

# Headings

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Best practices for [Content Writing](#) suggest that effective headings make content easy to skim and consume. Because people do not read every word on a website, but rather, skim the page to quickly identify what is important, headings are critical tools for communicating key ideas.

Some headings on the CalLutheran.edu website are automatically applied to certain sections within a page. In most cases, however, you will add headings manually — which means that you need to know how to write and apply them in different circumstances.

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## How to Write a Heading

### 1. Organize Your Content

Headings are useful when they break up long content. By paraphrasing or emphasizing the main point of each content chunk, headings make it easy for the reader to distill and understand the greater meaning. To create this effect, it is important that you begin by ensuring that your content is written in a logical order.

### 2. Keep It to the Keywords

Once your content is organized, the secret to writing a strong heading is to make it simple, relevant, and reflective of the information that it precedes. While you want your heading to be easy to remember, you don't need to get clever or complex with wordy language. Keywords count, but flowery words do not.

### 3. Maintain Consistency

It is best when all headings on the page maintain consistent phrasing. Because headings can take on various formats of phrasing, try to choose a format that signals the intended impact of your content.

Here are some example headings in different phrasing formats (note how each format changes the impact):

- Purpose Changes Your Perspective ("Statement" Format: feels like a fact)
- Change Your Perspective With Purpose ("Action" Format: starts with an action verb)
- How to Change Your Perspective With Purpose ("How-to" Format: teaches a process)
- Does Purpose Change Your Perspective? ("Question" Format: reflects on a provoking thought)
- Purpose and Perspective ("Topic" Format: Acknowledgement of a larger idea)

PRO TIP: There isn't an official number of headings that a page should have, however, the longer the content, the more headings are typically useful. As a test of your headings' effectiveness, ask a colleague to read the headings on your page but nothing else — do they get the gist?

## How to Apply a Heading

While you are [Editing a Page](#), ensure that each heading is placed on its own line of text so that it can be stylized with one of the predefined heading types. Then, place your cursor anywhere in the line of text and click the  menu to choose a heading type.

As a general practice, it is best to use higher level headings (i.e., Heading 2, Heading 3) for the main headings on a page and lower level headings (i.e., Heading 4, Heading 5, Heading 6) for more nested headings on a page. This hierarchical structure improves the page's accessibility for people with disabilities; each heading number carries a corresponding "weight" to it that signifies its importance within the structure of the page.

For guidelines on how each heading type can be used, see the descriptions below (note that **bold** font or ALL CAPS should *never* be used in place of a heading).

This heading is reserved for the page title, so you should not use it for any other content.

This heading is a standard format for prominent headings.

This heading is an alternative format for prominent headings, indicating different content than Heading 2.

This heading is a compact version of Heading 2, allowing it to be nested beneath Heading 2.

This heading is a compact version of Heading 3, allowing it to be nested beneath Heading 3.

This heading is useful for miscellaneous purposes and instances when black is preferred over purple.

EXTRA INSIGHT: Headings often look best when they are *one line* long. After publishing, adjust the width of your browser window to see your heading length on narrow, mid-sized, and large screen widths.

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