

Writing Good Do-Files

Both for good practice and grading lab assignments, here's what I'm looking for in a Stata Do-file.

An opening comment:

- Briefly tell the reader what this Do-file is for and who wrote it.
- For lab assignments, something like the following is good. The brief description might be something like “Replication of Crescenzi and Enterline (Journal of Peace Research, 1999)”. For research, you would want to give a longer description, including where online the source files are.

```
/* Student Name
   Class
   Date
   Brief Description
*/
```

A standard start to the analysis:

- Give the version of Stata you are using (for future reference and use), a “clear all” statement, a “set more off” statement, and an “open file” statement *assuming the data file and the Do-file are in the same directory*. The open-file statement will, of course, vary depending on the type of file you are using.

```
version 14.1
clear all
set more off
use "dataFile"
```

The next part of your Do-file is your commands. These are usefully divided into Setup, Descriptive Statistics, and Analysis. Be sure to add comments both as guideposts and other comments that tell others what you are doing. The elements below give some examples of guideposts and informative comments.

```
* Adding variable labels:
label var variableName "VariableLabel"
/* These variable labels came from a separate file in the replication archive.
   <Give the details of the file name>
   Some of them had to be deduced from the tables and figures in the article.
   These include: <give the details>
*/

* Verifying descriptive statistics:
<commands and comments would go here>

* Verifying the analysis:
* Table 3, Model 1:
logit depVar indepVarList, cluster(country)
/* Comments here might include why this is the correct estimation technique
   with the correct variables and options. Also important here is whether the
   analysis really did verify the published results.
*/
```