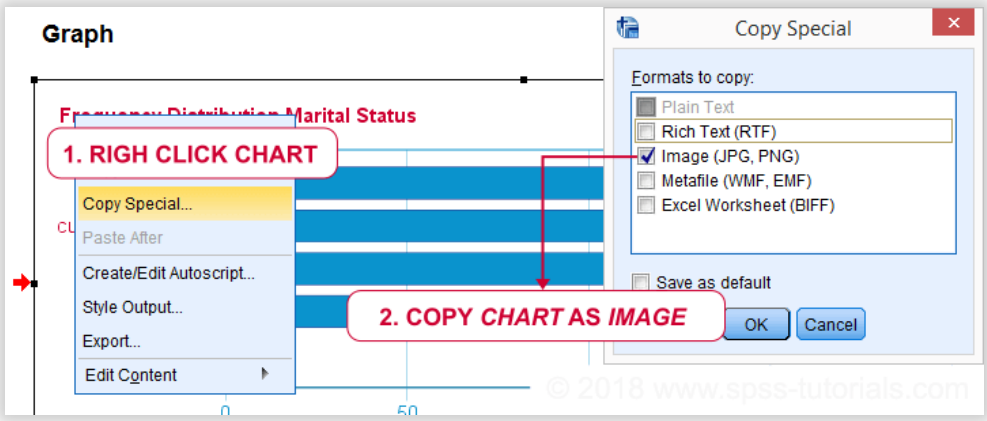
Since you can **batch edit** tables and charts in SPSS -but not in WORD- make sure your output is as good as it gets before converting it. A great way to adjust tables and delete unwanted output items is OUTPUT MODIFY.

Copy-Pasting SPSS Output Tables to WORD

If you need only a handful of output items in WORD, you can also just copy-paste them. The `ctrl` + `c` and `ctrl` + `v` shortkeys usually work fine for both tables and charts. If it fails, however, use copy special for tables as shown below.

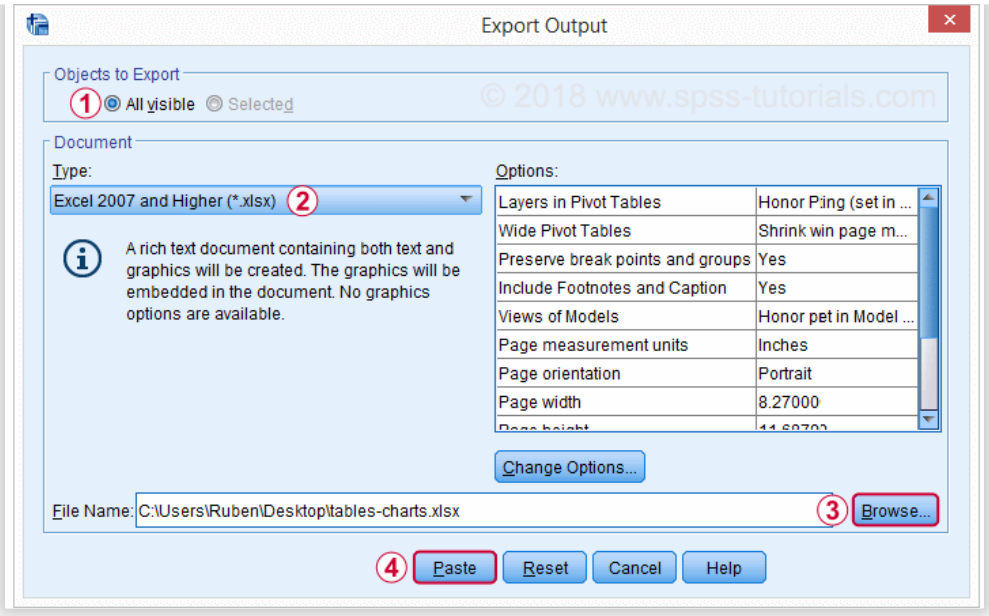


The same goes for copy-pasting **charts** to WORD: first try `ctrl` + `c`. If that doesn't work, copy the chart as an image as shown below.



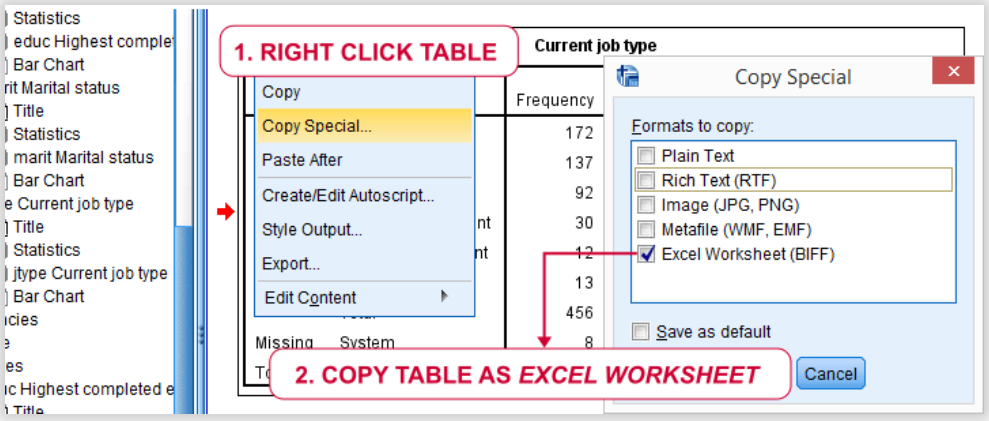
SPSS - All Output to Excel

You can convert *all* contents of your output window -including all tables and charts- in one go to a single Excel sheet. For doing so, navigate to File ▶ Export and select the options shown below.



Copy-Pasting SPSS Output Tables to Excel

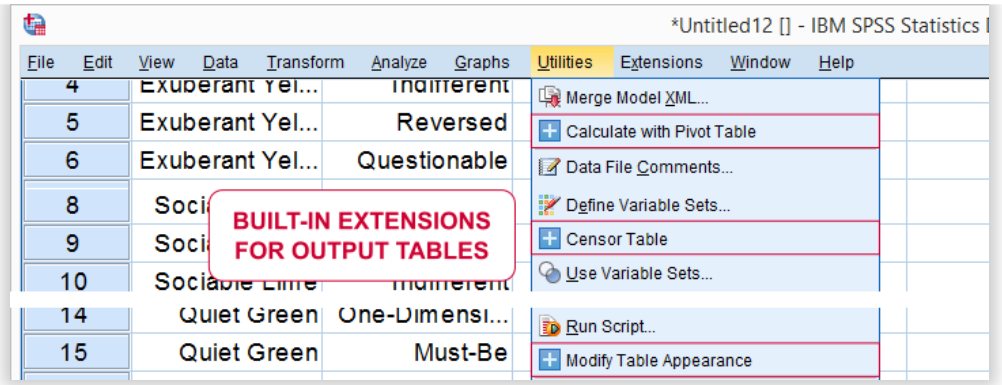
If you need just a couple of output tables in Excel, you can copy-paste them with the `ctrl` + `c` and `ctrl` + `v` shortkeys. If that fails, use copy special as Excel worksheet as shown below.



SPSS Output Tricks

SPSS users tend to waste a lot of time and effort on manually adjusting output items. The easiest way for doing so -like discussed- is using the pivot table editor and chart editor windows. We also suggested to use these only if everything else fails. So which are better -and especially *faster*- alternatives?

- Try to **style tables** with table templates. These can apply fonts, borders, colors, text-alignment and more to one or many tables. To some extent, table templates can also hide table elements such as titles and captions.
- For **styling charts**, use chart templates. These can also hide chart elements such as titles and labels.
- You can **convert** one or many output tables to a single SPSS dataset by using the OMS. You can further process this dataset in SPSS and/or save it as Excel or some other format. OMS is easy to use from the menu. It can also suppress a selection of output items: warnings, case processing summaries and so on.
- You can apply numeric formats -and hence **set decimal places**- to a selection of table columns, rows or cells with OUTPUT MODIFY. It can also apply **conditional formatting** -such as boldface or italicize- table cells or delete a selection of output items.
- You can **edit almost anything** for one or many output items with Python scripting. This is harder to use and works slower than OUTPUT MODIFY. However, it accomplishes much more. For an example, see SPSS Correlations in APA Format.
- Several **table adjustments** can be made from extensions that are built into recent SPSS versions with the SPSS Python Essentials installed. Most are based on Python scripting and are found under Utilities as shown below.



SPSS Output - Final Notes

Right, so that'll do for introducing SPSS output. I hope we clarified some basics. Some of the output tricks may be suitable only for experienced or even expert SPSS users. However, I thought you should at least be aware that they exist.

Thanks for reading!

Let me know what you think!

Your name*

Your email address*

Your website

Your comment*

Done!

**Required field. Your comment will show up after approval from a moderator.*

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By Ruben Geert van den Berg on July 15th, 2019

Hi Vamsee, thanks for your comment!

Please tell me more: which topics under the beginners tutorials? I'd r

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By vamsee on July 14th, 2019

sir you are gave the tutorial is good but its not order what I am learning for beginners

By Sheldon Maponga on March 25th, 2019

Outstanding stuff

1 … 5

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