

How can I remove the first character from a string using SAS?

Authored by
stats writer

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The process of removing the first character from a string in SAS involves using the SUBSTR function to extract a portion of the string starting from the second character. This function takes the string, the starting position (2), and the desired length (length of the string minus one) as parameters. The result is a new string without the first character. This can be useful for data manipulation and cleaning tasks in SAS programming.

SAS: Remove First Character from String

The easiest way to remove the first character from a string in SAS is to use the function.

You can use the following basic syntax to do so:

```
data new_data;  
set original_data;  
string_var = substr(string_var, 2);  
run;
```

This syntax extracts the substring starting from the second character to the end of the string, which has the effect of removing the first character from the string.

The following example shows how to use this syntax in practice.

Example: Remove First Character from String in SAS

Suppose we have the following dataset in SAS that

contains information about various basketball teams:

```
/*create dataset*/  
data my_data;  
input team $ points;  
datalines;  
xMavs 113  
xPacers 95  
xCavs 120  
xLakers 114  
xHeat 123  
xKings 119  
xRaptors 105  
xHawks 95  
xMagic 103  
xSpurs 119  
;  
run;  
  
/*view dataset*/  
proc printdata=my_data;
```

Obs	team	points
1	xMavs	113
2	xPacers	95
3	xCavs	120
4	xLakers	114
5	xHeat	123
6	xKings	119
7	xRaptors	105
8	xHawks	95
9	xMagic	103
10	xSpurs	119

Notice that each string in the team column contains an x as the first character.

We can use the SUBSTR function to remove this first character from each string in the team column:

```
/*create new dataset where first character in each string  
of team column is removed*/
```

```
data new_data;
```

```
set my_data;
```

```
team = substr(team, 2);
```

```
run;
```

```
/*view new dataset*/
```

```
proc printdata=new_data;
```

Obs	team	points
1	Mavs	113
2	Pacers	95
3	Cavs	120
4	Lakers	114
5	Heat	123
6	Kings	119
7	Raptors	105
8	Hawks	95
9	Magic	103
10	Spurs	119

Notice that the first character of each string in the team column has been removed.

Note that the SUBSTR function uses the following basic syntax:

SUBSTR(Source, Position, N)

where:

Source: The string to analyze
Position: The starting position to read
N: The number of characters to read

By using substr(team, 2) and not specifying a value for the last argument of N, we're able to extract the substring from the string in the team column starting

from the second character to the last character.

This has the effect of removing the first character from the string.

The following tutorials explain how to perform other common tasks in SAS:

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