
Chapter 6: Headings

Introduction

HTML provides not only plain paragraph tags, but six separate header tags to indicate headings of various sizes and thicknesses. Enumerated as heading 1 through heading 6, heading 1 has the largest and thickest text while heading 6 is the smallest and thinnest, down to the paragraph level. This topic details proper usage of these tags.

Syntax

- `<h1>...</h1>`
- `<h2>...</h2>`
- `<h3>...</h3>`
- `<h4>...</h4>`
- `<h5>...</h5>`
- `<h6>...</h6>`

Remarks

- An `h1–h6` element must have both a start tag and an end tag.¹
- `h1–h6` elements are block level elements by default (CSS style: `display: block`).²
- `h1–h6` elements should not be confused with the [section element](#)
- Heading tags (`h1–h6`) are not related to the `head` tag.
- Permitted Content: [phrasing content](#)
- The different CSS-styles for headings differ usually in `font-size` and `margin`. The following CSS-settings for `h1–h6` elements can serve as an orientation (characterized as 'informative' by the [W3C](#))
- Search engine spiders (the code that adds a page to a search engine) automatically pays more attention to higher importance (h1 has most, h2 has less, h3 has even less, ...) headings to discern what a page is about.

Examples

Using Headings

Headings can be used to describe the topic they precede and they are defined with the `<h1>` to `<h6>` tags. Headings support all the [global attributes](#).

- `<h1>` defines the most important heading.

- `<h6>` defines the least important heading.

Defining a heading:

```
<h1>Heading 1</h1>
<h2>Heading 2</h2>
<h3>Heading 3</h3>
<h4>Heading 4</h4>
<h5>Heading 5</h5>
<h6>Heading 6</h6>
```

Correct structure matters

Search engines and other **user agents** usually index page content based on heading elements, for example to create a table of contents, so using the correct structure for headings is important.

In general, an article should have one `h1` element for the main title followed by `h2` subtitles – going down a layer if necessary. If there are `h1` elements on a higher level they shouldn't be used to describe any lower level content.

Example document (extra indentation to illustrate hierarchy):

```
<h1>Main title</h1>
<p>Introduction</p>

  <h2>Reasons</h2>

    <h3>Reason 1</h3>
    <p>Paragraph</p>

    <h3>Reason 2</h3>
    <p>Paragraph</p>

  <h2>In conclusion</h2>
  <p>Paragraph</p>
```