

# CAL STATE LA THESIS AND DISSERTATION QUICK GUIDE

## Sections, Headings, and Subheadings

### **Organizing Your Sections**

Most thesis and dissertation chapters are divided up into sections and subsections, each of which is preceded by a heading or subheading. Candidates are advised to consider the following from section 3.02 of the APA style manual when organizing their sections for all style manuals:

Avoid having only one subsection heading and subsection within a section, just as you would 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).

Additionally, section 3.03 of the APA style manual advises:

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 may have fewer levels of subheading than another section. For example, the Method and Results sections [level 1] of a paper may each have two levels of subheading [levels 2 and 3], and the Discussion section may have only one level of subheading [level 2]. There would then be three levels of heading for the paper overall: the section headings (Method, Results, and Discussion) and the two levels of subheading.

### **Types of Capitalization**

Headings and subheadings often require special capitalization. The styles use include:

- All caps: All letters in all words are capitalized.  
Example: FEAR AND LOATHING IN LAS VEGAS
- Title case capitalization: Each major word is capitalized.  
Example: *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas: A Savage Journey into the Heart of the American Dream*
- Sentence case capitalization: The first word and proper nouns are capitalized.  
Example: *Fear and loathing in Las Vegas: A savage journey into the heart of the American Dream*

### **Headings and Subheadings**

The candidate shall consult the appropriate style manual as approved or recommended by the department or Committee when creating and formatting headings and subheadings. Regardless of specific style, headings and subheadings of chapters and sections are constructed and presented in a consistent manner within a thesis.

## Style Manuals with Their Own Heading Styles

The following style manuals specify the formatting for headings and subheadings:

### American Chemical Society (ACS)

Level of Heading	Format
1	<b>Centered, Boldface, Title Case Capitalization</b>
2	<b>Flush Left, Boldface, Title Case Capitalization</b>
3	<i>Flush Left, Italicized, Title Case Capitalization</i>

### American Psychological Association (APA)

Level of Heading	Format
1	<b>Centered, Boldface, Title Case Capitalization</b>
2	<b>Flush Left, Boldface, Title Case Capitalization</b>
3	<b>Indented run-in at beginning of paragraph, boldface, sentence case capitalization, ending with a period.</b>
4	<b><i>Indented run-in at beginning of paragraph, boldface, italicized, sentence case capitalization, ending with a period.</i></b>
5	<i>Indented run-in at beginning of paragraph, italicized, sentence case capitalization, ending with a period.</i>

### ASTM

Level of Heading	Format
1	<b>Flush Left, Boldface, Title Case Capitalization</b>
2	<i>Flush Left, Italicized, Title Case Capitalization</i>
3	<i>Indented Run-In at Beginning of Paragraph, Italicized, Title Case Capitalization, Followed by an Em Dash</i>

## IEEE

<b>Level of Heading</b>	<b>Format</b>
1	Enumerated by Roman Numerals, Centered, Roman Type, Title Case Capitalization
2	<i>Enumerated by Capital Letters Followed by Periods, Flush Left, Italicized, Title Case Capitalization</i>
3	<i>Enumerated by Arabic Numerals Followed by Parenthesis, Indented Half-Inch, Run-in at Beginning of Paragraph, Italicized, Title Case Capitalization, Followed by a Colon</i>
4	<i>Enumerated by lowercase letters followed by parenthesis, indented one inch, run-in at beginning of paragraph, italicized, sentence case capitalization, followed by a colon</i>
<b>NOTE:</b>	Enumeration of section heads is desirable, but not required. The author's preference may be followed. However, the choice must be consistent throughout the thesis/dissertation. Candidate should consult department and/or committee for further instruction.

## Society for American Archaeology (SAA)

<b>Level of Heading</b>	<b>Format</b>
1	<b>Centered, Boldface, Title Case Capitalization</b>
2	<i>Flush Left, Italicized, Title Case Capitalization</i>
3	<i>Indented Run-In at Beginning of Paragraph, Italicized, Title Case Capitalization, Ending with a Period.</i>

### Style Manuals That Borrow Heading Styles

Some style manuals do not specify the formatting of headings and subheadings or use the formatting of another style manual:

- American Anthropological Association (AAA): Use Chicago
- Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS): Flexible; use APA
- Council of Science Editors (CSE): Unspecified; use APA
- Journal of Forensic Sciences (JFS): Use ASTM
- Modern Language Association (MLA): Unspecified; use APA