



## Writing Center Academic Affairs

# How to Create an APA Running Head

The Running head in APA can be one of the most frustrating things that writers experience when formatting an APA paper. However, once you get the hang of it, it's really not that difficult; it just requires you to remember a sequence of steps that are ultimately not hard.

### Step One: Click into the header.

In order to do this, simply double-click the top portion of your Word document. You will know that you have clicked into the header because a dotted line will appear and the word "header" will appear in the lower left-hand corner (see Figure 1)



Figure 1: The Header

### Step Two: Make sure first page is different from the others.

In order to do this, there is a small box you have to click. This small box is located under the "Options" section in the ribbon that pops up when you are in the Header tab. Make sure the box labelled "Different first page" has a checkmark next to it.

The reason we need a different first page is because, in APA, the first page has the words "Running head:" in them in order to indicate the Running head for the rest of the paper. See Figure 2 for more information.

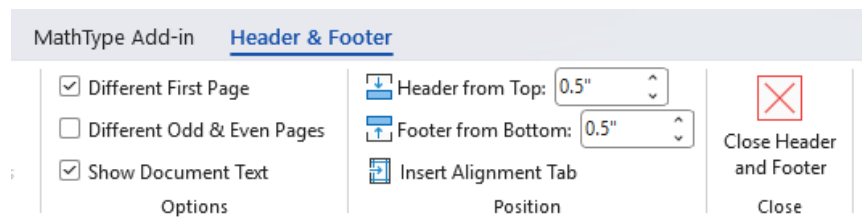


Figure 2: Clicking "Different First Page" will make the first page different from the rest.

## Step Three: Insert the page number

APA Requires a page number on each page. Because of the way Microsoft Word is built, if you insert a page number after inserting the Running head, it disappears! Because of this, the page number must be inserted first.

To insert the page number, go to the “Insert” tab and choose “Insert→Page number.” You will be prompted by several examples. Choose the option that will place the number in the top right corner. This option is found under the “Top of page” sub-section and is labelled “Plain number 3.” The resulting header should look like Figure 3 below.



Figure 3: The first page header with a page number.

## Step Four: Insert the first-page Running head

In APA, the Running head on the first page (usually always the title page) is different from the resulting pages.

In order to get the Running head to the opposite side of the page, place your cursor to the left of the number and begin typing the words “Running head:” followed by your Running head, which is usually a shortened version of your title in all caps.

After doing this, you will need to get your Running head to the opposite side of the page. In order to do this, with your cursor still at the end of your full Running head, hit the “Tab” key on the keyboard until the Running head is moved to the opposite side of the page. See Figure 4 below.



Figure 4: Header with first-page Running head

## Step Five: Formatting the second pages and beyond

Now that we have formatted the first page header of your APA paper, we have to do the same to the next page of your paper, with one slight difference: the words “Running head:” appear ONLY on the first page.

Go to the second page of your paper and follow steps one through four; however, instead of typing the words “Running head:” type ONLY the shortened version of your title in all caps that you used for the Running head on Page 1. From here until the end of your paper, your header

will look like the image in Figure 5, except the page number on each page will reflect subsequent numbers.

And that's all there is to it!



*Figure 5: The rest of the pages of your APA paper will look like this.*