

## **Write Headings (APA)**

For a short piece of writing, you will need at least one Level 1 heading as the title of your work. This goes on page 2 of your document (just after the Cover page).

### **What Headings Do I Need?**

For a longer assessment, you will need a Level 1 heading for each major component. Think of Level 1 headings, which are in bold type and centred, as the backbone of your work. For a research report, your Level 1 headings will include (but not be limited to): “Background,” “Literature Review,” “Methodology,” “Methods,” “Findings,” and “Conclusion” (see the related section under “Understand Different Genres” in the *Write Well* materials).

For an essay, your Level 1 headings will mostly come from you and will reflect the unique wording of your topic. You will include your essay title (e.g. “Should the Culling of Sharks be Banned?”) and then main sections that reflect the structure of your argument (e.g. “Background,” “Advantages of Culling,” “Disadvantages of Culling,” and “Conclusion”). Your Level 1 headings capture your essay outline.

### **Does the Introduction Get a Heading?**

Your work will always have an introductory paragraph or two but, if you are following the APA rules, do not give this section a heading (American Psychological Association, 2020, 2.27, p. 47). Some Business reports, however, would include a heading for the introduction (Turner et al., 2011, p. 180), so ask your lecturer which format you should follow.

### **How Many Headings Should I Have?**

There is no set number of headings as this depends on how long your work is and what you need to cover. It is possible to write a whole paper with only Level 1 headings. Level 2 headings are only needed when you have enough information (usually several paragraphs) to warrant dividing your work into subsections. To indicate these subsections, APA does not use numbers or letters. Business reports follow a different style guide, though, and can include numbers.

### Should I Miss a Line After Each Heading?

No, you should not add blank lines between your headings and the body of the text; everything is just double-spaced (American Psychological Association, 2020, 2.21, p. 45).

### How Many Levels of Headings Are There?

There are five levels of headings in APA formatting (American Psychological Association, 2020, 2.27, p. 47). However, as mentioned before, you do not need to use all five.

### How Do I Express the Different Levels of Headings?

There are specific formatting rules for each of the five levels (American Psychological Association, 2020, 2.27, pp. 47–48). Streefkerk (2022), modifying Table 2.3 from the APA Manual (2020, 2.27, p. 48), illustrates these below.

Level	APA Heading Format (7th ed.)
1	<b>Centered, Bold, Title Case</b> Text begins on a new line (indent first line).
2	<b>Left-aligned, Bold, Title Case</b> Text begins on a new line (indent first line).
3	<b>Left-aligned, Bold, Italic, Title Case</b> Text begins on a new line (indent first line).
4	<b>Indented, Bold, Title Case, Period.</b> Text begins on the same line.
5	<b>Indented, Bold, Italic, Title Case, Period.</b> Text begins on the same line.

### What Is Title Case?

Title case relates to capitalisation rules. In other words, it answers the question: Which words in the heading get a capital letter? Have a look at the following table.

<b>Title Case in APA Headings: Capitalisation Rules</b> (American Psychological Association, 2020, 6.17, p. 167)	
<b>Capitalise</b>	<b>Do not capitalise</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• almost every word</li> <li>• “the first word of a subtitle”</li> <li>• “the first word after a colon”</li> <li>• prepositions longer than four letters (e.g. “with,” “under,” “between”)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• short conjunctions (e.g. “and,” “but,” “for”) unless they are the first word</li> <li>• articles (i.e. “a,” “an,” “the) unless they are after a colon or are the first word</li> <li>• prepositions less than four letters (e.g. “at,” “of,” “to”) unless they are after a colon or are the first word</li> </ul>

### An Example

This is how Chapter 3 of my unpublished master’s thesis would look using three different levels of APA headings (Dench, 2003, pp. 21–37):

• <b>Level 1 heading</b>	• <b>Level 2 heading</b>	• <i>Level 3 heading</i>
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<p><b>Methodology</b></p> <p><b>Stage One: Eliciting and Compiling a Working Bank of Filipino Gestures</b></p> <p><i>The Informants</i></p> <p><i>The Instruments</i></p> <p><i>Presenting the Data</i></p> <p><b>Stage Two: Selecting and Videotaping a Limited Number of Gestures</b></p> <p><b>Stage Three: Discovering the Meaning of the Selected Gestures</b></p> <p><i>The Informants</i></p> <p><i>The Instruments</i></p> <p><i>Presenting the Data</i></p> <p><b>Method of Analysis</b></p> <p><b>Limitations of the Research</b></p>
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## References

- American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). Author.
- Dench, A. M. (2003). *Kinesics and the teaching of Tagalog to missionaries in the Philippines: Investigating emblematic gestures* (Unpublished master's thesis). Curtin University of Technology, Perth, Western Australia.
- Streefkerk, R. (2022, June 7). *APA headings and subheadings: With sample paper*. <https://www.scribbr.com/apa-style/apa-headings/>
- Turner, K., Ireland, L., Krenus, B., & Pointon, L. (2019). *Essential academic skills*. Oxford University Press.