The Writing Center
METHODIST UNIVERSITY

APA FORMAT: RUNNING HEAD & SECTION HEADINGS

APA: RUNNING HEAD

The following instructions are for documents in Microsoft Word 2007 and 2010:
1. Click Insert.
2. Click Header. This will prompt a dropdown window of header formats. Click on the first one (Blank).
3. Next, mark the box that says "Different First Page" under Options in the header toolbar.
4. Go to the top left corner of the toolbar and click on Page Number (There is an icon of a piece of paper with a # on it above the words.); click on this icon. Again, a dropdown window of formats will appear. Click on the first option, where the page number appears on the left side of the page.
5. Now, align your cursor in front of the number 1. Type the words Running head, followed by a colon, and then type the title of your paper in all caps. See top of handout for example.
6. Next, hit tab twice, moving the number 1 to the right side of the page, while the text remains on the left.
7. Finally, move to the second page of your paper. You'll notice that a text prompt is present in the header of page 2 (it says [Type text]); if you've closed the header toolbar, double click on the words [Type text], thus making the header toolbar available again. If you have not closed out of the header toolbar, simply scroll to the second page of your paper.
8. Just like before, go to the top left corner of the toolbar and click on Page Number. Select the format where the number is on the left side of the page. Now, align your cursor in front of the number 2 and type the title of your paper in all caps. Omit the words "Running head." Once you've typed the title of your paper, hit the tab key twice, moving the number 2 to the right side of the page, while the text remains on the left.

Your second page will look like this:

THIS IS THE TITLE OF MY PAPER   2

9. Now every page except for the first page will simply have the title and page number, without the words "Running head."

Note: If your paper has a lengthy title, you should abbreviate your title in your running head (50 characters or fewer, including spaces).

APA: SECTION HEADINGS

Headings and sub-headings can be helpful to both the reader and the author, especially in long papers. They can serve a number of purposes:

- to define different sections of a discussion, e.g., introduction/background, methodology, literature review, discussion and analysis, conclusion
- to indicate the relationships between sections, with sub-headings indicating sub-topics within a broader subject
- to provide transitions between sections

Headings are rarely used in literature analyses but are commonly used for papers in the social sciences and physical sciences.

The APA Style Manual does not require any particular format for headings and sub-headings, but it does suggest a format. The following text is copied from the APA Style Manual, 6th edition:

3.02 Organizing a Manuscript With Headings

In scientific writing, sound organizational structure is the key to clear, precise, and logical communication. This includes the use of headings to effectively organize ideas within a study as well as seriation to highlight important items within sections. Concise headings help the reader anticipate key points and track the development of your argument.

* * *

Levels of heading establish the hierarchy of sections via format or appearance. All topics of equal importance have the same level of heading throughout a manuscript. For example, in a multiexperiment paper, the headings for the Method and Results sections in Experiment 1 should be the same level as the headings for the Method and Results sections in Experiment 2.

Avoid having only one subsection heading and subsection within a section, just as you would in an outline. Use at least two subsection headings within any given section, or use none (e.g., in an outline, you could divide a section numbered I into a minimum of A and B sections; just an A section could not stand alone).

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	*Indented, boldface, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period.*
5	*Indented, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a period.*

[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.