Step-By-Step APA Formatting: The Running Head

Microsoft Word can be a tricky beast sometimes. There are so many options and possibilities for formatting that it’s easy to get discouraged—especially when you’re trying to get your paper to match a particular format minutes before the paper is due.

APA formatting requires a running head and page numbers, and the first page needs to contain different text than the rest of the pages. Here is a simple guide for doing that.

**Step 1: Edit the header.**

The header can be accessed by double clicking in the top margin or selecting Header>Edit Header in the Insert menu.
Step 2: Modify header settings.

The next step is to select “Different First Page” from the header/footer toolbar. This will allow you to have “Running head:” on the first page but not on any of the subsequent pages, as APA requires. Remember to do this first, because if you type everything out and then select “Different First Page,” it will delete everything you’ve done on that first page.

Step 3: Insert page number.

There are several different ways to insert the page number into the header. One way to do this is to select “Page Number” from the toolbar and pick the first option number (keep in mind that you’ll likely need to change the font to match the font in your paper). It’s okay that the page number is not right-aligned yet. We’ll get to that later.

Another way to add the page number to the document is to insert a “field” into the header.
The page number looks like this:

*You will need to add the page number to the header on the first and second pages of your document. For the second page, click into the header space and just follow the same steps as above.*

Step 4: Add the running head on the first page.

Type out the running head in front of the page number you’ve inserted. Be sure to have “Running head:” before the all-caps title on the first page (and first page only).

After you’ve typed your running head (remember that the title within the running head should not exceed 50 characters), just press the tab key a few times to move the page number to the right side of the paper.
Step 5: Add the running head to the second page.
Remember that what appears in the heading on the first page does \textit{not} automatically appear on the second page (that’s what selecting “Different First Page” does), so you will need to add the running head to that second page. The header will continue from that second page, though, so you don’t need to add anything to the third, fourth, etc. pages of the document. After you’ve added the header title, just tab to move the number over like you did on the first page. And voila! You’re done making your header.