

Importing an Excel or Text Data File into Stata

This set of notes describes how to import an Excel or text data file into Stata. It assumes that you have already installed Stata on your computer, following the “Getting Started with Stata” handout. It also assumes that you have started Stata up on your computer and are looking at its main screen, on which there is a Stata *Results* window and a Stata *Command* box.

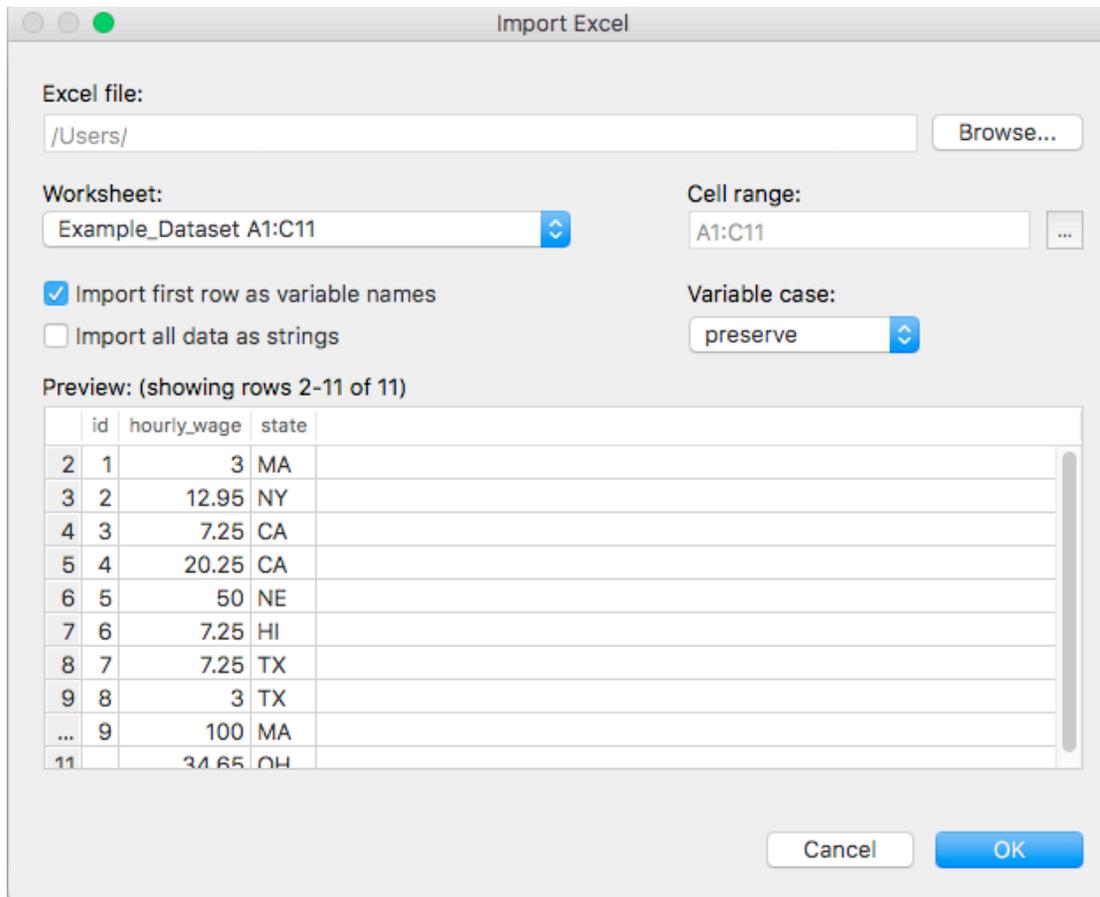
Some data files that you need for your analysis might not be in a .dta format, such as Excel or text data files. This handout uses the following data file to illustrate how to import data files using the Stata menus. This data file (file name: “Example_Dataset”) has three variables (“id”, “hourly_wage”, and “state”) and 10 observations.

id	hourly_wage	state
1	3	MA
2	12.95	NY
3	7.25	CA
4	20.25	CA
5	50	NE
6	7.25	HI
7	7.25	TX
8	3	TX
9	100	MA
10	34.65	OH

Excel files (.xls, .xlsx)

To import an Excel file (e.g. “Example_Dataset.xlsx”) click on File, then on Import, then on Excel spreadsheet. A new window will open. Click Browse and navigate to the folder where the data file you want to use is stored, and then click on Open.

You will see a preview of the data file in the “Import Excel” window. If the first row of your data file contains the variable names, as it does for the “Example_Dataset” data file, check the box next to “Import first row as variable names”:

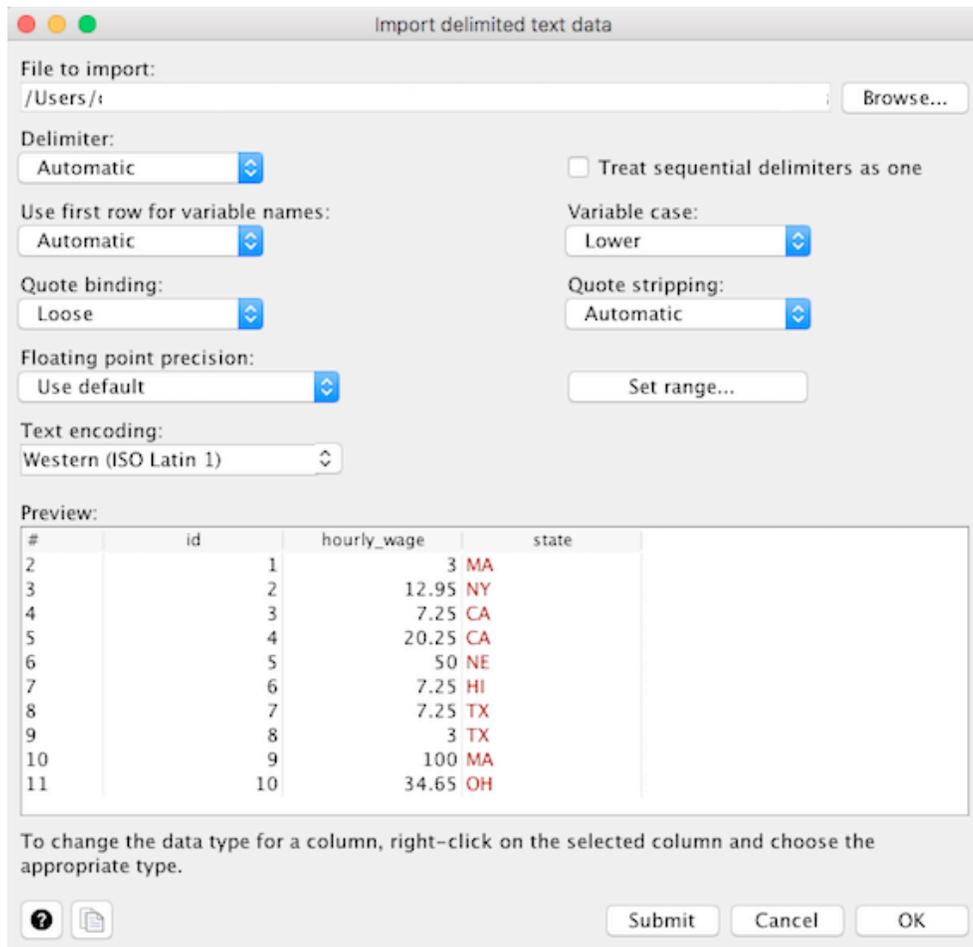


If the data set looks okay in the preview box, click “OK.” The data file will import into Stata.

Comma-separated values (.csv) and Text (.txt) files

To import a comma-separated values file (e.g. “Example_Dataset.csv”) or a text file (e.g. “Example_Dataset.txt”) click on File, then on Import, then on Text data (delimited, *.csv...). A new window will open. Click Browse and navigate to the folder where the data file you want to use is stored, and then click on Open.

You will see a preview of the data file in the “Import delimited text data” window. Variables might be grouped together in one column. If that is the case, try specifying a different “Delimiter” from the drop-down menu (the default setting is “Automatic”). If the first row of your data file contains variable names, as it does for the “Example_Dataset” data file, and the variable names are not automatically detected, try selecting a different option from the “Use first row for variable names” drop-down menu.



If the data set looks okay in the preview box, click “OK.” The data file will import into Stata.

Saving the data file

Once you have successfully imported your data file into Stata, you should save it as a .dta file so it is easier to read into Stata for future analysis. To save your data file, see the “Saving a Dataset...” handout.