

# 6

## Creating Effective Tables

### SUGGESTED COURSE EXTENSIONS

#### ■ A. REVIEWING

1. Find a simple table in a newspaper or magazine article. Evaluate whether tables in that article can stand alone without the text. Suggest ways to improve labeling and layout.
2. In a professional journal in your field, find a table that includes column spanners or panels.
  - 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 layout would work more effectively.
  - d. Assess whether other tables are needed in the paper. Can two (or more) tables from the paper be combined into one?
  - e. Take one of the tables in the article and simplify it into one or more tables for a lay audience.
  - f. Pick a chart from the article. Draw a table to present the same information. Show what would go into the rows and columns, whether the table would have spanners or panels, labels, notes, etc.

#### ■ B. APPLYING STATISTICS

1. Create a table to display univariate frequency distributions for several variables in your data set.
2. Create a table to show bivariate associations (e.g., correlations, cross-tabulations, or a difference in means) between two or more variables in your data set.
3. Identify a topic for a hypothetical research paper. Make a list of three or four simple (e.g., no more than three-way relationships) tables that pertain to your topic. Write individualized titles for each table.

#### ■ C. WRITING AND REVISING

1. Evaluate a table you have previously made for your paper, using the checklist in chapter 6 of *Writing about Numbers*.

2. Peer-edit another student's tables after he or she has revised them, again using the checklist.
3. Read through the results section of your paper and identify topics or statistics for which to create additional tables related to some aspect of your research question. Draft them with pencil and paper including complete title, labels, and notes.