APA STYLE

7th Edition

Heading Levels Template: Professional Paper

The following template demonstrates how to use heading levels in an APA Style professional paper.

Please note that the page numbers in this template are part of the template; that is, the text of a professional paper should start on page 3, after the title page and abstract.

Title of Paper

Begin your paper with the paper title at the top of the first page of text. The paper title acts as a de facto Level 1 heading: It is centered and in bold title case font. Do not use the heading "Introduction"; text at the beginning of the paper is assumed to be the introduction.

APA Style headings have five possible levels. Each main section starts with the highest level of heading, even if one section has fewer levels of subheading than another section. For example, in a paper with Level 1 Method, Results, and Discussion headings, the Method and Results sections may each have two levels of subheading (Levels 2 and 3), and the Discussion section may have only one level of subheading (Level 2).

Level 2 Heading in the Introduction

Use Level 2 headings for any headings within the introduction, Level 3 for subsections of any Level 2 headings, and so on.

Level 2 Heading in the Introduction

Avoid having only one subsection heading within a section, just like in an outline. Use at least two subsection headings within a section or use no subsection headings at all (e.g., in an outline, a section numbered with a Roman numeral would be divided into either a minimum of A and B subsections or no subsections; an A subsection would not stand alone).

Level 1 Heading for First Main Section After the Introduction

After the introduction (regardless of whether it includes headings), use a Level 1 heading for the next main section of the paper (e.g., Method).

Level 2 Heading

Use Level 2 headings for subsections of Level 1 headings. Do not label headings with numbers or letters.

Level 2 Heading

All topics of equal importance should have the same level of heading. For example, in a multiexperiment paper, the headings for the Method and Results sections for Experiment 1 should be the same level as the headings for the Method and Results sections for Experiment 2, with parallel wording. In a single-experiment paper, the Method, Results, and Discussion

sections should all have the same heading level.

Level 3 Heading

Use Level 3 headings for subsections of Level 2 headings. Do not use abbreviations in headings unless they already defined in the text.

Level 3 Heading

The number of levels of heading needed for a paper depends on its length and complexity. Three levels of heading is average.

Level 4 Heading. Use Level 4 headings for subsections of Level 3 headings. Use only the number of headings necessary to differentiate distinct sections in your paper. Short student papers may not require any headings.

Level 4 Heading. It is not necessary to add blank lines before or after headings, even if a heading falls at the end of a page. Do not add extra spacing between paragraphs.

Level 5 Heading. Use Level 5 headings for subsections of Level 4 headings. In the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.), Table 2.3 shows how to format each level of heading, Figure 2.4 demonstrates the use of headings in the introduction, and Figure 2.5 lists all the headings used in a sample paper in the correct format. In the *Concise Guide to APA Style* (7th ed.), this content is found in Table 1.3, Figure 1.3, and Figure 1.4, respectively.

Level 5 Heading. The sample papers at the end of Chapter 2 in the *Publication Manual* and Chapter 1 in the *Concise Guide* show the use of headings in context. Additional sample papers can be found on the APA Style website (https://apastyle.apa.org).

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More information on APA Style can be found in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.) and the *Concise Guide to APA Style* (7th ed.).

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