
How to Format a Running Head in APA Style

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Summary: Describes how to format the running head in the header position in APA style using Microsoft Word 2007.

Learning Objectives: To describe how the title page's header should be formatted in APA style. To describe how the subsequent pages' header should be formatted in APA style.

Part of APA style is formatting a running head, which can be tricky in Microsoft Word 2007. So let's discuss how to do it. *APA (Pocket Guide to APA Style, Third Edition)* prescribes a specific format for documents, and one of the features of this format is the running head.

Many students are unfamiliar with how to use the Header feature. Instead, they manually enter body text where the running head should go. Often this enlarges the top margin of the document, making it look as though there is a header on the document when, in fact, there is not one. But creating a faux header by that method is very problematic, especially later on when you need to rewrite or edit.

However, there are various ways to properly add headers to your document. Here is one that is simple and straightforward.

The First Page

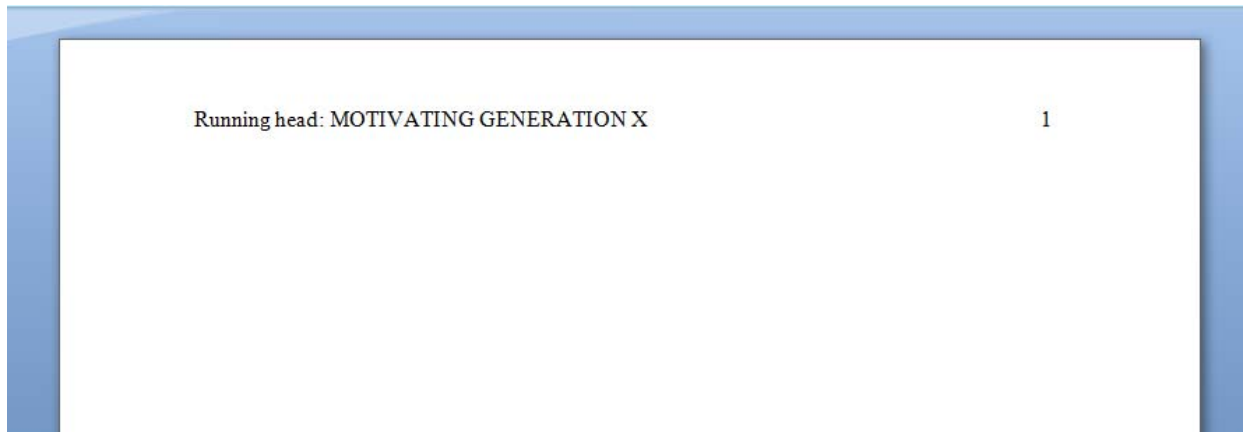
The first page (title page) of a document written according to APA format (*Pocket Guide to APA Style, Third Edition*) is different from the pages that come after it. Here's how you add the header to the first page.

Steps:

1. Double-click inside the top 1" margin of your Word document's first page where the header should appear.
2. Choose "Different First Page" under the "Design" tab.
3. Choose "Page Number: Top of Page: Plain Number 1 [the first one, left aligned]". (A left-aligned "1" should appear with the cursor just to the left of it.)
4. Type "Running head: SHORTENED VERSION OF TITLE IN ALL CAPS" starting at left 1" margin. Please note that this information should not include the quotation marks, and the information that is in all caps should be a short version of **your** paper's title which should be no more than 50 characters long.
5. Remain on the same line as your running head and "tab" over (*don't use the space bar!*) to the 1" right margin of your document: Type the number "1".



You now have your first-page header. Before we move onto the subsequent pages, let's take a look at an example of what the header should look like on the title page:



As you can see, the running head and the short title is flush left, while the page number is in the far right corner on the same line as the running head.

All Other Pages

The rest of your pages (2 and on) will all have the same header, but that header on all of those pages will differ slightly from your title page's header.

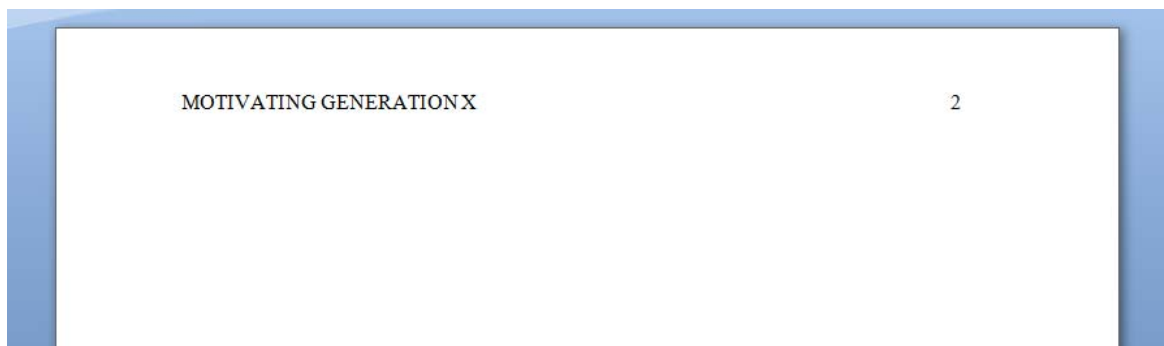
The header for these pages needs to be similar to your first-page header *with one exception*: the words "Running head:" should be omitted.

So here's how you add headers to the rest of your document's pages.

Steps:

1. Double-click on the top 1" margin of your Word document's second page.
2. Choose "Page Number: Top of Page: Plain Number 1 [the first one, left aligned]". (A left-aligned number "2" should appear with the cursor just to the left of it.)
3. Type "SHORTENED VERSION OF TITLE" starting at the 1" left margin. (Remember, use the same shortened version of **your** paper's title that you used on page one.)
4. Tab over to the 1" right margin. (Doing so should move only the "2" over to the 1" right margin.)

You now have your second, and subsequent, page headers. Let's take a look at this example to see how the header should look like in these subsequent pages:



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Please note that the words "Running head:" were omitted from this header, and the same short version of the title is used from the title page.

Trust me, the last thing you want to do is circumvent the Header function in Microsoft Word by inserting, page by page, text that only looks like a header. If you do it like that you will, at some point, need to edit your paper, and when you edit you will invariably wind up with text where it shouldn't be. Using the actual Header function will eliminate that possibility of error, giving you one less thing to worry about as you write your paper.



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