Presenting Economics Research

ECON 490

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General Guidelines (1/2)

Be clear about the big picture

- Highlight the research question
- Connect each slide back to this research question

Make sure that definitions, interpretation, etc. is consistent across slides

Avoid too much text

- Sentence fragments > full sentences
- My lecture slides get wordy… but we don’t have a textbook!

General Guidelines (2/2)

For showing results, figures > tables (where possible)

- Don’t show information you don’t want to discuss!
- Be careful screenshotting tables

Pay attention to font size

- Bigger is better… but not too big

Presenting Tables

With more than 3-4 explanatory variables, tables can become very large

- General rule of thumb → ***only*** show what you want to talk about
- This generally means 1) coefficients and 2) some way to assess significance

You should mention each X variable in your model, but you don't need to show coefficients for each of those variables –highlight the important stuff!

For assessing significance, you should address:

1. Statistical significance using p-values, CIs, etc. – *"Is this signal or noise?"*
2. Practical or economic significance – *"Is this a large or meaningful effect?"*

Note that you can do all of this with or without tables!

DON'T DO THIS!

Table 2
The impact of driver's licenses for undocumented immigrants on their labor market outcomes.

Sample	Panel A: likely undocumented immigrant men			Panel B: likely undocumented immigrant women		
Outcome	Employed	Log (weekly hours of work)	Log (real hourly Wage)	Employed	Log (weekly hours of work)	Log (real hourly Wage)
Driver's licenses	0.007	0.016**	0.011	0.003	-0.003	0.017
	(0.005)	(0.007)	(0.011)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.024)
Enforcement index	−0.002	−0.011**	-0.018*	0.005	−0.002	−0.011
	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.010)	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.015)
Age	0.006***	0.004***	0.050***	0.010***	0.010***	0.055***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.003)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)
Years in U.S.	−0.001***	0.001***	0.007***	0.001***	0.002***	0.008***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.001)
Metro area	0.009***	0.018***	0.076***	−0.015***	-0.033***	−0.043***
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.011)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.013)
Married	−0.001*	0.001	0.020***	0.002	0.001	0.019***
	(0.000)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.004)
Years of education	0.004	−0.043***	0.039***	0.007	−0.028*	0.077***
	(0.003)	(0.010)	(0.013)	(0.006)	(0.014)	(0.017)
No. of children	0.001*	0.003***	0.020***	−0.007***	−0.007**	−0.031***
	(0.000)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.003)	(0.002)
GDP growth	0.181***	0.234***	0.260*	0.173***	0.049	0.275
	(0.055)	(0.050)	(0.137)	(0.057)	(0.084)	(0.303)
State fixed-effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year fixed-effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
State-specific time trend	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	199,540	171,068	171,068	99,275	83,573	83,573
R-squared	0.015	0.019	0.059	0.017	0.012	0.047

Notes: All regressions include a constant term. Standard errors are clustered at the state level. * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$.

Main Results – *Likely-Undocumented Men*

	Employment	Log(Weekly Hours Working)	Log(Real Hourly Wage)
Effect of UILP	0.007 (0.005)	0.016** (0.007)	0.011 (0.011)
Average of Outcome within Sample	94%	~39.6 hours	~$18.50

$$Y_{ist} = \alpha + \beta_1 UILP_{st} + \beta_2 EI_{st} + X'_{ist}\beta_3 + \beta_4 Z_{st} + \gamma_s + \theta_t + \gamma_s t + \epsilon_{ist}$$

Relative to last slide, this table condenses output to just the most important information

- ***Pros:*** Much easier to read, only shows what we want to talk about
- ***Cons:*** Might not be clear how to interpret each coefficient

Main Results – *Likely-Undocumented Men*

Estimate effect of UILPs on range of outcomes with state + year FEs:

$$Y_{ist} = \alpha + \beta_1 UILP_{st} + \beta_2 EI_{st} + X'_{ist}\beta_3 + \beta_4 Z_{st} + \gamma_s + \theta_t + \gamma_s t + \epsilon_{ist}$$

We find UILPs are associated with:

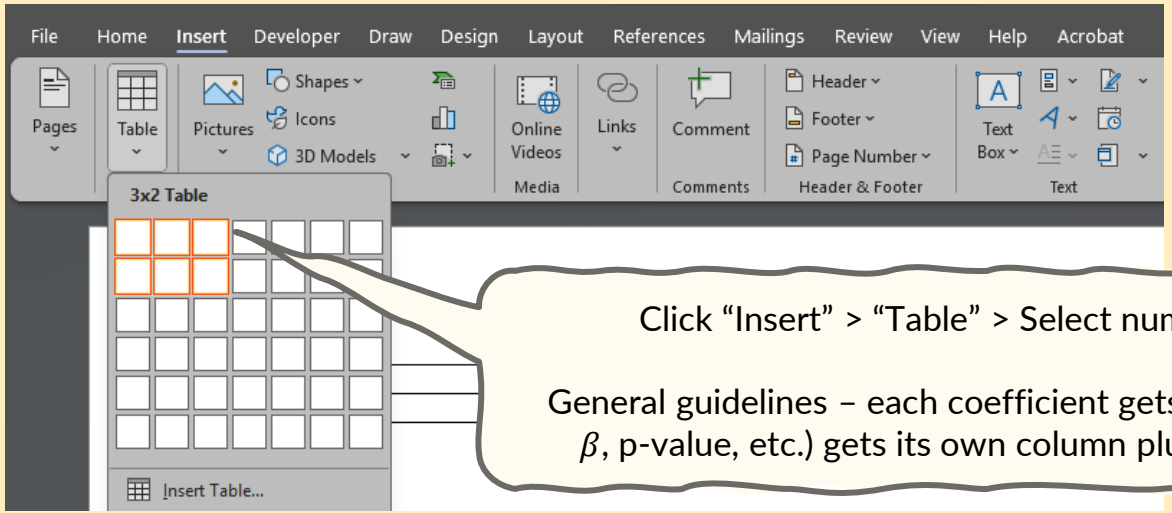
1. An increase of ~45 minutes in hours worked per week ($p < 0.01$)
    - Relative to sample avg. of 39.6 hours, this represents a ~1.6 pct. increase
    - Given hours worked are already high, this is a reasonably large effect
2. No change in either employment or hourly wages

Relative to last slide, we've emphasized our most significant result, provided an intuitive interpretation, and abbreviated discussion of less interesting results

Formatting Tables in Word

There is a sample tables Word document posted to Canvas Outline page

- A range of different table styles that you can copy and edit
- If you want to create your own tables, you can do so in Word



Click “Insert” > “Table” > Select number of rows and columns

General guidelines – each coefficient gets its own row, each statistic (i.e., β, p-value, etc.) gets its own column plus a column for variable labels

Start with a blank table, then label rows and columns

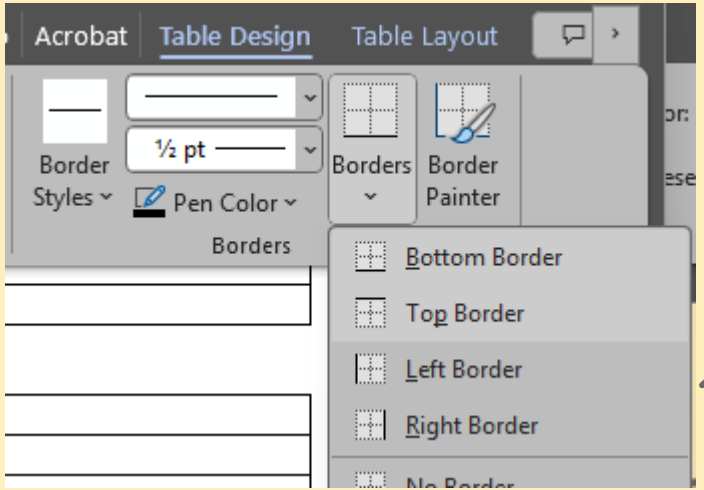
Coefficient	***Estimate***	***P-Value***
Intercept		
Minutes Played		

Fill in values either by typing out from R console output or copy-pasting `write_csv()` output

Coefficient	***Estimate***	***P-Value***
Intercept	10.1	0.02
Minutes Played	0.15**	0.01

Add rows as necessary to provide additional information (or include in bullet points on slide)

Coefficient	***Estimate***	***P-Value***
Intercept	10.1	0.02
Minutes Played	0.15**	0.01
Avg. Points	15.4	
Sample Size	372	



If you want to get fancy with things, adjusting borders can help

Select cell(s) you want to edit, then click “Table Design” > Borders > and make desired changes

Coefficient	*Estimate*	*P-Value*
Intercept	10.1	0.02

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Generally, think “less is more” with borders – what helps people read things clearly?

You frequently don’t need much (if any) vertical borders – you can also stretch or condense tables to remove extra whitespace

Sample Size

Somewhere in your Data and Results slides, you should mention sample size

- How many rows are in your working data set?
- This is important for assessing validity of results *(i.e., does your data look right?)*

If your analysis always uses the same sample, you don't need to repeat this every slide

- If your sample changes across regressions, you should note this!
- E.g., suppose you estimate a regression separately for college and non-college grads – you should state how many people are in each sample

Tips for Presenting

Don't try to memorize (or read) a script – speak freely!

- Scripts "feel" safer, but they create more stress *("what happens if I miss a line?")*
- Notecards or slide notes are better

Key is practice and ***repetition***

- Make a (short!) list of key points for each slide
- With repetition, you'll be more familiar with slides and less likely to get lost
- As you practice, ***update slides*** – delete sticking points, rephrase things, etc.

In general, take questions at the end of slides

Tips for Being a Good Audience Member

Be attentive and friendly

- Read slides and look at the speaker
- Don’t sit on your phone, FaceTime friends, etc.

Friendly questions are encouraged

- Take a moment to make sure your question is clear
- No points for showing off!

What if I Hate Presenting?

You're in good company!

- In undergrad, I hated presenting
- Worked through most of college, didn't know anyone in class

Think about presenting to your friends in class

- Or me, if you don't know anyone else!
- I'm always happy to meet to practice, discuss tips, etc.