

Selecting Variables

As with reading raw data or reading SAS data sets, you can specify the variables you want to drop or keep by using the DROP= and KEEP= data set options.



Where to Specify DROP= and KEEP=

You can specify the DROP= and KEEP= options wherever you specify a SAS data set. When match-merging, you can specify these options in either the DATA statement or the MERGE statement, depending on whether you want to reference the variables in that DATA step:

- If you don't reference certain variables and you don't want them to appear in the new data set, specify them in the DROP= option in the MERGE statement.

```
merge a (in=ina rename=(date=BirthDate)) b(in=inb drop=score4);
```

- If you do need to reference a variable in the original data set (in a subsetting IF statement, for example), then you must specify the variable in the DROP= option in the DATA statement. Otherwise, you may get unexpected results and your variable will be uninitialized.

```
data merged (drop=id);
```

When used in the DATA statement, the DROP= option simply drops the variables from the new data set. However, the variables are still read from the original data set and are available for processing within the DATA step.

