

1.4: Data is/are

Before we go any further, a note on the word data. While working as a data analyst for the state government, my colleagues and I had an argument on whether we say, data *is* or data *are* when finalising a report. This is an old debate that comes up every now and again among people who deal with data on a regular basis.

The American Psychological Association's (APA) style manual treats data as "plural" in its strict form, as the word datum is singular and the word data is plural.^[1] However, I take the modern approach of saying "the data is" and my reason is that *no one really uses the singular form anymore*.^[2]

There are other things that we should be focusing on though. Like, what is the nature of the data? Is it qualitative? Quantitative? How is it measured?

Data are composed of variables, where a variable reflects a unique measurement or quantity. In the following chapters, we will be talking about different types of data that we will come across.

Chapter attribution

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1. APA Style Blog. (2012). *Data is/are*. American Psychological Association. blog.apastyle.org/apastyle/2012/07/data-is-or-data-are.html ↩
 2. Data is or data are? (2010). *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2010/jul/16/data-plural-singular> ↩
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