

- A variable is something that varies.
- Another way to think of this is that a variable is something that you can divide into parts. The parts of a variable are often referred to as levels when there are not many of them.
- For example, gender can be considered as a variable with two levels: male and female.
- If you had an experiment where you were comparing large and small mice, for example, mice would be a variable with two levels.
- Sometimes variables can be divided into many parts, and these parts are usually not referred to as levels, but as scores or something similar.
- For example, weight given as pounds is a variable with many potential scores or parts.
- Sometimes a variable can be broken into parts in different ways depending on how it is defined or measured in an experiment. For example, test grade can be considered as a variable with five levels: A, B, C, D, & F.
- It could also be a variable with many more levels in it that could be considered as a numerical score from 0 to 100, depending on the data that an experimenter had available and chose to use for a given experiment.
- There are some fundamental differences between variables that are divided into just a few categories, versus those that consist of a linear string of numbers, and we will take this up in the module that covers levels of measurement.
- For now it is just important to recognize that a variable must have at least two parts.
- The end.