Checklist for Fixing Stata Errors
SMPA 2152

Stata errors are extremely common. They are a daily occurrence even for advanced users. But when you're new to learning Stata, fixing errors can be an extremely frustrating and time-consuming part of using the program. This checklist aims to help you recognize and fix your errors more quickly. It attempts to go in order from the most common to the least common, but this is approximate and may vary by user.

General use of commands:
- ❏ Did you spell the command correctly? (Remember - capitalization matters!)
- ❏ Did you spell the variable name correctly? (Remember - capitalization matters!)
- ❏ Does your "if" statement come before the comma, as it should?
- ❏ Did you accidentally put more than one "if" in your command? (Remember: you only need one "if"; multiple conditions should be combined with the "&" or "|" symbols
- ❏ Did you type "and" or "or" (bad!) instead of "&" or "|" (good!)?
- ❏ Did you put your options after a comma, as you should?
- ❏ Did you accidentally include more than one comma? (Remember, only one comma is necessary; multiple options can simply be separated by a space as long as they are all after the comma)
- ❏ Are you trying to treat a string variable like a numeric variable or vice-versa? (Remember, you can check that the variable you are attempting to work with is the format you are expecting by typing `describe + the variable name` in the command window.)
- ❏ When using an if statement that sets a condition where an observation must equal some value or other variable, did you use two equal signs (==)? (Remember: if you are setting a variable or macro to a value you use one equal sign; if you are testing whether one value is equal to another value, you use a double equals.)
- ❏ Did you use a balanced number of parentheses?

Importing/Exporting Files:
- ❏ Did you spell the file name correctly?
- ❏ Did you spell the name of every folder in the path correctly?
- ❏ Does your import/export command match your file type? (eg `import excel` with *.xlsx* but not with *.csv*)
- ❏ Is Stata looking in the right folder for the file? (eg: is the file in your current working directory (check this by typing `ls` in the command window)? Or did you specify the correct path where Stata can find the right file?
- ❏ Have you type a path that contains spaces without enclosing it in quotation marks?

Other tips if the above suggestions do not help you:
- ● Browse your data and make sure it looks as you expect
- ● Check the help file and compare your code to an example
- ● Google the name of your command plus the error message you are getting
- ● Try to do the same command on a simpler dataset - such as the Stata "auto" dataset, which you can load by typing `sysuse auto, clear`