

Basic Text Markup

Text Block elements

The paragraph and heading elements are all text block elements in that they define a block of copy. Headings and paragraphs are always preceded and followed by a blank line, which sets a built-in top and bottom margin equal to one blank line. Text block elements are siblings in the HTML hierarchy. They cannot be nested inside of each other.

Headings

There are six heading elements. By default all headings are displayed in bold type and have a top and bottom margin (referred to as “Space Before” and “Space After” in many graphic design programs). The largest and most important heading is **H1**, with headings decreasing in size and importance down to **H6**.

Example:

`<h1>I am the largest and most import head</h1>`

`<h2>I am the second largest and second most important head</h2>`

`<h3>I am the third largest and third most important head</h3>`

`<h4>I am the fourth largest and fourth most important head</h4>`

`<h5>I am the fifth largest and fifth most important head</h5>`

`<h6>I am the smallest and least important head</h6>`

Good HTML semantics calls for using the **H1** element as the leading or main head of an HTML document, assigning other heading elements heads based on their order of importance.

You do not have to use all of the headings — only the ones that are needed. Also, one should not mark up a head as an **H3** head unless that head is sub to an **H2** head. And one should not mark up a head as an **H4** head unless that head is sub to an **H3** head. And so on.

Do not design with HTML

When you view an HTML page in a browser whose heads are marked up with **H1** or **H2** elements, you may feel those **H1** and **H2** heading elements make the heads look too big and horsey. And not wanting your heads to be overly large may entice you to use the **H3** element to mark up the main headline of your article, and to mark up level 2 heads with the **H4** element. This is trying to design with HTML, and it is a bad practice that violates HTML’s semantic rules. You should always assign your heading elements based on each head’s level of importance. If a head is the main headline of your article, then it should be marked up with the **H1** element. If a head is a level 2 head, then it should be marked up with the **H2** element. When we cover CSS we will learn how to typeset the heads to the desired font size.

Heading Markup notes

- Heading assignment will aid browsers and search engines as to a document's outline in order to construct an implicit article or document sectioning.

- Do not use lower level headings to decrease heading font size, instead use CSS to set font size and other styling.
- Avoid skipping heading levels: always start from **<h1>**, next use **<h2>** and so on.
- You should consider avoiding using **<h1>** more than once on a page. Search engines prefer if there is only one **<h1>** to a page

Paragraphs

The P element, **<p>**, is used to create body copy text blocks. By default, its text will use a browser's default font size. Like the heading elements, the P element has a top and bottom margin, each equal to one blank line. Unlike the heading elements, the text inside the paragraph element is not bold.

Example:

1. **<!DOCTYPE HTML>**
2. **<html lang="en">**
3. **<head>**
4. **<meta charset="UTF-8">**
5. **<title>Bookmark name and SEO topic goes here</title>**
6. **</head>**
7. **<body>**
8. **<h1>Main Headline</h1>**
9. **<h2>I am a second level head or subhead.</h2>**
10. **<p>I am a body copy paragraph. This is the element that will hold the various body copy paragraphs.</p>**
11. **<p>I am another body copy paragraph.</p>**
12. **<h2>I am another second level head.</h2>**
13. **<p>The above head is a second level head because it has the same semantic importance as the previous H2 head.</p>**
14. **<h3>I am a level three head.</h3>**
15. **<p>The above head is an H3 head because it has less semantic importance than the previous level two heads and opens up a portion of this article that is sub to an H2. Remember that an H3 must be preceded by an H2.</p>**
16. **<p>How do you determine the semantic importance and level of each head? You may have to discuss this with the document's author, since assigning heads is also an editorial task.</p>**
17. **</body>**
18. **</html>**

Notice in the example above that the heading and paragraphs elements have a sibling relationship.

Phrase or Inline Elements

Phrase elements such as the **STRONG** and **EM** elements are children of text block elements, like the **P** element. Their purpose is to mark up a word or phrase within body copy that should have either strong importance (**STRONG** element) or emphasis (**EM** element).

Examples:

```
<p>The Heading Level One is the <strong>largest and most important</strong> heading of all the heads.</p>
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```
<p>Use the Emphasis element when you want to <em>emphasize</em> a word or phrase within a sentence or text block.</p>
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How do these Phrase elements render in the browser?

The browser will render the copy contained within the **STRONG** element as bolded text, and copy contained within the **EM** element as italics.

So, in the browser, the above coding will render as:

The Heading Level One is the **largest and most important** heading of all the heads.

Use the Emphasis element when you want to *emphasize* a word or phrase within a sentence or text block.

Can Phrase Elements be children of the Heading elements?

Although adding Phrase elements to any of the Heading elements will not produce a syntactical error, it will violate the semantic rules. Remember that Headings already have a designated level of importance and don't need to be made more important or be given greater emphasis.

Additional Phrase Elements

There are other phrase/inline elements besides the **STRONG** and **EM** elements which you can use to markup your body copy. See the **HTML Guide Phrase-Inline Elements.pdf** handout.