

DATA Step

Can SAS identify the last-created dataset?

Macro Variable

It is possible to omit the DATA= option from a PROC statement, and the system will then use the last-created dataset for processing.

The stored value can be seen in the SYSLAST automatic macro variable; which has a default value of _NULL_ at the start of a new session.

The SYSLAST variable is one of those automatic variables whose value can be altered - simply submit code which generates a dataset, and the value will be updated.

Consider the code (submitted at the start of a new session):

```
%put &=syslast ;

data over12 ;
  set sashelp.class ;
  where age > 12 ;
run ;

%put &=syslast ;

proc print ;
run ;
```

which generates values in the LOG as follows:

```
SYSLAST=_NULL_
SYSLAST=WORK.OVER12
```

and produces a listing report.

Global System Option

This is not the only source of the last-created dataset, however. There is also a global system option _LAST_= which can specify any temporary, or permanent dataset. This over-rides the default value, and remains in force until another dataset is created.

Amending the code, in a new session:

DATA Step

```
options _last_=sashelp.class ;
```

```
proc print ;  
run ;
```

```
data over12 ;  
    set sashelp.class ;  
    where age > 12 ;  
run ;
```

```
proc print ;  
run ;
```

Listing reports of each of the SASHELP.CLASS and WORK.OVER12 datasets are produced.

Unique solution ID: #1053

Author: Alan D Rudland

Last update: 2020-01-10 13:01