

# compare — Compare two variables

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## Syntax

```
compare varname_1 varname_2 [if] [in]
```

*by* is allowed; see [\[D\]](#) *by*.

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## Description

`compare` reports the differences and similarities between *varname\_1* and *varname\_2*.

## Remarks and examples

[stata.com](#)

### ▶ Example 1

One of the more useful accountings made by `compare` is the pattern of missing values:

```
. use http://www.stata-press.com/data/r13/fullauto
(Automobile Models)
. compare rep77 rep78
```

	count	minimum	difference average	maximum
rep77<rep78	16	-3	-1.3125	-1
rep77=rep78	43			
rep77>rep78	7	1	1	1
jointly defined	66	-3	-.2121212	1
rep77 missing only	3			
jointly missing	5			
total	74			

We see that both `rep77` and `rep78` are missing in 5 observations and that `rep77` is also missing in 3 more observations.

◀

### □ Technical note

`compare` may be used with numeric variables, string variables, or both. When used with string variables, the summary of the differences (minimum, average, maximum) is not reported. When used with string and numeric variables, the breakdown by `<`, `=`, and `>` is also suppressed.

□

### Also see

[D] `cf` — Compare two datasets

[D] `codebook` — Describe data contents

[D] `inspect` — Display simple summary of data's attributes