

APA (6th Edition) Odds & Ends: The Running Head, Heading Levels, Missing Information, and Hanging Indent Format

Some elements of APA style may require knowledge beyond what can easily be found in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA), 6th edition (2010a) or on APAStyle.org. For example, many students know that APA papers include a running head, but they might not know how to create a running head so that the title is aligned with the left margin while the page number is aligned with the right margin on the same line. This handout provides supplemental instruction on the following lesser-known citation and formatting aspects of APA style:

- Creating the running head in Microsoft Word and Google Docs
- Formatting subheadings
- Including in-text citations
- Formatting the references section, including some uncertainties about source information.

The Running Head

According to the APA manual, “the running head is an abbreviated title that is printed at the top of the pages of a manuscript” and “should be a maximum of 50 characters, counting letters, punctuation, and spaces between words. It should appear flush left in all uppercase letters at the top of the title page and all subsequent pages” (p. 229). On the title page alone, the label “Running head:” should appear to the left of the running head itself. On all pages, including the title page, page numbers should be flush right on the same line as the running head. The running head at the top of this document follows APA 6th edition guidelines and was created using the following steps:

In Microsoft Word

1. Double-click in the header area of your document’s first page to open the *Header & Footer Tools* design tab.
2. Select the option labeled *Different First Page*.
3. Click on *Page Number*. Mouse over *Top of Page*, and click the option that shows the page number flush right.
4. Making sure that the cursor is located against the left side of the page number, type the words “Running head” followed by a colon and, in all caps, your paper’s (possibly abbreviated) title. (Refer to the top of this handout for an example.)
5. With the cursor still located against the left side of the page number, press the *Tab* button on the keyboard until the running head is flush left.
6. Highlight the entire contents of the header area, including the page number. Click the Home tab, and change the font size and face to match that used in the rest of the document.
7. Scroll to the second page or any subsequent page in your document, and repeat steps 3 through 6, making sure to omit the label “Running head:” as this label should appear only on your first page.

In Google Docs

1. Double-click in the header area on your Google doc’s first page.
2. At the bottom of the header field, check the box next to *Different first page header/footer*.

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3. You may need to press *Enter* twice to bring the cursor down a half-inch from the top of the page.
4. Insert your page number by clicking the *Insert* tab, selecting page number, and choosing the top left option. The page number will appear on your first page.
5. Now place the cursor on the left side of the page number, and type “Running head” followed by a colon and, in all caps, your paper’s (possibly abbreviated) title. (Note that “Running head” is typed in sentence case, not in all caps. Refer to the top of this handout for an example.)
6. With the cursor between your title and the page number, press *Tab* enough times to move the number to the right margin. You may need to use the space bar as well to avoid exceeding the end of the line.
7. Highlight the entire contents of the header area, including the page number, and change the font size and face to match that used in the rest of the document.
8. Scroll to the second page in your document, and repeat steps 4 through 8, making sure to omit the label “Running head:” as this label should appear on your first page only. (If a page number already appears in the header area on the second page when you scroll down, place the cursor on the left side of the number, press backspace until the cursor and number align with the left margin, and then repeat steps 5 through 8.)

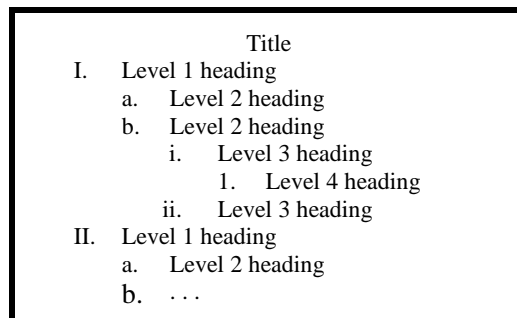
Heading Level Formats

The following table (APA, 2010a, p. 62) details the format for each heading:

Level of heading	Format
1	Centered, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading^a
2	Flush Left, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading
3	Indented, boldface, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period.^b
4	<i>Indented, boldface, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period.</i>
5	<i>Indented, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period.</i>

^a This type of capitalization is also referred to as *title case*. ^b In a *lowercase paragraph heading*, the first letter of the first word is uppercase and the remaining words are lowercase.

To clearly understand heading levels, it may be helpful to think of them as levels of an outline for your paper: After your title, the first level 1 heading of your paper might be “Introduction” or “Literature Review.” Level 2 headings precede sections within level 1, level 3 headings precede sections within level 2, and so on.



Basic In-Text Citation Styles
(Table 6.1 in the APA Manual [2010a])

Citations in the text can be arranged in a variety of ways. Basically, an in-text citation includes the source’s author and year of publication, accompanied by a page number if specific information from within the source is summarized or quoted. These elements are ordered with the source’s publication year immediately following the author’s name, whether one or both are enclosed in parentheses. The page number, if needed, appears in parentheses after the quoted or summarized information. The following table (APA, 2010a, p. 177) details the formats for various in-text citations:

Table 6.1 Basic Citation Styles				
Type of citation	First citation in text	Subsequent citations in text	Parenthetical format, first citation in text	Parenthetical format, subsequent citations in text
One work by one author	Walker (2007)	Walker (2007)	(Walker, 2007)	(Walker, 2007)
One work by two authors	Walker and Allen (2004)	Walker and Allen (2004)	(Walker & Allen, 2004)	(Walker & Allen, 2004)
One work by three authors	Bradley, Ramirez, and Soo (1999)	Bradley et al. (1999)	(Bradley, Ramirez, & Soo, 1999)	(Bradley et al., 1999)
One work by four authors	Bradley, Ramirez, Soo, and Walsh (2006)	Bradley et al. (2006)	(Bradley, Ramirez, Soo, & Walsh, 2006)	(Bradley et al., 2006)
One work by five authors	Walker, Allen, Bradley, Ramirez, and Soo (2008)	Walker et al. (2008)	(Walker, Allen, Bradley, Ramirez, & Soo, 2008)	(Walker et al., 2008)
One work by six or more authors	Wasserstein et al. (2005)	Wasserstein et al. (2005)	(Wasserstein et al., 2005)	(Wasserstein et al., 2005)
Groups (readily identified through abbreviation) as authors	National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH, 2003)	NIMH (2003)	(National Institute of Mental Health [NIMH], 2003)	(NIMH, 2003)
Groups (no abbreviation) as authors	University of Pittsburgh (2005)	University of Pittsburgh (2005)	(University of Pittsburgh, 2005)	(University of Pittsburgh, 2005)

Reference List Format

Entries in your references section should be alphabetized by author last name and arranged using hanging indentation. Follow these steps to format your references section.

1. Place the cursor at the end of your document, and perform a “hard return” by typing Ctrl + Enter. This adds a new page to your document.
2. On the first line, center the cursor, and type “References.”
3. Begin your entries on the next line. Consult APA sources to format your entries correctly:
 - a. Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th Edition (APA, 2010a)
 - b. APAStyle.org Frequently Asked Questions (APA, 2013a)
 - c. APAStyle.org APA Basics Tutorial (APA, 2013b)
 - d. The Purdue OWL APA Formatting and Style Guide (2013) is also accurate and helpful.
4. When you are ready to format the list in hanging indentation, highlight all of your entries together, and right-click. Select *Paragraph*.
5. In the *Paragraph* window, under *Indentation*, click the dropdown menu under *Special*, and select *Hanging*. Click *OK* to apply the change and return to your paper.

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What if an example format cannot be found for a source?

APAStyle.org offers some reference examples not found in the APA manual—YouTube videos and articles on websites, for example. But they also offer this guidance: “When you cannot find the example reference you need in the [APA manual], choose the example that is most like your source and follow that format. Sometimes you will need to combine elements of more than one reference format” (APA, 2013a).

What if information for an online source cannot be found?

Missing information is one indicator that a source may not be trustworthy. So you should first evaluate the source for accuracy. Also, consider that you may need to justify the use of such a source in your paper. Finally, if you need to provide citation information for a source that is missing reference elements, use the guidelines illustrated on the following chart (APA, 2010b):

How to Cite Something You Found on a Website in APA Style: What to Do When Information is Missing

What’s missing?	Solution	Reference template			
		Position A	Position B	Position C	Position D
Nothing; I’ve got all the pieces	n/a	Author, A.	(date).	Title of document [Format].	Retrieved from http://URL
Author is missing	Substitute title for the author	Title of document [Format].	(date).	Retrieved from http://URL	
Date is missing	Use “n.d.” for <i>no date</i>	Author, A.	(n.d.).	Title of document [Format].	Retrieved from http://URL
Title is missing	Describe the document inside square brackets	Author, A.	(date).	[Description of document].	Retrieved from http://URL
Author and date are both missing	Combine author and date methods	Title of document [Format].	(n.d.).	Retrieved from http://URL	
Author and title are both missing	Combine author and title methods	[Description of document].	(date).	Retrieved from http://URL	
Date and title are both missing	Combine date and title methods	Author, A.	(n.d.).	[Description of document].	Retrieved from http://URL
Author, date, and title are all missing	Combine all three methods	[Description of document].	(n.d.).	Retrieved from http://URL	

Note. The basic reference template is made up of four pieces: author, date, title (with format in brackets if necessary), and source (the URL). When one or more of these pieces is missing, use the method shown above to adapt the template. In-text citations use the pieces from Position A and Position B (usually the author and date, but if there’s no author, then the title and date—more details available at <http://www.apastyle.org/learn/faqs/web-page-no-author.aspx>).

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References

American Psychological Association (2010a). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association*, 6th Edition. Washington D.C.: APA.

American Psychological Association (2010b). *How to cite something you found on a Website in APA style: What to do when information is missing*. Retrieved from <http://blog.apastyle.org/apastyle/2010/11/how-to-cite-something-you-found-on-a-website-in-apa-style.html>

American Psychological Association (2013a). *APA FAQ*. Retrieved from <http://www.apastyle.org/learn/faqs/index.aspx>

American Psychological Association (2013b). *APA Basics Tutorial*. Retrieved from <http://www.apastyle.org/learn/tutorials/basics-tutorial.aspx>

Purdue OWL (2013). *APA formatting and style guide*. Retrieved from <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

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