



College of Business
Writing Style Guide for Students

College of Business Writing Style Guide for Students

This document serves as the College of Business at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University Worldwide writing style guide. This guide follows a format similar to the seventh edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA Manual) for style and citation matters.

The majority of written assignments (i.e.: general assignments, narrative essays, reaction or response papers, literature reviews) required in the College of Business courses do not require strict adherence to all APA style requirements. In the rare instance where a research paper (as designated by the assignment type in Canvas) may be required, APA 7th edition formatting will be required.

The College of Business has adopted the following guidelines to govern all written assignments (except research papers, as stated above).

The following guidelines are required in all *written assignments*:

- Text (Body)—see page 8 for specific details
- In-text citation—see page 9 for specific details
- Reference list—see page 11 for specific details

For *discussions*, the purpose is to facilitate discussion among students on topics designated by the instructor. As they are generally not intended to be essays or research endeavors, no specific formatting guidelines are required, unless otherwise noted in the specific course assignment instructions.

The following pages include specific details and examples for all of the style and formatting elements.

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College of Business Style and Formatting Elements

The majority of the written assignments will only require in-text citations and reference lists. If a research paper is required, all elements of the style and formatting in this guide are required and follow the APA 7th edition standards. The following are examples of the elements of the style and formatting guidelines.

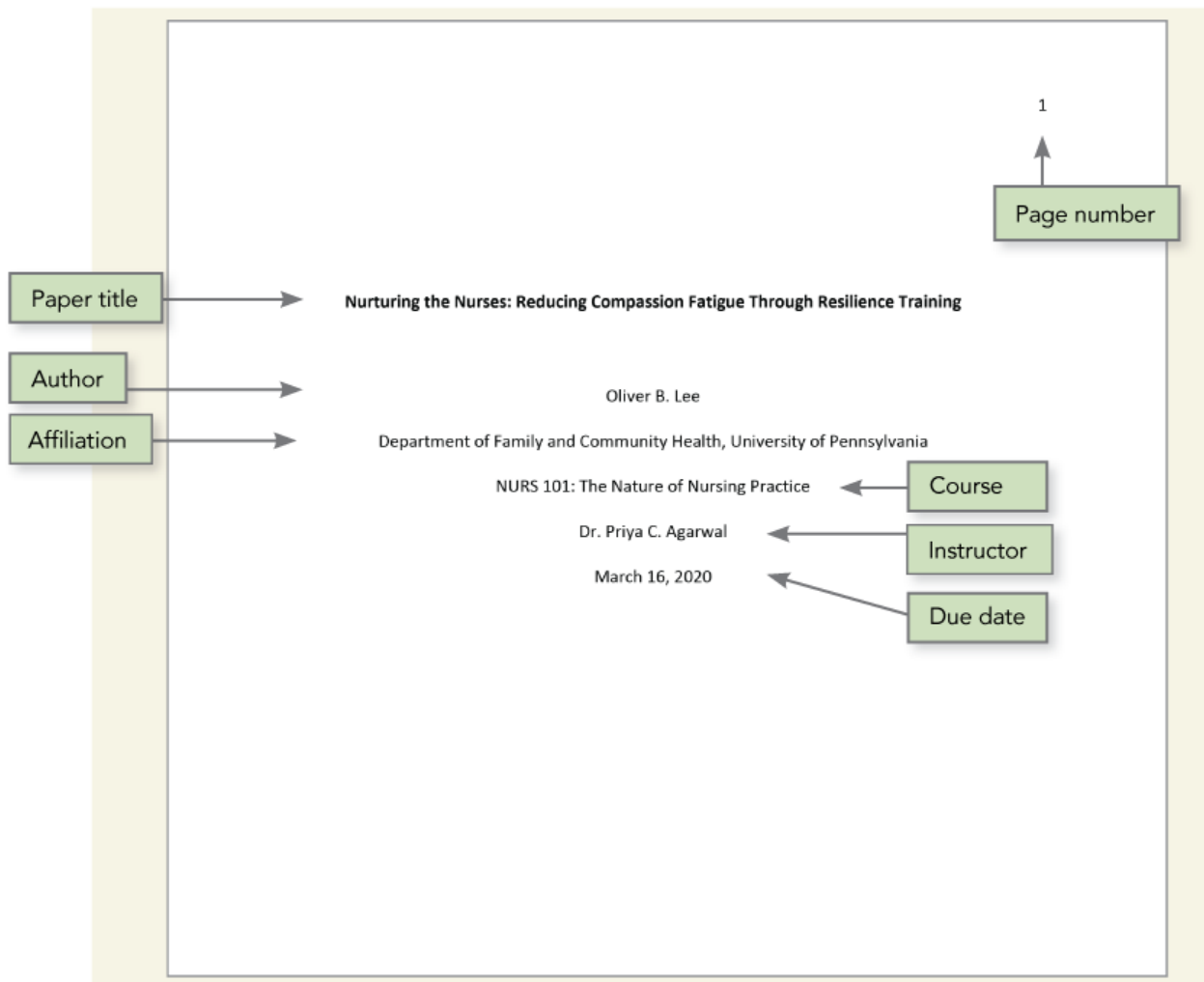
Student Title Page

Use the following guidelines (see Figure 1 for an example):

- Title of the paper
 - Bold, centered, and positioned in the upper half of the title page
- Name of each author of the paper
 - First name, middle initial(s), and last name
- Department/college/university name (e.g., Department of Business Administration, College of Business, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University)
- Course number and name
 - Use the format set by Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University; e.g., MBAA 514 Strategic Marketing Management in Aviation.
- Instructor name
 - Use the format set by Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. For example:
 - Dr. John Smith
 - Professor Lincoln Jones
 - Mark Andrews, Ph.D.
- Assignment due date
- Page number

Flush right in the header of every page. Use the automatic page-numbering function of your word-processing program to insert page numbers in the top right corner; do not type page numbers manually. The title page is page number 1.

Figure 1 Sample Student Title Page



Title

The title should summarize the specific assignment title. For research papers, it should be a concise statement of the main topic of the research and should identify the variables or theoretical issues under investigation and the relationship between them. Although there is no prescribed limit for title length in APA Style, authors are encouraged to keep their titles focused and succinct.

The paper title should be in title case bold, centered, and positioned in the upper half of the title page (e.g., three or four lines down from the top margin of the page). Move the title up to accommodate a longer author note if necessary. If the title is longer than one line, the main title and the subtitle can be separated on double-spaced lines if desired. Note that the paper title also appears at the top of the first page of text.

Author Name (Byline)

Every paper includes the name of the author or authors—the *byline*. The preferred form of an author’s name is first name, middle initial(s), and last name; this form reduces the likelihood of mistaken identity (e.g., that authors with the same first and last names are the same person).

Write the byline on the title page after the paper title. Include one blank double-spaced line between the paper title and the byline. Follow these guidelines for byline formatting:

- If the paper has one author, write the author name centered and in standard (i.e., non-bold, non-italic) font.
- If the paper has multiple authors, order the names of the authors according to their contributions. Write all names on the same line (flowing onto additional lines if needed), centered, and in standard font. For two authors, separate the names with the word “and”; for three or more authors, separate the names with commas and include “and” before the final author’s name.
- For names with suffixes, separate the suffix from the rest of the name with a space, not a comma (e.g., Roland J. Thorpe Jr.).

Author Affiliation

The affiliation identifies where the student(s) studied when the work was conducted, which is usually a university or other institution.

The format of the affiliation depends on the number of authors and whether different authors have different affiliations, as follows. Begin the affiliation(s) on a new line after the byline. Place different affiliations on individual lines. Do not add blank lines between affiliations or between the byline and the first affiliation. See Table 1 for examples of how to set up author bylines and affiliations.

Table 1 Examples of Author Bylines and Affiliations

Variation	Example
One author, one affiliation	Maggie C. Leonard Department of Psychology, George Mason University
Two authors, shared affiliation	Mackenzie J. Clement and Talia R. Cummings College of Nursing, Michigan State University
Three or more authors, shared affiliation	Madina Wahab, DeAndre L. Washington Jr., and Julian H. Lee School of Public Health, University of California, Berkeley

Course Number and Name

Use the format set by Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. For example:

- ENGL 123 English Composition

- CSCI 109 Introduction to Computers and Applications
- SCTY 488 National Security Issues and Terrorism
- MGMT 436 Strategic Management
- ENGR 330 Signals & Systems

Instructor Name

Use the format set by Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. For example:

- Dr. John Smith
- Professor Lincoln Jones
- Mark Andrews, Ph.D.

Assignment Due Date

Written in the month, date, and year format used in your country (usually November 4, 2020, or 4 November 2020; Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University recommends spelling out the month.

Page Number/Headings

All papers should contain the page number, flush right, in the header of every page. Use the automatic page-numbering function of your word-processing program to insert page numbers in the top right corner; do not type page numbers manually. The title page is page number 1.

Abstract

An abstract is not usually required for student papers unless requested by the course instructor. When required, the following guidelines apply:

- No more than 250 words
- Paragraph format as a single paragraph without indentation of the first line

An abstract is a brief, comprehensive summary of the contents of the paper.

Place the abstract on its own page after the title page (i.e., page 2). Write the section label “Abstract” in bold title case, centered at the top of the page, and place the abstract below the label.

Abstracts may appear in paragraph or structured format. Structured abstracts are also written as a single paragraph without indentation.

Text (Body)

The *text*, or body of the paper, contains the main contribution. Follow the content and formatting guidelines described in this guide

The text can be organized in many ways, and the organization generally depends on the paper type. Most papers include an introduction that addresses the importance of the work, contextualizes the work, and states the aims of the work. Beyond the introduction, the paper should include paragraphs or sections explaining the main premises of the paper. There are many possible formats for the rest of the text. A brief student paper (e.g., a response paper) may not have section headings unless required by the instructor.

The text should start on a new page after the title page and abstract (if the paper includes a title and abstract). On the first line of the first page of the text, write the title of the paper in title case, bold, and centered. The text should be left-aligned, double-spaced paragraphs, with the first line of each paragraph indented by one tab key (0.5 in). Use headings as needed and appropriate within the text to separate sections and to reflect the organizational structure of the content. Do not start a new page or add extra line breaks when a new heading occurs; each section of the text should follow the next without a break.

In-Text Citation

Author–Date Citation System

Use the *author–date citation system* to cite references in the text in APA Style. In this system, each work used in a paper has two parts: an in-text citation and a corresponding reference list entry (Figure 2). The in-text citation appears within the body of the paper (or in a table, figure, footnote, or appendix) and briefly identifies the cited work by its author and date of publication. This in-text citation enables readers to locate the corresponding entry in the alphabetical reference list at the end of the paper. Each reference list entry provides the author, date, title, and source of the work cited in the paper and enables readers to identify and retrieve the work.

Figure 2. Correspondence Between a Reference List Entry and an In-Text Citation

Reference list entry:

Alexander, P. A. (2018). Past as prologue: Educational psychology's legacy and progeny. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 110(2), 147–162. <https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000200>

Parenthetical citation:

(Alexander, 2018)

Narrative citation:

Alexander (2018)

In an in-text citation, provide the surname(s) of the author(s) or the name(s) of the group author(s). Do not include suffixes such as “Jr.” in the in-text citation. The list of authors in an in-text citation may be shortened in certain cases (such as for individual authors, for group authors).

The date in the in-text citation should match the date in the reference list entry. Use only the year in the in-text citation, even if the reference list entry contains a more specific date (e.g., year, month, and day). For works with no date, use “n.d.” in the in-text citation. For works that have been accepted for publication but have not yet been published, use “in press”. Do not use phrases like “in progress” for draft manuscripts; instead, use the year the draft was written.

Each in-text citation must correspond to only one reference list entry. Avoid ambiguity when abbreviating the list of authors when multiple works have the same author(s) and date, and when multiple first authors share the same surname.

Parenthetical and Narrative Citations

In-text citations have two formats: parenthetical and narrative. In parenthetical citations, the author’s name and publication date (or equivalent information) appears in parentheses. In narrative citations, this information is incorporated into the text as part of the sentence.

Parenthetical Citation

Both the author and the date, separated by a comma, appear in parentheses for a parenthetical citation. A parenthetical citation can appear within or at the end of a sentence. When a parenthetical citation is at the end of a sentence, place the period or other end punctuation after the closing parenthesis.

Falsely balanced news coverage can distort the public’s perception of expert consensus on an issue (Koehler, 2016).

- If other text appears with the parenthetical citation, use commas around the year.

(See Koehler, 2016, for more detail)

- When text and a citation appear together in parentheses, use a semicolon to separate the citation from the text; do not use parentheses within parentheses.

(e.g., falsely balanced news coverage; Koehler, 2016)

Narrative Citation

The author appears in running text and the date appears in parentheses immediately after the author’s name for a narrative citation.

Koehler (2016) noted the dangers of falsely balanced news coverage.

- In rare cases, the author and date might both appear in the narrative. In this case, do not use parentheses.

In 2016, Koehler noted the dangers of falsely balanced news coverage.

Reference List

The *reference list* provides a reliable way for readers to locate the works authors cite to acknowledge previous scholarship. References are used to document and substantiate statements made about the literature, just as data in the paper are used to support interpretations and conclusions. The references cited in the paper do not need to be exhaustive but should be sufficient to support the need for your research and to enable readers to place it in the context of previous research and theorizing.

Start the reference list on a new page after the text and before any tables, figures, and/or appendices. Label the reference list “References”, capitalized, in bold, and centered. Double-space all reference list entries (including between and within references). Use a hanging indent for all references, meaning that the first line of each reference is flush left and subsequent lines are indented by 0.5 in. Use the paragraph-formatting function of your word-processing program to automatically apply the hanging indent.

Four Elements of a Reference

A reference generally has four elements: author, date, title, and source. Each element answers a question:

- **Author:** Who is responsible for this work?
- **Date:** When was this work published?
- **Title:** What is this work called?
- **Source:** Where can I retrieve this work?

Table 2 provides guidance on what to do if one or more of these elements are missing from a reference list entry.

Table 2 How to Create a Reference When Information Is Missing

Missing Element	Solution (Provide...)	Template: Reference List Entry
Nothing	Author, date, title, source	Author. (Date). Title. Source.
Author	Title, date, source	Title. (Date). Source.
Date	Author, write ‘n. d.’, title, source	Author. (n. d.). Title. Source.
Title	Author, date, describe the work, source	Author. (Date). [Description]. Source.
Author and Date	Title, write “n. d.” and “No date”, source	Title. (n. d.). Source.
Author and Title	Describe the work, date, source	[Description]. (Date). Source.
Date and Title	Author, write “n. d.” describe work, source	Author. (n. d.) [Description]. Source.
Author, date, title	Describe the work, write “n. d.”, source	[Description]. (n. d.). Source.
Source	Find another source	No reference list entry

(n. d.) = No Date

Table 3 provides guidance on what to do if one or more of these elements are missing from an in-text citation entry.

Table 3 How to Create an In-Text Citation When Information Is Missing

Missing Element	Solution (Provide...)	Template: In-text Citation
Nothing	Author, date, title, source	(Author, year) Author (year)
Author	Title, date, source	(Title, year) Title (year)
Date	Author, write ‘n. d.’, title, source	(Author, n. d.) Author (n. d.)
Title	Author, date, describe the work, source	(Author, year) Author (year)
Author and Date	Title, write “n. d.”, source	(Title, year) Title (year)
Author and Title	Describe the work, date, source	([Description], year) [Description] (year)
Date and Title	Author, write “n. d.” describe work, source	(Author, year) Author (year)
Author, date, title	Describe the work, write “n. d.”, source	([Description], n. d.) [Description] (n. d.)
Source	Find another source	No reference list entry

Order of Works in the Reference List

Works are listed in alphabetical order in the reference list by the first word of the reference list entry, according to the following principles:

- Arrange entries in alphabetical order by the surname of the first author followed by the initials of the author’s given name(s). For alphabetizing names, “nothing precedes something”: Loft, V. H. precedes Loftus, E. F., even though “u” precedes “v” in the alphabet.
- When alphabetizing names, disregard any spaces or punctuation marks (e.g., apostrophes, hyphens) in two-word surnames. Also, disregard anything in parentheses (e.g., roles like “Eds.”) or square brackets (e.g., usernames).
- Alphabetize entries by authors who have the same given name and surname with suffixes indicating birth order chronologically, oldest first.

Format

Importance of Format

The physical appearance of a paper can enhance or detract from it. A well-prepared paper encourages instructors to view authors' work as professional. In contrast, mechanical flaws can lead instructors to misinterpret content or question the authors' expertise or attention to detail, and students may receive a lower grade because of formatting errors.

Order of Pages

Arrange the pages of the paper in the following order:

- Title page (page 1)
- Abstract [if required] (start on a new page after the title page)
- Text (start on a new page after the abstract, or after the title page if the paper does not have an abstract)
- References (start on a new page after the end of the text)
- Footnotes (start on a new page after the references)
- Tables (start each on a new page after the footnotes)
- Figures (start each on a new page after the tables)
- Appendices (start each on a new page after the tables and/or figures)

Footnotes may appear either in the footer of the page where they are first mentioned or on a separate page after the references. Tables and figures may be embedded within the text after they have been mentioned, or each table and figure can be displayed on a separate page after the footnotes.

Page Header

All papers should contain the page number, flush right, in the header of every page. Use the automatic page-numbering function of your word-processing program to insert page numbers in the top right corner; do not type page numbers manually. The title page is page number 1. Student papers need only the page number in the page header.

Font

Student papers should be written in a font that is accessible to all users

Use the same font throughout the text of the paper. Options include

- Sans serif font such as 11-point Calibri, 11-point Arial, or 10-point Lucida Sans Unicode, OR
- Serif font such as 12-point Times New Roman, 11-point Georgia, or normal (10-point) Computer Modern (the latter is the default font for LaTeX).

We recommend these fonts because they are legible and widely available and because they include special characters such as math symbols and Greek letters.

A student paper may contain other fonts or font sizes under the following circumstances:

- Within figure images, use a sans serif font with a type size between 8 and 14 points.
- When presenting computer code, use a monospace font, such as 10-point Lucida Console or 10-point Courier New.

- When presenting a footnote in a page footer, the default footnote settings of your word-processing program are acceptable (e.g., 10-point font with single line spacing).

Due to the fact that different fonts take up different amounts of space on the page, we recommend using a word count rather than page count to gauge paper length.

Special Characters

Special characters are accented letters and other diacritical marks, Greek letters, math signs, and symbols. Type special characters using the special character functions of your word-processing program or a plug-in such as MathType. Characters that are not available should be presented as images.

Line Spacing

Double-space the entire paper, including the title page, abstract (if required), text, headings, block quotations, reference list, table and figure notes, and appendices, with the following exceptions:

- **Title page:** Elements of the title page are double-spaced, and an additional double-spaced blank line appears between the title and byline. At least one double-spaced blank line also appears between the final affiliation and any author note (Figure 1).
- **Table body and figure image:** The table body (cells) and words within the image part of a figure may be single-spaced, one-and-a-half-spaced, or double-spaced, depending on what format creates the most effective presentation of the data. If the text appears on the same page as a table or figure, insert a double-spaced blank line between the text and the table or figure.
- **Footnotes:** Footnotes that appear at the bottom of the page on which they are called out should be single-spaced and formatted with the default settings of your word-processing program. Footnotes that appear on their own page after the references should be formatted like regular paragraphs of text—that is, indented and double-spaced.
- **Displayed equations:** It is permissible to apply triple- or quadruple-spacing in special circumstances, such as before and after a displayed equation.

It is not necessary to add blank lines before or after headings, even if a heading falls at the end of a page. Do not add extra spacing between paragraphs.

Margins

Use 1-in. (2.54-cm) margins on all sides (top, bottom, left, and right) of the page. This is the default page margin in most word-processing programs.

Paragraph Alignment

Align the text to the left and leave the right margin uneven (“ragged”). Do not use full justification, which adjusts the spacing between words to make all lines the same length (flush with the margins). Do not manually divide words at the end of a line, and do not use the hyphenation function to break words at the ends of lines. Do not manually insert line breaks into long DOIs or URLs; however, breaks in DOIs or URLs applied automatically by a word-processing program are permissible.

Paragraph Indentation

Indent the first line of every paragraph 0.5 in. For consistency, use the tab key or the automatic paragraph-formatting function of your word-processing program. The default settings in most word-processing programs are acceptable. The remaining lines of the paragraph should be left-aligned.

Exceptions to these paragraph indentation requirements are as follows:

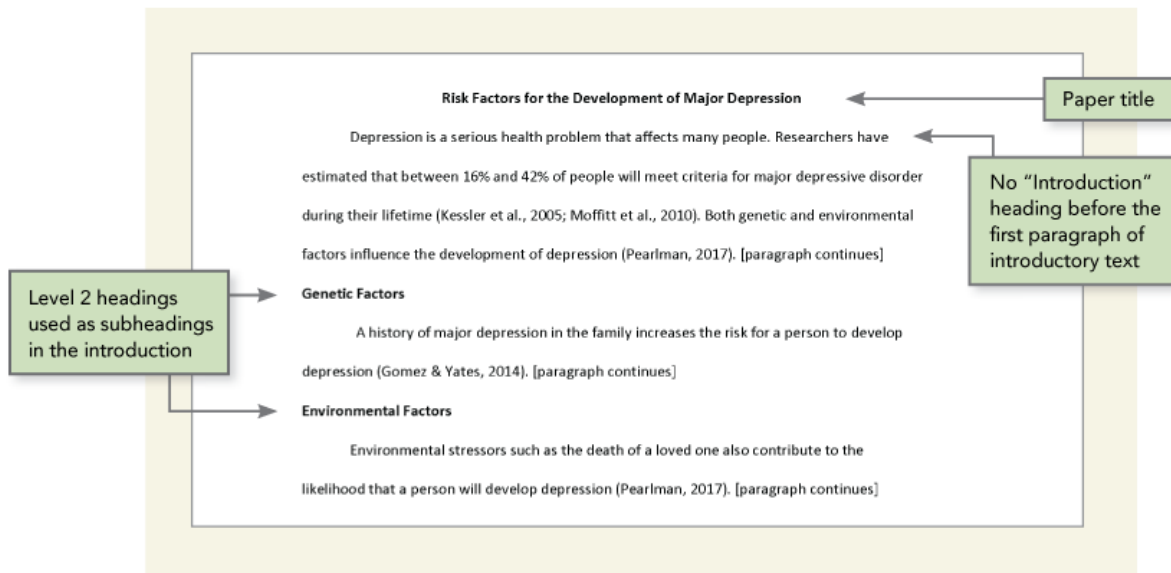
- For student papers, the title (in bold), byline, affiliations, course number and name, instructor, and assignment date should be centered (Figure 1).
- Section labels should be centered (and bold)
- The first line of the abstract should be flush left (not indented),
- The entirety of a block quotation should be indented from the left margin 0.5 in. If the block quotation spans more than one paragraph, the first line of the second and any subsequent paragraphs of the block quotation should be indented another 0.5 in., such that those first lines are indented a total of 1 in.
- Level 1 headings should be centered (and in bold), and Level 2 and 3 headings should be left-aligned.
- Table and figure numbers, titles, and notes should be flush left.
- Reference list entries should have a hanging indent of 0.5 in.
- Appendix labels and titles should be centered (and bold).

Heading Levels

There are five possible levels of headings: Level 1 headings are used for top-level or main sections, Level 2 headings are subsections of Level 1, and so on. 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 has fewer levels of subheading than another section. For example, in a paper with Level 1 Method, Results, and Discussion headings, the Method and Results sections may each have two levels of subheading (Levels 2 and 3), and the Discussion section may have only one level of subheading (Level 2). Thus, there would be three levels of heading for the paper overall.

Headings in the Introduction. Because the first paragraphs of a paper are understood to be introductory, the heading “Introduction” is not needed. Do not begin a paper with an “Introduction” heading; the paper title at the top of the first page of text acts as a de facto Level 1 heading (Figure 3). For subsections within the introduction, use Level 2 headings for the first level of subsection, Level 3 for subsections of any Level 2 headings, and so on. After the introduction (regardless of whether it includes headings), use a Level 1 heading for the next main section of the paper (e.g., Method).

Figure 3 Use of Headings in a Sample Introduction



Number of Headings in a Paper. The number of levels of heading needed for a paper depends on its length and complexity; three is average. If only one level of heading is needed, use Level 1; if two levels are needed, use Levels 1 and 2; if three levels are needed, use Levels 1, 2, and 3; and so forth. Use only the number of headings necessary to differentiate distinct sections in your paper; short student papers may not require any headings. Do not label headings with numbers or letters.