Headings

Headings, Headers, or Headlines are titles or subjects that provide structure to content by dividing and categorizing content on a page. On the web, headings help improve accessibility, searchability, and web standards. This document will go over why it's important to use headings properly, and how to achieve this on the UNBC website.

Heading Hierarchy

On the web, headings are organized from largest (H1), to smallest (H6 on the UNBC site). It is important to work consistently within a page by using headings in this order, from largest to smallest.
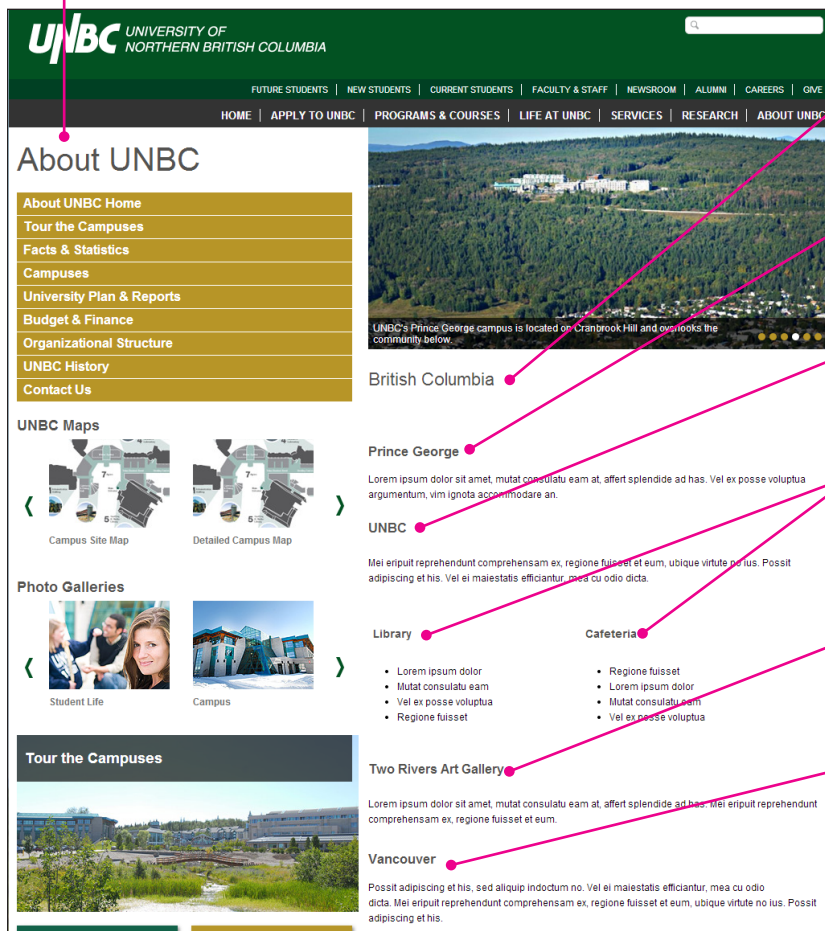
The screenshot bellow shows an example of a typical webpage on the UNBC website. The section title (About UNBC) is always Heading 1 (H1).

Heading hierarchy analogy:

H1 - World

H2 - North America

H3 - Canada

H4 - British Columbia

H5 - Prince George

H6 - UNBC

Heading 1
The section title is always H1.

Heading 2
The title of a page is always H2.

Heading 3
The first heading on a webpage should always be H3.

Heading 4
The sub-heading bellow H3 should always be H4.

Heading 5
The sub-heading bellow H4 should always be H5 and so-on.

Heading 4

Heading 3

Note: When headings are numbered the same they hold the same hierarchical values. For instance UNBC and Two Rivers Gallery are both H4.

Headings: Best Practices

Headings are one of the most important elements on a webpage. Properly used headings help users find what they are looking for quickly, help search engines like Google find content, and ensure that visually impaired users can easily read content.

Use Headings in order without skipping
Headings should be used from largest to smallest without skipping.

For example: **H2-H3-H4 and so-on** (not H2-H4-H6).

Only use Headings to structure content
To draw attention to an item, **style the important text as bold** and reserve headings for titles, sections, subjects, etc.

Name Headings mindfully
Be mindful of the text you use for titles and headings as these function a lot like keywords and will help people find content on a webpage when they search with search engines like Google or the unbc.ca search bar.

Consider what the heading is headlining and make sure to choose a short and concise title that summarizes its content.

Why is it important?

Web accessibility
A visually impaired user who uses a screen reader to read content on a website will filter through content by reading all of the headings in order, i.e., all the H1's, then all H2's below the chosen H1 and so-on.

Search engine optimization (SEO)
Proper use of headings ensures content can be found through Google, unbc.ca, and other internet searches.

Web standards
Keeping up with current web standards ensures that our website displays properly in multiple browsers and that content is found easily by search engines.

Design principles
Following heading rules for the web not only ensures correct web standards, but also ensures a design that is easy to understand and follow. Since headings help to organise content, users can easily scan through a webpage to find the content they are looking for — this allows for a pleasant web experience and encourages the user to revisit our website.