

6

Creating Effective Tables

PROBLEM SET

1. Write a title for table 6A.

Table 6A.

Year	Median age (years)
1960	
1970	
1980	
1990	
2000	

Source: U.S. Census of Population, various dates.

2. Answer the following questions for tables 6.2 through 6.8 in *Writing about Numbers*.
 - a. Who is described by the data?
 - b. To what date or dates do the data pertain?
 - c. Where were the data collected?
 - d. What are the units of measurement? Are they the same for all cells in the table?
 - e. Where in the table are the units of measurement defined?
 - f. Does the table use footnotes? If so why? If not, are any needed?
 - g. Are panels used within the table? If so, why? If not, would the addition of panels improve the clarity of the table?
3. Table 6B needs several footnotes to be complete. What information would those footnotes provide?

Table 6B. EPA estimates of carbon dioxide concentration and mean annual global temperature, 1950–2000

	CO ₂ concentration (ppmv)	Mean temperature (°F)
1950		
1960		
1970		
1980		
1990		
2000		

4. What is missing from table 6C?

Table 6C. Math and English test scores by homeroom teacher

Ms. Michaelson	65.7	69.0
Mr. Cifuentes	72.1	70.8
Mr. Williams	70.1	62.1
Ms. Andrews	76.2	78.2
Ms. Smith-Henderson	65.2	72.5

5. Design a table for each of the following topics. Provide complete labeling and notes, show column spanner and panels if pertinent, and indicate what principle(s) you would use to organize items within the rows and/or columns.
- Average commuting costs per month, by mode of transportation (bicycle, bus, car, train, walk, other). (One number per type of transportation.)
 - Age (years), gender, race, and educational attainment composition of a study sample.
 - Annual number of people receiving college degrees by gender, from 1990 to 2000.
 - Measures of association between height (cm), weight (kg), percentage body fat, systolic blood pressure (mm Hg), and resting pulse (beats per minute).
 - Estimates of dates using two different dating techniques for each of 15 artifacts taken from archaeological sites in three North African and two European countries.
 - Type of contraceptive (condom, diaphragm, implant/injectable, oral contraceptive (the Pill), surgical sterilization, other, none) by 10-year age groups of women aged 15 to 44. (Some women use more than one method.)

6. A journal for which you are writing an article allows no more than two tables but your current draft has three. Combine tables 6D and 6E below into one table of 18 or fewer rows.

Table 6D. Number of wildfires by month, United States, 1998–2000

Month	1998	1999	2000	30-year average ^a
January				
February				
March				
April				
May				
June				
July				
August				
September				
October				
November				
December				
Total				

^a1970–1999.

Table 6E. Number of acres consumed by wildfire, by month, United States, 1998–2000

Month	1998	1999	2000	30-year average ^a
January				
February				
March				
April				
May				
June				
July				
August				
September				
October				
November				
December				
Total				

^a1970–1999.