

## lookfor — Search for string in variable names and labels

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## Description

`lookfor` helps you find variables by searching for *string* among all variable names and labels. If multiple *strings* are specified, `lookfor` will search for each of them separately. You may search for a phrase by enclosing *string* in double quotes.

## Quick start

Search variable names and variable labels for the phrase “my text” regardless of case

```
lookfor "my text"
```

Search for “word1” or “word2”

```
lookfor word1 word2
```

## Syntax

```
lookfor string [string [...]]
```

`collect` is allowed; see [\[U\] 11.1.10 Prefix commands](#).

## Remarks and examples

### ► Example 1

`lookfor` finds variables by searching for *string*, ignoring case, among the variable names and labels.

```
. use https://www.stata-press.com/data/r17/nlswork
(National Longitudinal Survey of Young Women, 14-24 years old in 1968)
. lookfor code
```

Variable name	Storage type	Display format	Value label	Variable label
idcode	int	%8.0g		NLS ID
ind_code	byte	%8.0g		Industry of employment
occ_code	byte	%8.0g		Occupation

Three variable names contain the word `code`.

```
. lookfor married
```

Variable name	Storage type	Display format	Value label	Variable label
msp	byte	%8.0g		1 if married, spouse present
nev_mar	byte	%8.0g		1 if never married

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Two variable labels contain the word married.

```
. lookfor gnp
```

Variable name	Storage type	Display format	Value label	Variable label
ln_wage	float	%9.0g		ln(wage/GNP deflator)

lookfor ignores case, so lookfor gnp found GNP in a variable label.

### ▷ Example 2

If multiple strings are specified, all variable names or labels containing any of the strings are listed.

```
. lookfor code married
```

Variable name	Storage type	Display format	Value label	Variable label
idcode	int	%8.0g		NLS ID
msp	byte	%8.0g		1 if married, spouse present
nev_mar	byte	%8.0g		1 if never married
ind_code	byte	%8.0g		Industry of employment
occ_code	byte	%8.0g		Occupation

To search for a phrase, enclose *string* in double quotes.

```
. lookfor "never married"
```

Variable name	Storage type	Display format	Value label	Variable label
nev_mar	byte	%8.0g		1 if never married

## Stored results

lookfor stores the following in `r()`:

Macros

```
r(varlist) the varlist of found variables
```

## References

- Cox, N. J. 2010a. [Speaking Stata: Finding variables](#). *Stata Journal* 10: 281–296.
- . 2010b. [Software Updates: Finding variables](#). *Stata Journal* 10: 691–692.
- . 2012. [Software Updates: Finding variables](#). *Stata Journal* 12: 167.

## Also see

[D] [describe](#) — Describe data in memory or in file

[D] [ds](#) — Compactly list variables with specified properties