Notes on BHPS and Understanding Society

John F Hall   [draft only: **8 Oct 2013**]

UK Data Service distributes separate SPSS files for each topic and a separate list of dictionaries in Word documents.

5151   British Household Panel Survey
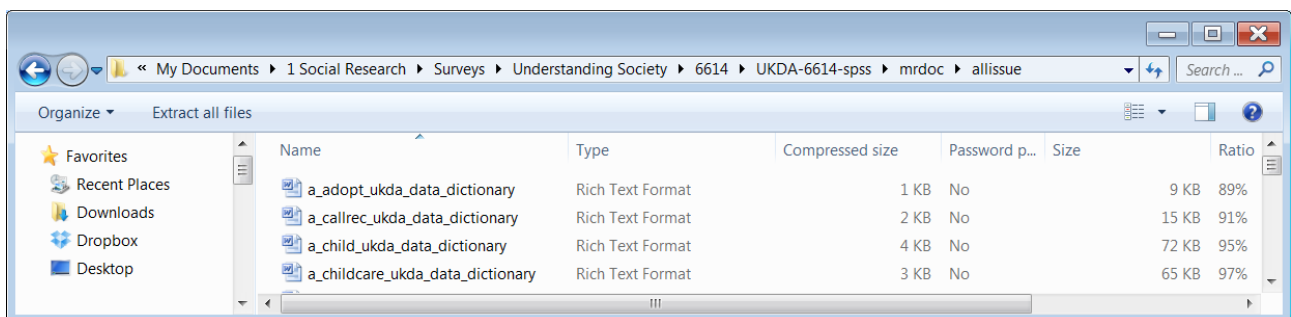   184 SPSS files

        Understanding Society

6614   Understanding Society (Waves 1 and 2)
        http://esds.ac.uk/doi/?sn=6614
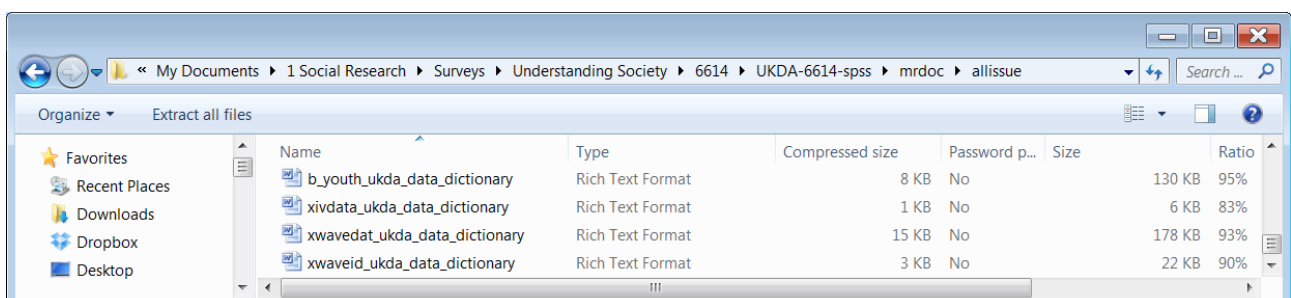
31 SPSS files

Name	Type	Compressed size	Password p...	Size
a_adopt	SPSS Statis...	53 KB	No	189 KB
a_callrec	SPSS Statis...	5,886 KB	No	21,929 KB
a_child	SPSS Statis...	457 KB	No	2,934 KB
a_childcare	SPSS Statis...	74 KB	No	505 KB
b_youth	SPSS Statis...	416 KB	No	1,158 KB
xivdata	SPSS Statis...	7 KB	No	25 KB
xwavedat	SPSS Statis...	1,657 KB	No	9,518 KB
xwaveid	SPSS Statis...	1,541 KB	No	3,543 KB

31 Data dictionaries

« My Documents ▸ 1 Social Research ▸ Surveys ▸ Understanding Society ▸ 6614 ▸ UKDA-6614-spss ▸ mrdoc ▸ allissue

Name	Type	Compressed size	Password p...	Size	Ratio
a_adopt_ukda_data_dictionary	Rich Text Format	1 KB	No	9 KB	89%
a_callrec_ukda_data_dictionary	Rich Text Format	2 KB	No	15 KB	91%
a_child_ukda_data_dictionary	Rich Text Format	4 KB	No	72 KB	95%
a_childcare_ukda_data_dictionary	Rich Text Format	3 KB	No	65 KB	97%

« My Documents ▸ 1 Social Research ▸ Surveys ▸ Understanding Society ▸ 6614 ▸ UKDA-6614-spss ▸ mrdoc ▸ allissue

Name	Type	Compressed size	Password p...	Size	Ratio
b_youth_ukda_data_dictionary	Rich Text Format	8 KB	No	130 KB	95%
xivdata_ukda_data_dictionary	Rich Text Format	1 KB	No	6 KB	83%
xwavedat_ukda_data_dictionary	Rich Text Format	15 KB	No	178 KB	93%
xwaveid_ukda_data_dictionary	Rich Text Format	3 KB	No	22 KB	90%

17 User Manuals (pdf)

Name	Type	Compressed size	Password p...	Size	Ratio
6614_ukhls_wave1_2012revisions-2	Adobe Acrobat Document	191 KB	No	215 KB	12%
6614_understanding_society_wave1...	Adobe Acrobat Document	2,469 KB	No	2,802 KB	12%
6614_understanding_society_wave2...	Adobe Acrobat Document	3,289 KB	No	3,726 KB	12%
6614_user_manual_waves1-2	Adobe Acrobat Document	980 KB	No	1,394 KB	30%
6614_wave1_consent_package	Adobe Acrobat Document	582 KB	No	645 KB	10%
6614_wave1_main_adult_sc_questio...	Adobe Acrobat Document	358 KB	No	429 KB	17%
6614_wave1_main_youth_sc_questi...	Adobe Acrobat Document	697 KB	No	750 KB	7%
6614_wave1_project_instructions_in...	Adobe Acrobat Document	1,964 KB	No	2,426 KB	20%
6614_wave1_showcards	Adobe Acrobat Document	168 KB	No	199 KB	16%
6614_wave1_technical_report	Adobe Acrobat Document	450 KB	No	477 KB	6%
6614_wave2_adult_selfcompletion_...	Adobe Acrobat Document	292 KB	No	475 KB	39%
6614_wave2_arf	Adobe Acrobat Document	433 KB	No	510 KB	16%
6614_wave2_project_instructions_in...	Adobe Acrobat Document	1,459 KB	No	1,967 KB	26%
6614_wave2_respondent_communi...	Adobe Acrobat Document	448 KB	No	526 KB	15%
6614_wave2_showcards	Adobe Acrobat Document	357 KB	No	408 KB	13%
6614_wave2_technical_report	Adobe Acrobat Document	354 KB	No	365 KB	3%
6614_wave2_youth_selfcompletion...	Adobe Acrobat Document	512 KB	No	840 KB	40%

17 items

1 guide to contents 6614_file_information (Word doc in table format: read only)

File name	Description of file
read6614	UKDA Information for Study 6614
6614_ukhls_wave1_2012revisions-2	Wave 1 Revisions November 2012
6614_understanding_society_wave1_questionnaire	Wave 1 Adult Main Questionnaire
6614_understanding_society_wave2_questionnaire_v04	Wave 2 Adult Main Questionnaire
6614_user_manual_waves1-2	Waves 1-2 User Manual
6614_wave1_consent_package	Wave 1 Consent Package
~ ~ ~	
6614_wave2_youth_selfcompletion_questionnaire	Wave 2 Youth Self-Completion Questionnaire
~ ~ ~	
xwaveid	Identifiers for each wave for individual respondents
xwaveid_ukda_data_dictionary	UKDA Data Dictionary

Main SPSS files seem to be: a_indresp (88.8 mb, V = 134, N = 50,994)

b_indresp (94.3 mb; V = 1568; N = 54,597)

. . but there are also a_indall and b_indall.

Good points:
    Missing values are negative and consistent

Problem points:
    Measurement levels all Unknown
    Most variable and value labels start with lower case letters
    No question numbers at all (to use with questionnaire?)
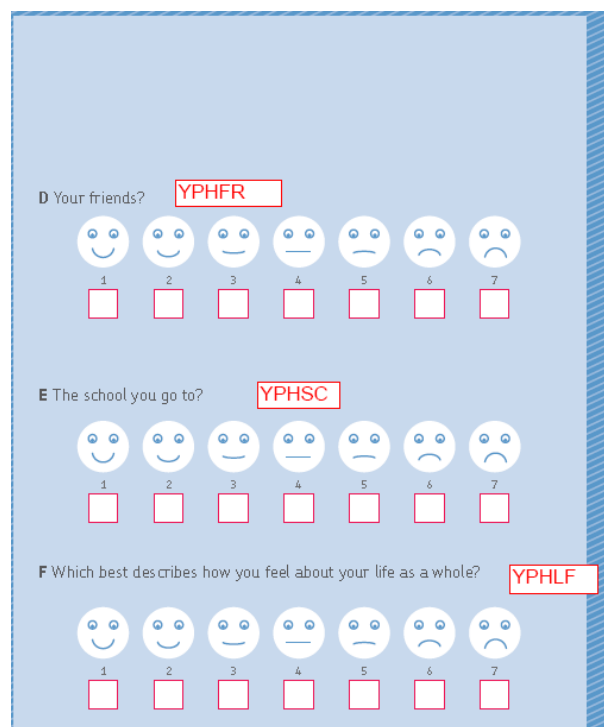
2

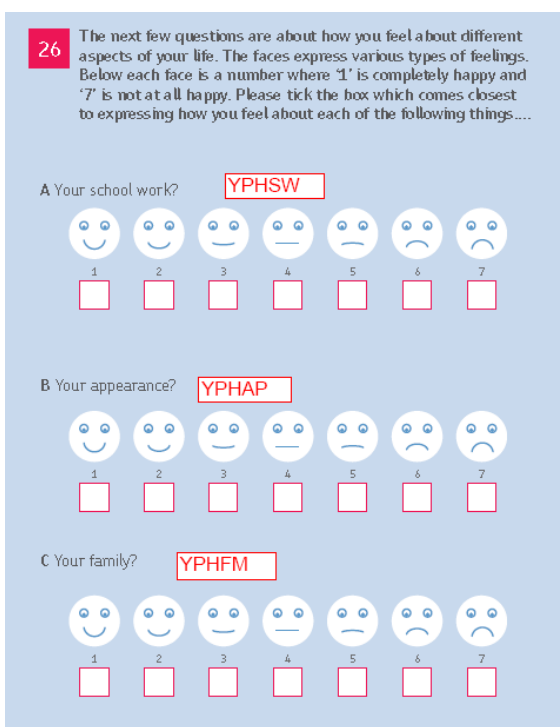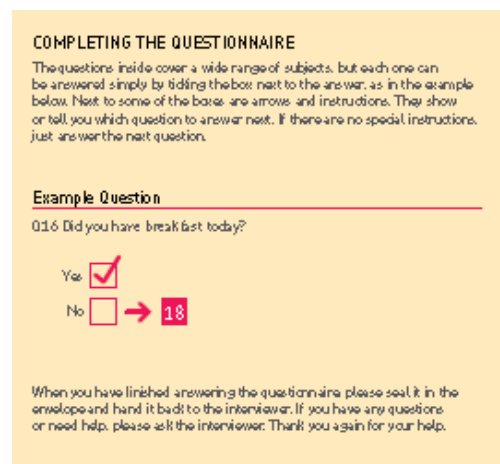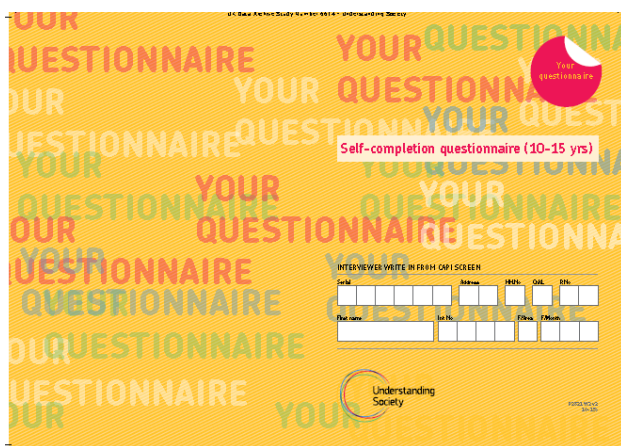https://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/news/comment-and-analysis is an article using a 1 – 7 scale (ends only labelled) to measure children's happiness with various aspects of their lives (based on data from the UK Household Panel Study). From the information sent out by UKDA, it took me a while to track down the self-completion youth questionnaire:
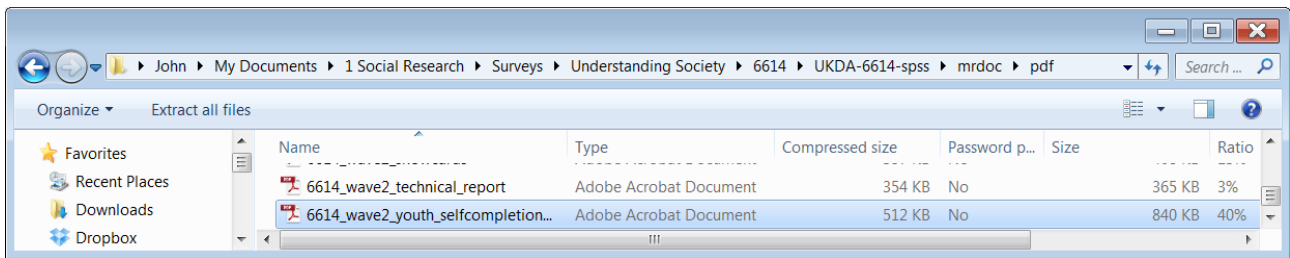
Beautifully designed self-completion questionnaire for 10-15 year-olds.

6614_wave2_youth_selfcompletion_questionnaire

Click on Enter to progress through it (better)

or just scroll down, but the display of variable names changes.:

Then had a bit of a pantomime track down the associated SPSS file b_youth.sav

Scroll down to find the "happy" variables (helpfully indicated in boxes on the questionnaire)
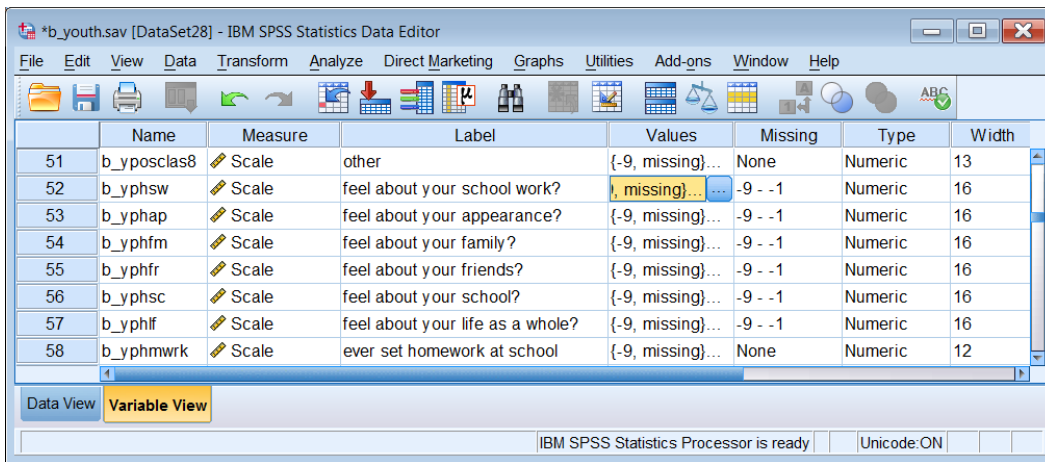
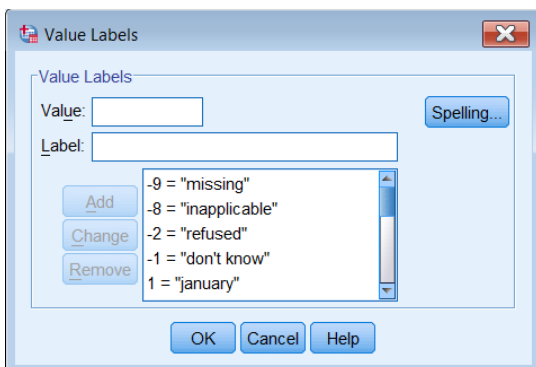Adjust column separators to see contents more clearly:
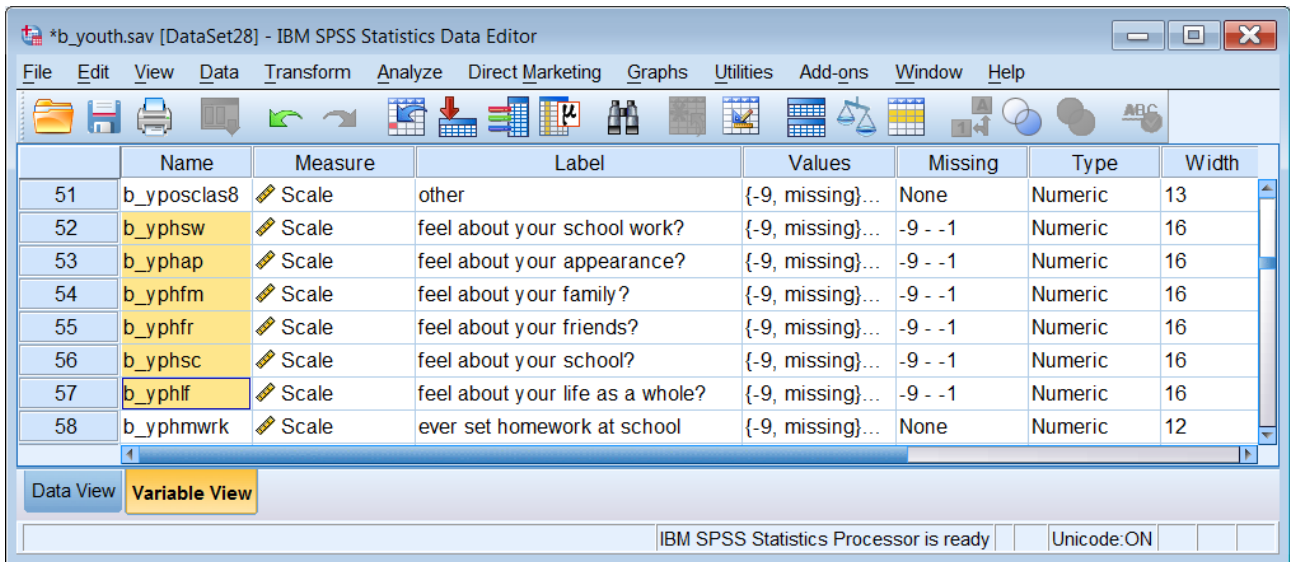
Two ways to check labels and missing values:

1: The slow way

One variable at a time, click on the two dots to the right of each box in the Values column, but if the column is very wide you may get this first, so click on the blue box:
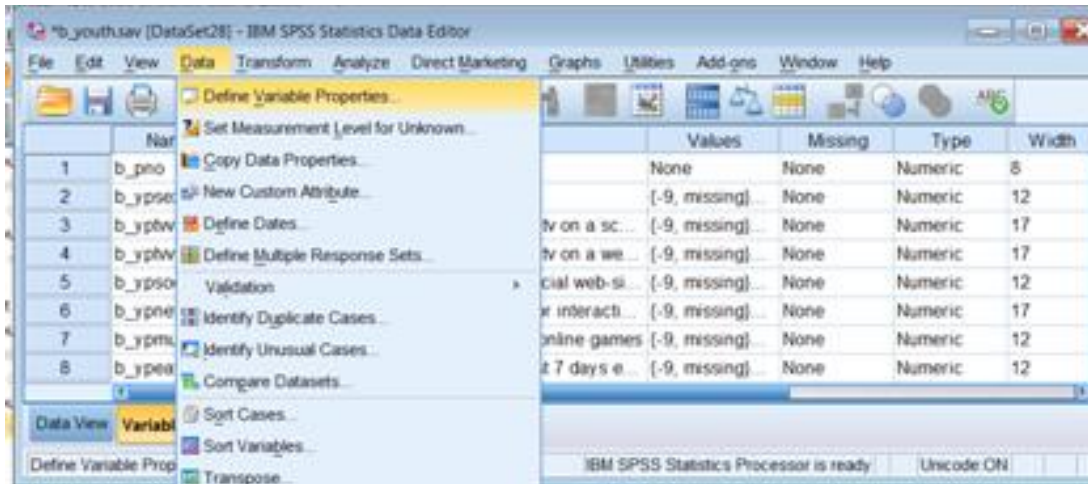

. . to get this:

Now do this six more times for the other variables.

2: The quick way

Data > Define Variable Properties

The display starts at the beginning of the file, so you need to scroll down to find your variables:
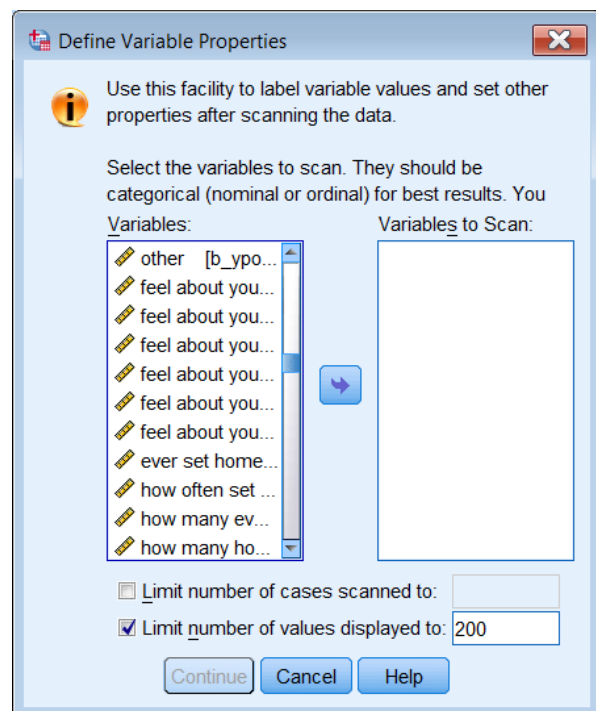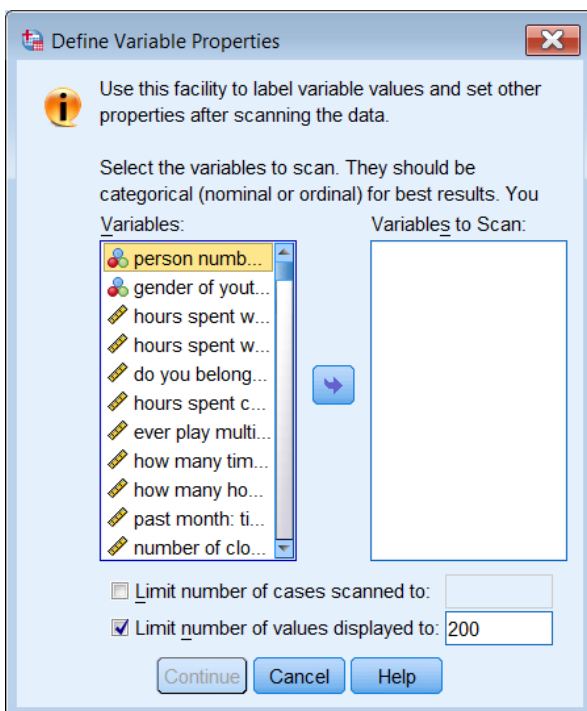
Click on the first one, then [SHIFT] click on the last one (if the variables are not contiguous in the file you have to use [CTRL] click on each one separately.

Click on the blue arrow to drag them across to the right hand pane:
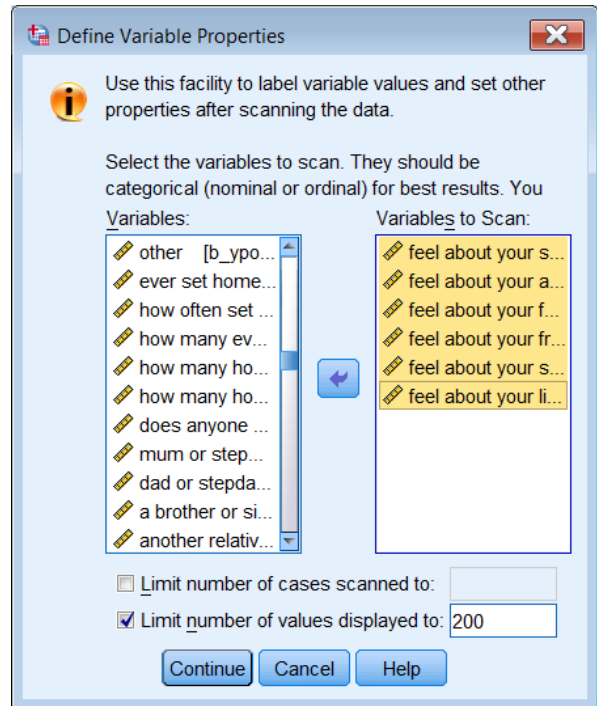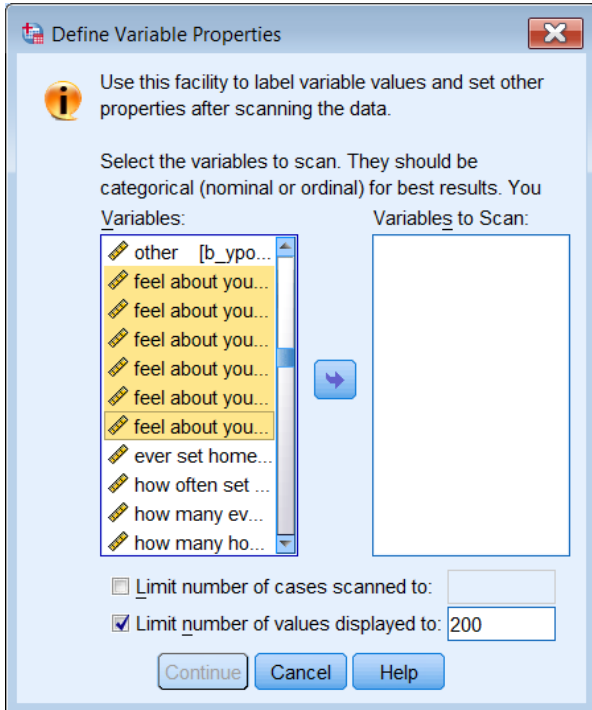
You can stretch the window out to see more of the variable names:

. . but it will spring back once you leave it:

Click on Continue :

Define Variable Properties

Scanned Variable List

Unl...	Me...	Role	Variable
☒	✐	↘	b yphsw
☒	✐	↘	b yphap
☒	✐	↘	b yphfm
☒	✐	↘	b yphfr
☒	✐	↘	b yphsc
☒	✐	↘	b yphlf

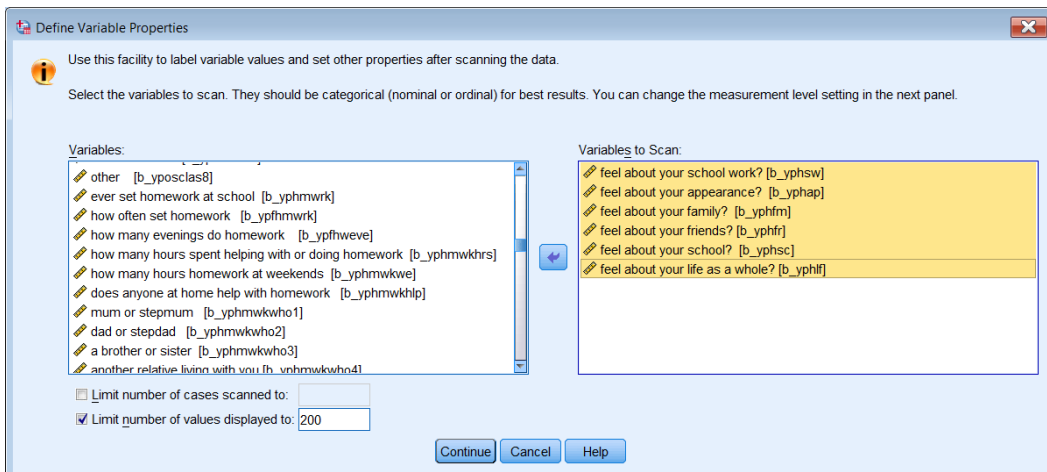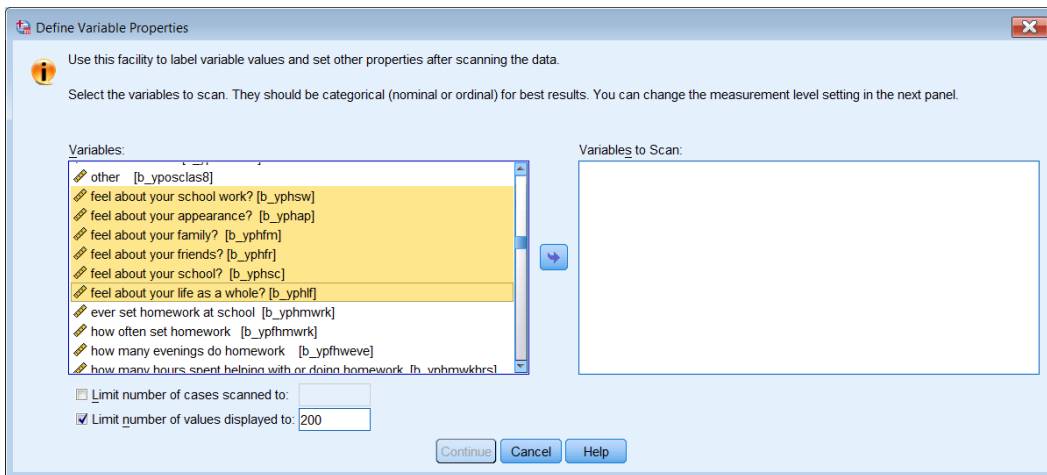Current Variable: b_yphsw   Label: feel about your school work?
Measurement Level: ✐ Scale   Suggest   Type: Numeric
Role: ↘ Input   Width: 16   Decimals: 0
Unlabeled values: 5   Attributes...

Value Label grid: 🛈 Enter or edit labels in the grid. You can enter additional values at the bottom.

	Changed	Missing	Count	Value	Label
1	☐	✔	0	-9	missing
2	☐	✔	0	-8	inapplicable
3	☐	✔	0	-2	refused
4	☐	✔	39	-1	don't know
5	☐	☐	1002	1	completely happy
6	☐	☐	1748	2	
7	☐	☐	1352	3	
8	☐	☐	568	4	
9	☐	☐	178	5	
10	☐	☐	61	6	
11	☐	☐	72	7	not at all happy

Cases scanned: 5020
Value list limit: 200

Copy Properties: From Another Variable...   To Other Variables...
Unlabeled Values: Automatic Labels

OK   Paste   Reset   Cancel   Help

This facility was designed to enter properties of variables, but I always use it for checking files once they've been saved, if they're mine, or downloaded, if they're someone else's. Just click on a variable in the left pane and all its properties will be displayed. You can use this to edit or add properties, but no syntax is saved, so I always prefer to use syntax for changing properties. The nice thing about it is you can see the counts, so it saves having to run **Frequencies** if all you want are raw counts.

In this particular example, you can skip down the left pane with the down arrow ▼ on the keyboard ▼and see that all variables have the same missing values (boxes are checked under **Missing** for the values -9, -8, -2, and -1) and the same value labels, but only the extremes are labelled.

Define Variable Properties

Scanned Variable List

Unl...	Me...	Role	Variable
☒	✐	↘	b yphsw
☒	✐	↘	b yphap
☒	✐	↘	b yphfm
☒	✐	↘	b yphfr
☒	✐	↘	b yphsc
☒	✐	↘	b yphlf

Current Variable: b_yphlf   Label: feel about your life as a whole?
Measurement Level: ✐ Scale   Suggest   Type: Numeric
Role: ↘ Input   Width: 16   Decimals: 0
Unlabeled values: 5   Attributes...

Value Label grid: 🛈 Enter or edit labels in the grid. You can enter additional values at the bottom.

	Changed	Missing	Count	Value	Label
1	☐	✔	0	-9	missing
2	☐	✔	0	-8	inapplicable
3	☐	✔	0	-2	refused
4	☐	✔	44	-1	don't know
5	☐	☐	1788	1	completely happy
6	☐	☐	1850	2	
7	☐	☐	830	3	
8	☐	☐	342	4	
9	☐	☐	98	5	
10	☐	☐	42	6	
11	☐	☐	26	7	not at all happy

Cases scanned: 5020
Value list limit: 200

Copy Properties: From Another Variable...   To Other Variables...
Unlabeled Values: Automatic Labels

OK   Paste   Reset   Cancel   Help

You can change the settings for SPSS so that dialog boxes display variable labels instead of variable names, especially if you have used question numbers at the beginning of labels. This can make files easier to navigate in the Data Editor Variable View and to find in Define Variable Properties. The files for Understanding Society do not have question numbers, so it's better to use names.
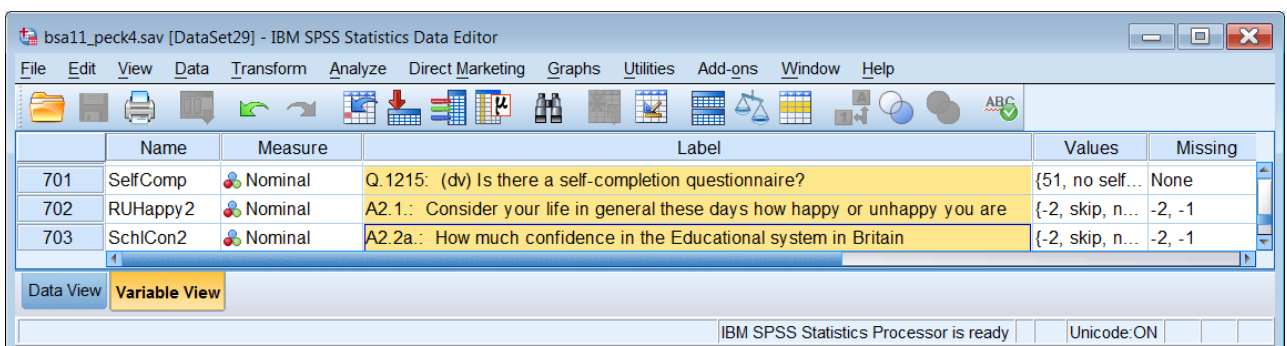
The files for the British Social Attitudes series also have mnemonic names, but they also have question numbers at the end of the labels. This example is from the 2011 survey:
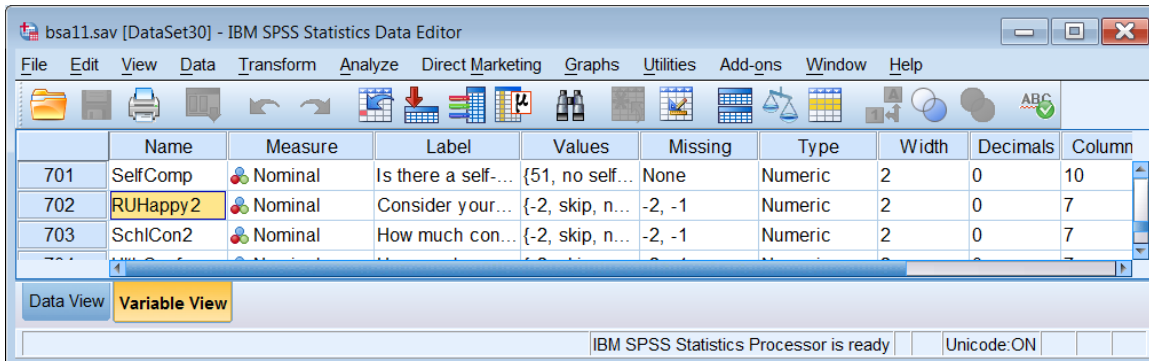

Whilst it's possible to navigate using the **Label** column (much widened):
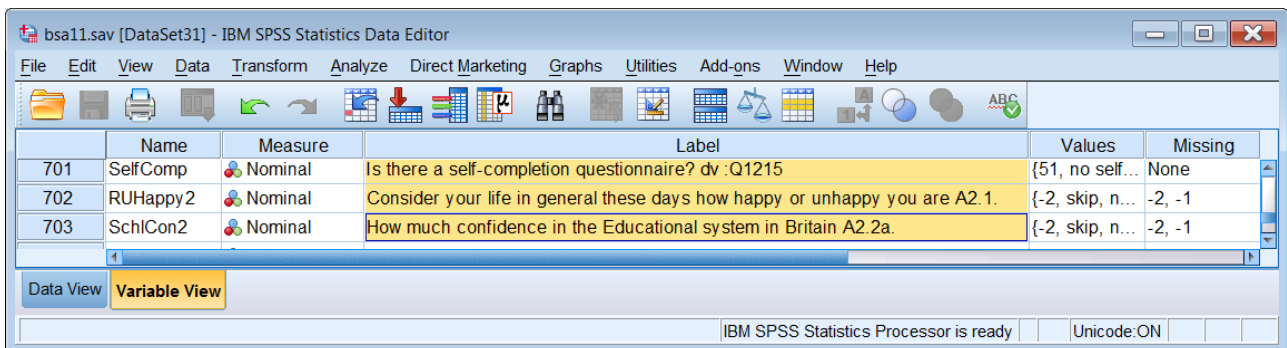
. . it's easier to have the question numbers at the beginning so they all line up vertically in the default Variable View :

In response to a query to the SPSS-X list, asking if there was a quick way to do this, rather than changing them manually, one by one, Jon Peck (Senior Software Engineer at IBM/SPSS) supplied a nice little Python program to do it for me (and other users). A bonus was to move any free standing "dv"s (derived variable) to the beginning of the label as well as the question numbers and to change any lower case first letters of the original labels to upper case:
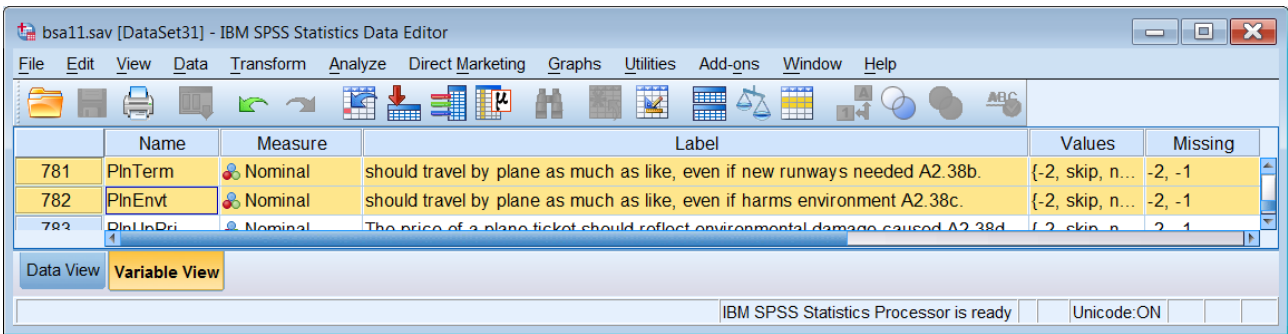
Before
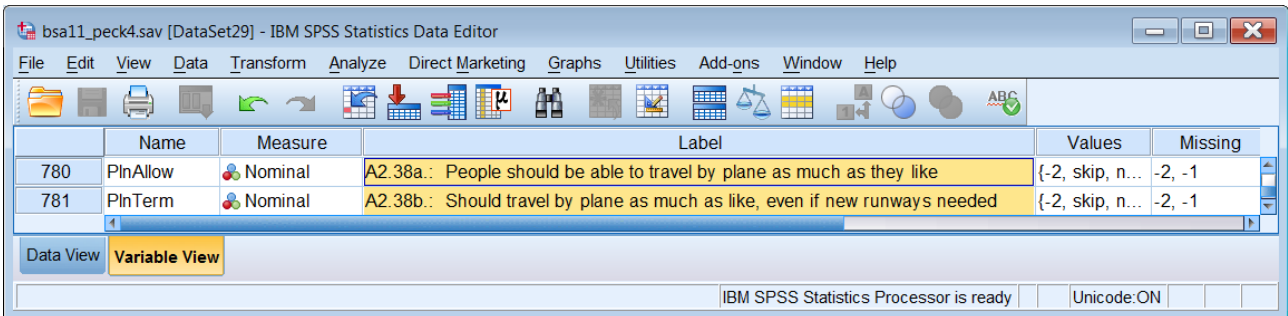
After

Variable view is easier to use, and the default Define Variable Properties displays the question numbers;