APA Levels

APA recommends the use of headings and subheadings to help organize a paper. The use of headings visually marks each section of your paper, helping the reader to follow arguments by anticipating important sections and key points.

Determining the Number and Levels of Headings for Your Paper
The first step in determining which headings and subheadings to use is to identify how many levels you will need. Levels refer to the degree of generality or specificity of a subsection of your paper. The levels of headings are determined in the same way that sections of an outline are determined.

Consider these factors to determine the number of levels to use in your paper:
- The length of the paper
- The number of topics or points that you will be covering
- The amount of detail included in each of the points
- How you want the audience to work through your text

Formatting of Headings
In APA style, long papers, or papers with a high degree of specificity, can have up to five levels of headings. However, most people will have one, two, or three levels. The table below describes the format of each level of heading. Headings at different levels will vary in alignment, thickness of type, use of capitalization, case of type, and position in relationship to the text that follows

Level of heading	Format
1	**Centered, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Headings**
2	**Flush Left, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Headings**
3	**Indented, boldface, lowercase paragraph heading ending in period.**
4	***Indented, boldface, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading ending in period.***
5	*Indented, italicized, lowercase paragraph heading ending in period.*

This table is from the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th ed. (2009). Table 3.1, p. 62.

* "lowercase paragraph heading ending in period." —In other words, this means that the first letter of the first word of the heading is capitalized; the heading ends in a period; and the text begins immediately after the heading.