3.03 Levels of Heading

The heading style recommended by APA consists of five possible formatting arrangements, according to the number of levels of subordination. Each heading level is numbered (see Table 3.1).

Regardless of the number of levels of subheading within a section, the heading structure for all sections follows the same top-down progression. Each section starts with the highest level of heading, even if one section may have fewer levels of subheading than another section. For example, the Method and Results sections of a paper may each have two levels of subheading, and the Discussion section may have only one level of subheading. There would then be three levels of heading for the paper overall: the section headings (Method, Results, and Discussion) and the two levels of subheading, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of heading</th>
<th>Format</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Centered, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Flush Left, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Indented, boldface, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period. b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Indented, boldface, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Indented, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Method

Sample and Participant Selection
Assessments and Measures
O-sort measures of inhibition and aggressiveness.
Life History Calendar.

Results

Outcome of Inhibited Children at 23 Years
Personality and self-esteem.
Social network.
Life history and IQ.

Outcome of Aggressive Children at 23 Years

Discussion

Inhibited Children: Delayed Social Transitions During Emerging Adulthood
Inhibited Children: Weak Evidence for Internalizing Difficulties
Limitations of the Present Study
Conclusions and Future Prospects

The introduction to a manuscript does not carry a heading that labels it as the introduction. (The first part of a manuscript is assumed to be the introduction.)

Do not label headings with numbers or letters. (The sections and headings in the Publication Manual are numbered only to permit indexing and cross-referencing.) The number of levels of heading needed for your article will depend on its length and complexity. If only one level of heading is needed, use Level 1; for a paper with two levels of heading, use Levels 1 and 2; if three levels are needed, use Levels 1, 2, and 3; and so forth.