

# APA Format: Headings



This handout is based on the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, Seventh Edition, 2019.

Headings are used to signal the organization and structure of the paper. The appearance of the heading changes depending on the number of structural levels within the paper.

Headings used in your paper are dictated by the number of content levels in the paper. APA has 5 levels of headings (see below), ranging from Level 1 major sections to lower-level subsections. The heading structure begins with Level 1 and then continues depending on the number and division of subsections. (See examples.)

Observe the following conventions when using headings:

- Use the same heading level for sections of the same importance.
- Begin a new level only if it will have two or more headings.
- Do **not** use introduction as a heading. Instead repeat the title of your paper in boldface, and center it.
- Do **not** label headings with numbers or letters.
- Maintain the same font size used in the paper.
- **Maintain double-spacing** before and after Level 1, 2, and 3 headings; the extra spacing does not apply with Level 4 and 5 headings. (For these last levels, the text continues on the same line as the heading.)

## APA Headings

Level of Heading	Format
1	<b>Centered, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading</b>
2	<b>Flush Left, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading</b>
3	<b><i>Flush Left, Boldface, Italicized, Upper and Lowercase Heading</i></b>
4	<b>Indented, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading Ending with a Period.</b> Text continues.
5	<b><i>Indented, Boldface, Italicized, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading Ending with a Period.</i></b> Text continues.

**Paper with two levels:**  
Use Levels 1 and 2.

<b>Method</b> (Level 1)
<b>Procedures</b> (Level 2)
<b>Sample</b> (Level 2)
<b>Results</b> (Level 1)
<b>Discussion</b> (Level 1)
<b>Limitations of the Study</b> (Level 2)
<b>Application of the Results</b> (Level 2)
<b>Conclusions</b> (Level 1)

**Paper with three levels:**  
Use Levels 1, 2, and 3.

<b>Method</b> (Level 1)
<b>Measures</b> (Level 2)
<i>Perceived Control</i> (Level 3)
<i>Autonomy</i> (Level 3)
<i>Behavior and Emotions</i> (Level 3)
<b>Results</b> (Level 1)
<b>Discussion</b> (Level 1)
<b>Limitations of the Study</b> (Level 2)
<b>Application of the Results</b> (Level 2)
<b>Conclusions and Future Prospects</b> (Level 2)

**Paper with four levels:**  
Use Levels 1, 2, 3, and 4.

<b>Method</b> (Level 1)
<b>Procedures</b> (Level 2)
<i>Perceived Narcissism</i> (Level 3)
<i>Methods of Assessment</i> (Level 3)
<b>Self-Assessment Approaches.</b> Text continues here. (Level 4)
<b>Group-Assessment Approaches.</b> Text continues here. (Level 4)
<b>Results</b> (Level 1)
<b>Discussion</b> (Level 1)
<b>Effects of Self-Perceived Narcissism</b> (Level 2)
<b>Effects of Group-Perceived Narcissism</b> (Level 2)
<b>Limitations of the Study</b> (Level 2)
<b>Applications of the Results</b> (Level 2)
<b>Summary and Concluding Discussion</b> (Level 1)