**APA Headings**

**What are Headings?**

Headings “in a document identify the topic or purpose of the content within in each section. Headings help readers become familiar with how a paper’s content is organized,…concise headings help readers anticipate key points and track the development of your argument” (47).

* Headings must be clearly distinguishable from text in the body of the paper. APA provides precise guidelines on how to do this for five levels (see table below).
* Headings will always “follow the same top-down progression”. Headings should always begin with Level 1, and further sections will be formatted in the next level number. (47)
* There is no minimum or maximum number of headings in an APA paper. Such will be determined by the aim of the paper and its complexity. Short student papers may not need headings. (48)
* *Note:* Do not label a paper’s “Introduction” as a heading when it is the first section. (47)
* *Note 2:* Headings should not be labelled using numbers or letters e.g. “**1.1 Methods**”

**Format for Five Levels of Headings in APA**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Level of Heading** | **Format** |
| **1** | **Centered, Bold, Title Case Heading**  Text begins with a new paragraph. |
| **2** | **Flush Left, Bold, Title Case Heading**  Text begins as a new paragraph. |
| **3** | ***Flush Left, Bold Italic, Title Case Heading***  Text begins as a new paragraph. |
| **4** | **Indented, Bold, Title Case Heading, Ending With a Period.**Text begins on same line and continues as a regular paragraph. |
| **5** | ***Indented, Bold Italic, Title Case Heading, Ending With a Period.***Text begins on the same line and continues as a regular paragraph. |

Example:

**Method** [Level 1]

**Site of Study** [Level 2]

**Participant Population** [Level 2]

***Teachers*** [Level 3]

**Demographics.** [Level 4]

**Incidentals.** [Level 4]

***Students*** [Level 3]

**Demographics.** [Level 4]

**Incidentals.** [Level 4]

The information for this handout was compiled from the following source:

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). http://doi.org/10.1037/0000165-000