GYATA TABIRI

Inspired. Precise. Purposeful.

Bold text: choose the meaning before the appearance

By Gyata Tabiri · Revised November 2, 2026

A sentence can become darker without becoming more important. That small distinction matters when markup starts carrying decisions that really belong to the typography—or when an important instruction is left to communicate through weight alone.

Ask what the weight is doing

If a paragraph contains a warning, `strong` may express its importance. If a product name needs attention without that added importance, `b` may fit. If the designer simply wants a heavier visual treatment, a class can express that choice. I want a reason for the element beyond how it happens to render.

A warning still needs useful words

Consider “Important: your changes will be lost.” The reader also needs to know which action causes that loss and how to avoid it. Marking the sentence as important does not repair missing instructions. I would examine the wording and placement before deciding the tag has solved the communication problem.

Do not design around an assumed voice

I would not promise that a particular tag will always be spoken with emphasis. Presentation depends on the assistive technology and its settings. The importance needs to survive in the actual sentence and its context, including for someone who never sees the heavier type.

Read the page without its visual cues

A bold paragraph may really be a heading. A highlighted phrase may be doing the work of a missing label. Those are different problems, and they deserve different solutions. Looking past the visual effect often reveals which decision has been left unresolved.

The element is a way to describe a decision, not a substitute for making it. Once the meaning is clear, the typography has a much clearer job.

Read alongside: When the text is really a heading · Describing the page through HTML.

Reference: HTML text-level semantics.

Gyata Tabiri · Bethlehem, Pennsylvania
gtabiri.com · info@gtabiri.com · +1 484 484 2601