order — Reorder variables in dataset

Description

`order` relocates *varlist* to a position depending on which option you specify. If no option is specified, `order` relocates *varlist* to the beginning of the dataset in the order in which the variables are specified.

Quick start

Move `v1` to the beginning of the dataset

```
order v1
```

Same as above, but instead move `v1` to the end of the dataset

```
order v1, last
```

Move `v3` before `v2`

```
order v3, before(v2)
```

Move `x` and `z` after `y`

```
order x z, after(y)
```

Alphabetize `y`, `x`, and `z`, and move them to the beginning of the dataset

```
order y x z, alphabetic
```

Alphabetize `x`, `y`, `z`, `v3`, `v2`, and `v1`, and sort numbers in sequential order

```
order x y z v*, sequential
```

Menu

Data > Data utilities > Change order of variables

Syntax

```
order varlist [ , options ]
```

options	Description
`first`	move *varlist* to beginning of dataset; the default
`last`	move *varlist* to end of dataset
`before(`*varname*`)`	move *varlist* before *varname*
`after(`*varname*`)`	move *varlist* after *varname*
`alphabetic`	alphabetize *varlist* and move it to beginning of dataset
`sequential`	alphabetize *varlist* keeping numbers sequential and move it to beginning of dataset

Options

`first` shifts *varlist* to the beginning of the dataset. This is the default.

`last` shifts *varlist* to the end of the dataset.

`before(`*varname*`)` shifts *varlist* before *varname*.

`after(`*varname*`)` shifts *varlist* after *varname*.

`alphabetic` alphabetizes *varlist* and moves it to the beginning of the dataset. For example, here is a varlist in `alphabetic` order: `a x7 x70 x8 x80 z`. If combined with another option, `alphabetic` just alphabetizes *varlist*, and the movement of *varlist* is controlled by the other option.

`sequential` alphabetizes *varlist*, keeping variables with the same ordered letters but with differing appended numbers in sequential order. *varlist* is moved to the beginning of the dataset. For example, here is a varlist in `sequential` order: `a x7 x8 x70 x80 z`.

Remarks and examples

▷ Example 1

When using `order`, you must specify a *varlist*, but you do not need to specify all the variables in the dataset. For example, we want to move the `make` and `mpg` variables to the front of the `auto` dataset.

```
. use https://www.stata-press.com/data/r19/auto4
(1978 automobile data)
. describe
Contains data from https://www.stata-press.com/data/r19/auto4.dta
 Observations:            74                  1978 automobile data
    Variables:             6                  6 Apr 2024 00:20
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------
Variable      Storage   Display    Value
    name         type    format    label      Variable label
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------
price           int     %8.0gc                Price
weight          int     %8.0gc                Weight (lbs.)
mpg             byte    %8.0g                 Mileage (mpg)
make            str17   %-17s                 Make and model
length          int     %8.0g                 Length (in.)
rep78           byte    %8.0g                 Repair record 1978
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------
Sorted by:
. order make mpg
. describe
Contains data from https://www.stata-press.com/data/r19/auto4.dta
 Observations:            74                  1978 automobile data
    Variables:             6                  6 Apr 2024 00:20
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------
Variable      Storage   Display    Value
    name         type    format    label      Variable label
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------
make            str17   %-17s                 Make and model
mpg             byte    %8.0g                 Mileage (mpg)
price           int     %8.0gc                Price
weight          int     %8.0gc                Weight (lbs.)
length          int     %8.0g                 Length (in.)
rep78           byte    %8.0g                 Repair record 1978
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------
Sorted by:
```

We now want `length` to be the last variable in our dataset, so we could type `order make mpg price weight rep78 length`, but it would be easier to use the `last` option:

```
. order length, last
. describe
Contains data from https://www.stata-press.com/data/r19/auto4.dta
 Observations:            74                  1978 automobile data
    Variables:             6                  6 Apr 2024 00:20
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------
Variable      Storage   Display    Value
    name         type    format    label      Variable label
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------
make            str17   %-17s                 Make and model
mpg             byte    %8.0g                 Mileage (mpg)
price           int     %8.0gc                Price
weight          int     %8.0gc                Weight (lbs.)
rep78           byte    %8.0g                 Repair record 1978
length          int     %8.0g                 Length (in.)
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------
Sorted by:
```

We now change our mind and decide that we prefer that the variables be alphabetized.

```
. order _all, alphabetic
. describe
Contains data from https://www.stata-press.com/data/r19/auto4.dta
 Observations:            74                  1978 automobile data
    Variables:             6                  6 Apr 2024 00:20
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------
Variable      Storage   Display    Value
    name         type    format    label      Variable label
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------
length          int     %8.0g                 Length (in.)
make            str17   %-17s                 Make and model
mpg             byte    %8.0g                 Mileage (mpg)
price           int     %8.0gc                Price
rep78           byte    %8.0g                 Repair record 1978
weight          int     %8.0gc                Weight (lbs.)
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------
Sorted by:
```

◁

❑ Technical note

If your data contain variables named `year1`, `year2`, …, `year19`, `year20`, specify the `sequential` option to obtain this ordering. If you specify the `alphabetic` option, `year10` will appear between `year1` and `year11`.

❑

Also see

[D] **describe** — Describe data in memory or in a file

[D] **ds** — Compactly list variables with specified properties

[D] **edit** — Browse or edit data with Data Editor

[D] **rename** — Rename variable

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