

isid — Check for unique identifiers

[Description](#)
[Options](#)[Quick start](#)
[Remarks and examples](#)[Menu](#)
[Also see](#)[Syntax](#)

Description

`isid` checks whether the specified variables uniquely identify the observations.

Quick start

Verify that `idvar` uniquely identifies observations

```
isid idvar
```

Verify that `idvar` uniquely identifies observations within panels identified by `pvar`

```
isid idvar pvar
```

Same as above

```
isid pvar idvar
```

As above, and indicate that the data should be sorted by `pvar` and `idvar`

```
isid pvar idvar, sort
```

Verify that `idvar` uniquely identifies observations in `mydata.dta`

```
isid idvar using mydata.dta
```

Menu

Data > Data utilities > Check for unique identifiers

Syntax

```
isid varlist [using filename] [, sort missok]
```

Options

`sort` indicates that the dataset be sorted by *varlist*.

`missok` indicates that missing values are permitted in *varlist*.

Remarks and examples

► Example 1

Suppose that we want to check whether the mileage ratings (`mpg`) uniquely identify the observations in our `auto` dataset.

```
. use https://www.stata-press.com/data/r17/auto
(1978 automobile data)
. isid mpg
variable mpg does not uniquely identify the observations
r(459);
```

`isid` returns an error and reports that there are multiple observations with the same mileage rating. We can locate those observations manually:

```
. sort mpg
. by mpg: generate nobs = _N
. list make mpg if nobs >1, sepby(mpg)
```

	make	mpg
1.	Linc. Continental	12
2.	Linc. Mark V	12
<i>(output omitted)</i>		
68.	Mazda GLC	30
69.	Dodge Colt	30
72.	Datsun 210	35
73.	Subaru	35



► Example 2

`isid` is useful for checking a time-series panel dataset. For this type of dataset, we usually need two variables to identify the observations: one that labels the individual IDs and another that labels the periods. Before we set the data using `tsset`, we want to make sure that there are no duplicates with the same panel ID and time. Suppose that we have a dataset that records the yearly gross investment of 10 companies for 20 years. The panel and time variables are `company` and `year`.

```
. use https://www.stata-press.com/data/r17/grunfeld, clear
. isid company year
```

`isid` reports no error, so the two variables `company` and `year` uniquely identify the observations. Therefore, we should be able to `tsset` the data successfully:

```
. tsset company year
Panel variable: company (strongly balanced)
Time variable: year, 1935 to 1954
Delta: 1 year
```



□ Technical note

The `sort` option is a convenient shortcut, especially when combined with `using`. The command

```
. isid patient_id date using newdata, sort
```

is equivalent to

```
. preserve  
. use newdata, clear  
. sort patient_id date  
. isid patient_id date  
. save, replace  
. restore
```

□

Also see

- [D] [describe](#) — Describe data in memory or in file
- [D] [ds](#) — Compactly list variables with specified properties
- [D] [duplicates](#) — Report, tag, or drop duplicate observations
- [D] [lookfor](#) — Search for string in variable names and labels
- [D] [codebook](#) — Describe data contents
- [D] [inspect](#) — Display simple summary of data's attributes