

3.1 Formatting Procedure Headings

Headings and subheadings are a necessary part of any document. They help the audience navigate through the document easily and find the tasks quickly. Headings can be distinguished from the content of the document by creating visual cues such as larger, darker text, graphics, and icons. Use the following guidelines as you format headings for your document.

1. **Use a consistent font and style.** Use the same font size and style for each heading level.
2. **Use a bold, sans-serif (plain) font.** An example of a sans-serif font is *Arial*.
3. **Employ appropriate graphical cues.** These include checkmarks, pointing hands, warning triangles, or note pencils.
4. **Use a hierarchy to show the different levels of headings.** You can create heading levels by using point-size and cueing (bolding, italicizing, etc.) (See Table 4).

Table 4. Creating a Hierarchy with Headings

Chapter Heading	18 pt. bold sans-serif	Indicates chapters
Section Heading	14 pt. bold sans-serif	Indicates sections that relate to groups of tasks
Topic Heading	12 pt. bold sans-serif	Indicates sections that relate to groups of subtasks
Task Name	10 pt. bold sans-serif	Indicates task names
Subtask Name	10 pt. sans-serif	Indicates groups of steps within subtasks

Source: Barker, Thomas T. *Writing Software Documentation: A Task-Oriented Approach*. Needham Heights: Allyn & Bacon, Inc., 1997.

5. **Include no more than three levels of information, preferably two.** Limit the number of times you have to change the size, style, and font of the text.