

# How do you recode a variable in SPSS?

Authored by  
**stats writer**

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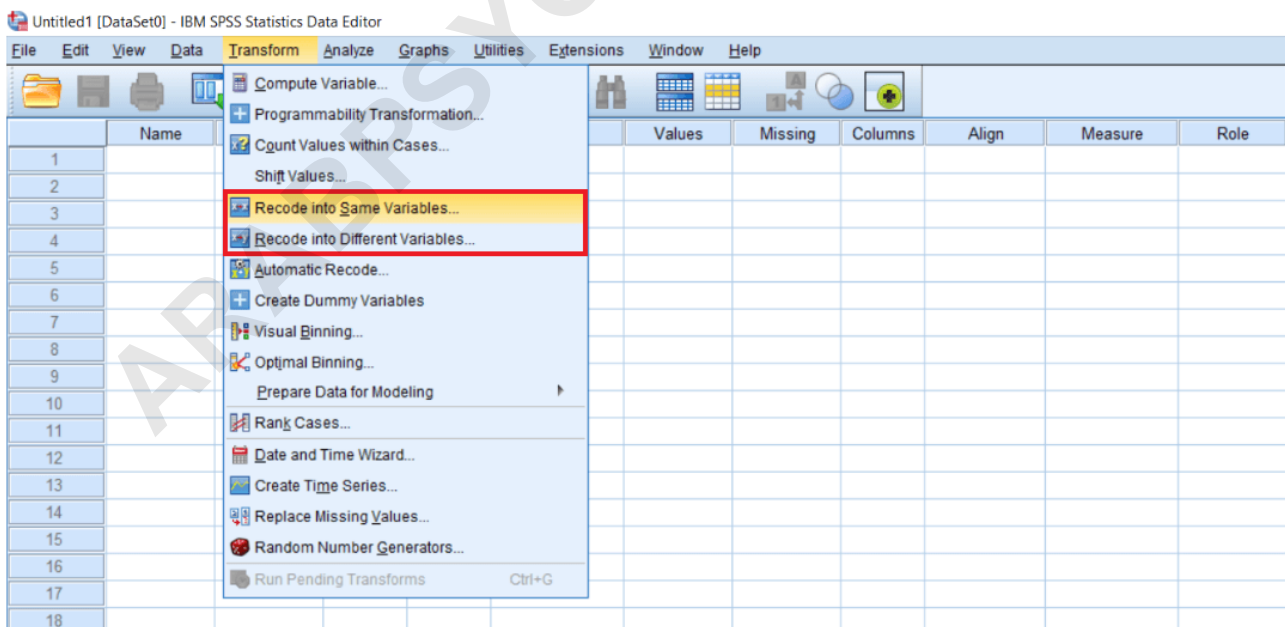
## RECOMMENDED CITATION

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Recoding a variable in SPSS refers to the process of changing the values of a variable in a dataset. This is often done to simplify data analysis or to make the data more interpretable. To recode a variable in SPSS, one must first identify the variable to be recoded and the new values that will be assigned to it. This can be done manually or by creating a new variable with the desired recoded values. In SPSS, recoding can be done using the "Recode into Same or Different Variables" function, where the user can specify the old and new values for the variable. This allows for easy transformation of data without altering the original values. Recoding variables in SPSS can greatly enhance data analysis and aid in obtaining meaningful insights from the data.

## SPSS Recode Variable

In this section, we will learn about the Recode function in SPSS. Recode function is located in the Transform menu, and it comes into two varieties Recode into the same variables and Recode into different variables like this:



So we will learn when we use these two different

functions. Before going into that, we need to understand what recode can do for us. Recode is a kind of function available in the **SPSS** Transform menu, which can help us in recoding the values that we assign to a variable. For example, the following data set has certain variables. Basically, they are the questions items of a scale, and there are 15 questions for measuring the different dimensions of personality.

SPSS file 2.sav [DataSet1] - IBM SPSS Statistics Data Editor

	Name	Type	Width	Decimals	Label	Values	Missing	Columns	Align	Measure	Role
1	ID	Numeric	8	0	ID	None	None	8	Right	Scale	Input
2	Q1_N	Numeric	11	0	I often feel sad*	None	None	11	Right	Scale	Input
3	Q2_E	Numeric	11	0	I like to take charge of situations and events	None	None	11	Right	Scale	Input
4	Q3_N	Numeric	11	0	I experience deep and varied emotions*	None	None	11	Right	Scale	Input
5	Q4_S	Numeric	11	0	I am very regular in my approach.	None	None	11	Right	Scale	Input
6	Q5_S	Numeric	11	0	I keep my promises	None	None	11	Right	Scale	Input
7	Q6_E	Numeric	11	0	I enjoy being center of attention	None	None	11	Right	Scale	Input
8	Q7_I	Numeric	11	0	I find it difficult to approach others*	None	None	11	Right	Scale	Input
9	Q8_E	Numeric	11	0	I love being in company.	None	None	11	Right	Scale	Input
10	Q9_E	Numeric	11	0	I prefer variety to routine	None	None	11	Right	Scale	Input
11	Q10_E	Numeric	11	0	I love a good argument - a good fight	None	None	11	Right	Scale	Input
12	Q11_I	Numeric	8	0	I prefer being alone.*	None	None	8	Right	Scale	Input
13	Q12_E	Numeric	11	0	I love excitement	None	None	11	Right	Scale	Input
14	Q13_I	Numeric	11	0	I enjoy reading books*	None	None	11	Right	Scale	Input
15	Q14_E	Numeric	8	0	I believe that i am better than others	None	None	8	Right	Scale	Input
16	Q15_S	Numeric	11	0	I am always prepared	None	None	11	Right	Scale	Input
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When we click on the Data View option, we can see that all the responses have been scored on the 7 point rating scale.

ID	Q1_N	Q2_E	Q3_N	Q4_S	Q5_S	Q6_E	Q7_I	Q8_E	Q9_E	Q10_E	Q11_I	Q12_E	Q13
1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
2	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
3	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
4	7	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
6	5	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
7	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
8	4	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
9	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
10	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
11	8	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
12	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
13	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
14	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
15	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
16	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
17	3	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
18	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
19	7	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
20	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
21	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
22	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
23	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
24	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
25	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
26	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
27	7	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

There are 15 items, as shown in the following diagram. The items measure various personality dimensions of the subject like their introversion and extroversion traits, and the extent to their Stability or Unstability. These are the four-measure dimensions, and all these questions measure one of the four dimensions mentioned in the scale. If we want to change the responses or values assigning to a variable, we can use the Recode function. We use the recode function because it is required. If we look at the personality scale, it consists of 15 items.

\*SPSS file 2.sav [DataSet1] - IBM SPSS Statistics Data Editor

	Name	Type	Width	Decimals	Label	Values	Missing	Columns	Align	Measure	Role
1	ID	Numeric	8	0	ID	None	None	8	Right	Scale	Input
2	Q1_N	Numeric	11	0	I often feel sad*	None	None	11	Right	Scale	Input
3	Q2_E	Numeric	11	0	I like to take charge of situations and events	None	None	11	Right	Scale	Input
4	Q3_N	Numeric	11	0	I experience deep and varied emotions*	None	None	11	Right	Scale	Input
5	Q4_S	Numeric	11	0	I am very regular in my approach.	None	None	11	Right	Scale	Input
6	Q5_S	Numeric	11	0	I keep my promises	None	None	11	Right	Scale	Input
7	Q6_E	Numeric	11	0	I enjoy being center of attention	None	None	11	Right	Scale	Input
8	Q7_I	Numeric	11	0	I find it difficult to approach others*	None	None	11	Right	Scale	Input
9	Q8_E	Numeric	11	0	I love being in company.	None	None	11	Right	Scale	Input
10	Q9_E	Numeric	11	0	I prefer variety to routine	None	None	11	Right	Scale	Input
11	Q10_E	Numeric	11	0	I love a good argument - a good fight	None	None	11	Right	Scale	Input
12	Q11_I	Numeric	8	0	I prefer being alone.*	None	None	8	Right	Scale	Input
13	Q12_E	Numeric	11	0	I love excitement	None	None	11	Right	Scale	Input
14	Q13_I	Numeric	11	0	I enjoy reading books*	None	None	11	Right	Scale	Input
15	Q14_E	Numeric	8	0	I believe that i am better than others	None	None	8	Right	Scale	Input
16	Q15_S	Numeric	11	0	I am always prepared	None	None	11	Right	Scale	Input
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They measure four different dimensions of personality. Some dimensions are positive, and others are negative. For example, in the case of Q1\_N, the dimension is Neuroticism. Neuroticism measures the extent to which a person is unstable or the extent of Instability in personality predisposition. For example, I often feel sad or being often sad, or moody is the basic characteristic of Neurotic person or those persons who are unstable by nature.

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12	Q11_I	Numeric	8	0	I prefer being alone.*	None	None	8	Right	Scale	Input
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As compared to this, the Stability dimension measures the extent to which a person is stable in his behavior. For example, I keep my promises. This is the characteristic of those people who are stable by nature.

\*SPSS file 2.sav [DataSet1] - IBM SPSS Statistics Data Editor

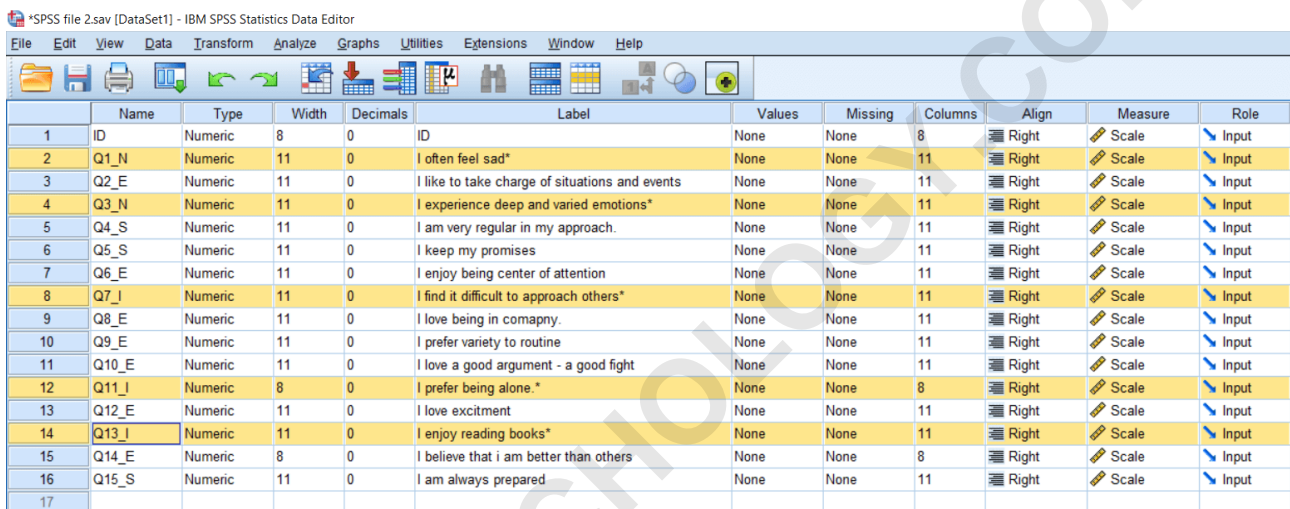
	Name	Type	Width	Decimals	Label	Values	Missing	Columns	Align	Measure	Role
1	ID	Numeric	8	0	ID	None	None	8	Right	Scale	Input
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13	Q12_E	Numeric	11	0	I love excitement	None	None	11	Right	Scale	Input
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So one dimension is Neurotic Vs. Stability, or we can call it Stability Vs. Instability. The second dimension is Extraversion Vs. Introversion. So it is the extent to

which individuals are oriented towards others outgoing or oriented towards themselves. Suppose somebody asks us to find out the total score of the subject on the scale. We know that certain items measure the traits that are negative, for example, Instability or Neuroticism. We want a total score reflecting how positive an individual's personality is or how negative an individual's personality is because we are looking for an overall picture. So if we have to calculate the total score of the subject based on these 15 items, we cannot do total as it is because that will not reflect the true score of the individuals either as a positive personality or negative personality.

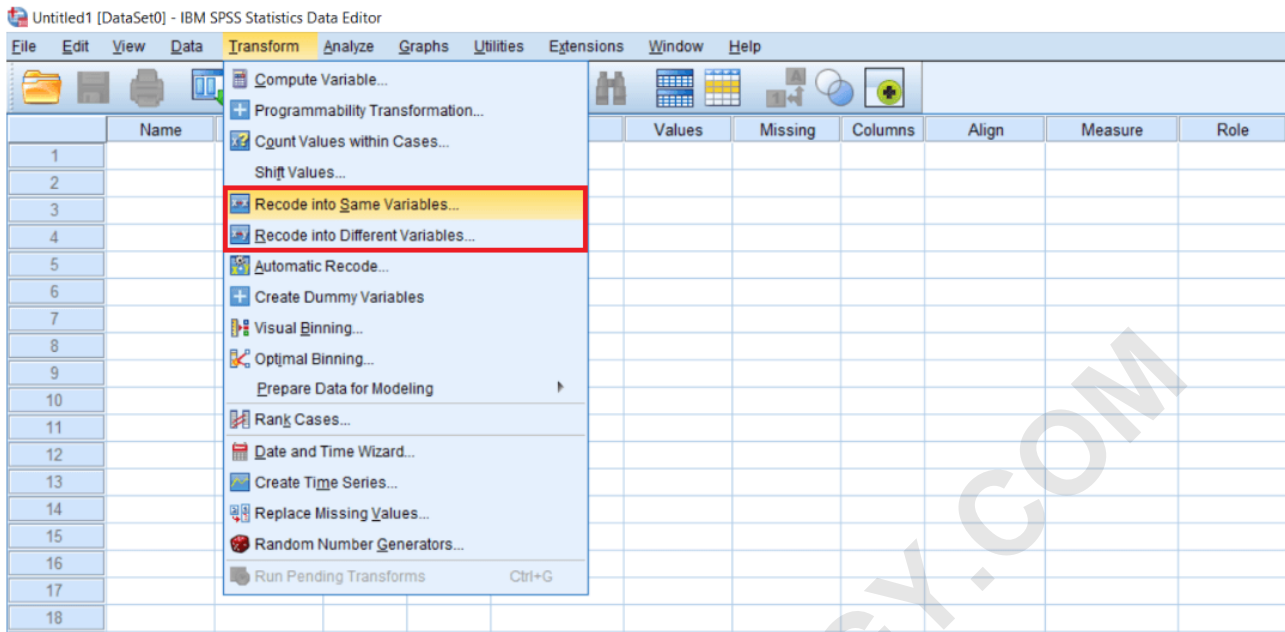
So for that, we need to reverse score certain items. For example, all those items which are negative or which we consider as negative personality traits not desirable for the workplace like I often feel sad, and I prefer being alone. I often feel alone is part of Introversion. If somebody wants to find out the total score where the desirability of that person should be high at Extroversion and high on Stability and it should be low on Introversion and low on Instability. So for this, a total score on this scale should reflect high Extroversion and

high Stability. So for this, we have to reverse score all those questions, which are negative that is measuring Neuroticism or measuring Introversion. All these items for the sake of convenience have been marked by an asterisk (\*) at their end.



	Name	Type	Width	Decimals	Label	Values	Missing	Columns	Align	Measure	Role
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9	Q8_E	Numeric	11	0	I love being in company.	None	None	11	Right	Scale	Input
10	Q9_E	Numeric	11	0	I prefer variety to routine	None	None	11	Right	Scale	Input
11	Q10_E	Numeric	11	0	I love a good argument - a good fight	None	None	11	Right	Scale	Input
12	Q11_I	Numeric	8	0	I prefer being alone.*	None	None	8	Right	Scale	Input
13	Q12_E	Numeric	11	0	I love excitement	None	None	11	Right	Scale	Input
14	Q13_I	Numeric	11	0	I enjoy reading books*	None	None	11	Right	Scale	Input
15	Q14_E	Numeric	8	0	I believe that i am better than others	None	None	8	Right	Scale	Input
16	Q15_S	Numeric	11	0	I am always prepared	None	None	11	Right	Scale	Input
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This is the standard practice followed in the scale development exercise. So if we have to calculate the total score of a person first, we will reverse score all these items, which have been marked by an asterisk(\*). For reverse scoring, we can take the help of following Recode function.



Once the reverse scoring has been done, we can calculate the total score by adding all positively worded items and reverse scoring of the negatively worded items.