5

Creating Effective Tables

■ A. REVIEWING

1. Find a simple table in a newspaper or magazine article. Evaluate whether it can stand alone without the text. Suggest ways to improve labeling and layout.

2. In a journal article from your field, find a table of regression results.
   a. Evaluate whether you can interpret all the numbers in the table without reference to the text. Suggest ways to improve labeling and layout.
   b. Using information in the article, revise the table to correct those errors.
   c. Consider whether a different table layout would work more effectively.
   d. Assess whether additional tables are needed in the paper, to present net effects of an interaction, convey nonlinear specifications, or illustrate effects of multiunit changes in an independent variable, for example (see chapter 9 of *Writing about Multivariate Analysis*).
   e. Pick a chart from the article. Draw a rough draft of a table to present the same information. Show what would go into the rows and columns, whether the table would have spanners or panels, and write complete title, labels, and notes.

■ B. APPLYING STATISTICS

1. Create a table to display univariate statistics for your main dependent variable and three or more independent variables that you later use in your multivariate model (see question B.3).

2. Create a table to show bivariate associations (e.g., correlations, cross-tabulations, or a difference in means) among the variables you selected for question B1.

3. Create a table to show coefficients, standard errors, and model goodness-of-fit statistics from three nested models of the association between the variables you selected for question B1.

4. Make a list of two or three simple tables to show two-way or three-way associations that pertain to your research question. Write individualized titles for each table.

5. Obtain a copy of the instructions for authors for a leading journal in your field. Revise the tables you created in questions B.1 through B.3 to satisfy their criteria.

■ **C. WRITING AND REVISING**

1. Evaluate a table of bivariate statistics that you created previously for a paper, using the checklist in chapter 5 of *Writing about Multivariate Analysis* and the instructions for authors for a leading journal in your field.

2. Evaluate a table of regression results that you created previously for the same paper, again using the checklist from chapter 5 and the instructions for authors for your selected journal.

3. Peer-edit someone else's bivariate and multivariate tables after he or she has revised them, using the checklist in chapter 5 and the instructions for authors for his or her selected journal.

4. Read through the results section of a paper you have written previously. Identify topics or statistics for which to create additional tables to present net effects of interactions, nonlinear specifications, or multiunit changes related to your multivariate model. Draft them with pencil and paper, including complete title, labels, and notes.