

UI Text Guidelines

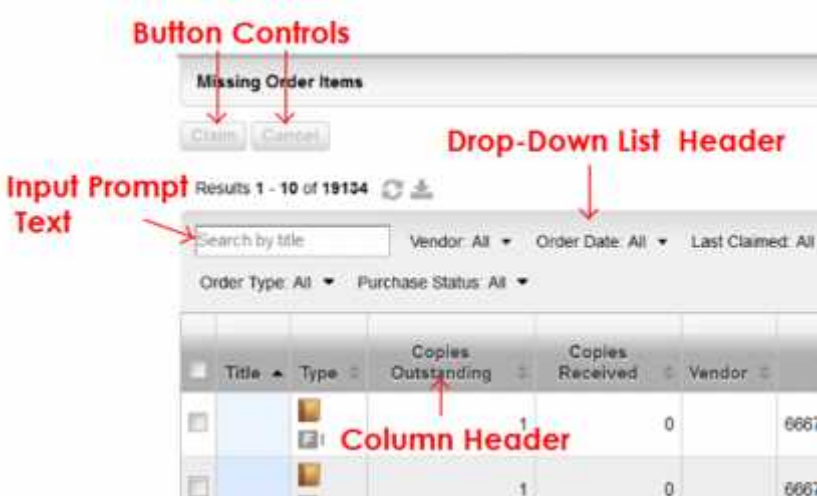
[Capitalization & Punctuation](#) | [Commit Button Labels](#) | [Constructing Labels](#) | [How Users Read Page Text](#) | [Standard Commands for Buttons & Action Links](#) | [User Interface Text](#)

User Interface Text

User interface text appears on UI surfaces. It has several usage patterns:

Header/Title Text

Use title bar text to identify a panel, dialog, table, list or column.



Static Text

Good main instructions communicate the user's objective rather than focusing just on manipulating the UI.



Control Labels

These labels identify UI controls: buttons, radio buttons, checkboxes, or hyperlinks, etc., and are placed directly on or next to the controls.

Title	Encyclopedia of measurement and statistics
Holding Location	OCLC Library North Branch
Call Number	HA29 .S2363 2007
Shelving Locations	NORT-Reference
Barcode	98052

Control/Field Labels

Standard
 Free Temporarily
 Trial Period

Control/Field Labels

Supplemental Explanations

Use supplemental explanations or text when controls require more information than can be conveyed by their label. Typically, supplemental explanations are used with action links, radio buttons, and check boxes.

OCLC Symbol

OCLC
 None

Note: OCLC symbols are pulled from the WorldCat Registry records. To add or remove symbols, visit your WorldCat Registry record.

Proxy Configuration

Supplemental Text

Input Hint Text

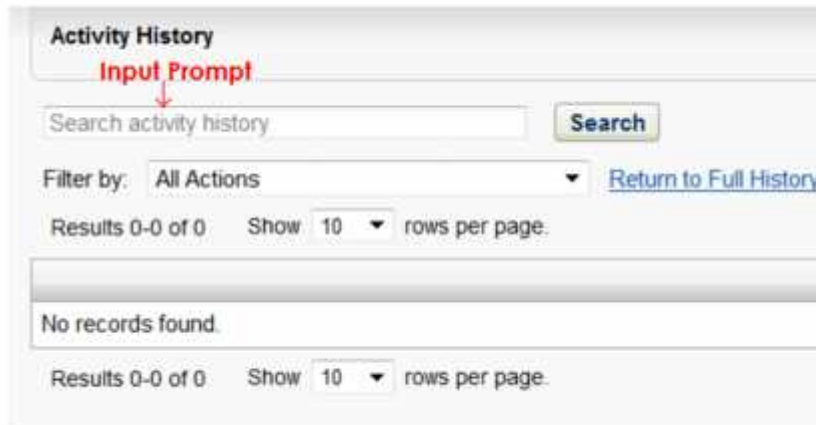
Use this text when the label of an input field does not fully explain what should be filled into it. Beside or below the field, place a phrase or example that explains what is required.

City

The area in which you live

Input Prompt Text

Use this text when the label of an input field does not fully explain what should be filled into it. Pre-fill a text field or drop-down list with prompt text that tells the user what to do or type.



See also:

- [Constructing Labels](#)
- [Input Hints](#)
- [Input Prompts](#)
- [Drop-Down List](#)
- [Radio Buttons](#)

[UI Text Guidelines](#) | [UI Cookbook](#)

How Users Read Page Text

As you think about UI text and its placement on your UI surfaces, consider these facts:

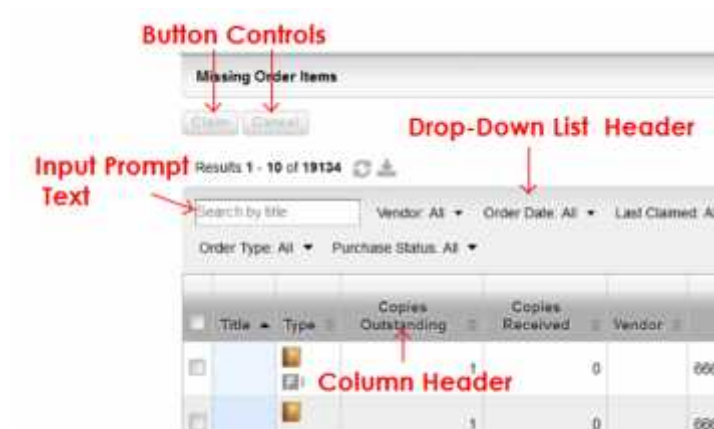
- During focused, immersive reading, users read in a left-to-right, top-to-bottom order (in Western cultures). However, OCLC does present non-western flows.
- When using software, users aren't immersed in the UI itself but in their work. Consequently, users don't read UI text—they scan it.
- When scanning a page, users may appear to be reading text when in reality they are filtering it. They often don't truly comprehend the UI text unless they perceive the need to.
- Within a page, different UI elements receive different levels of attention. Users tend to read control labels first, especially those that appear relevant to completing the task at hand.
- By contrast, users tend to read static text only when they think they need to.

How Users Scan a Page

Users start by quickly scanning the whole page, then read UI text in roughly the following order:

1. Interactive controls in the center
2. Commit buttons
3. Interactive controls found elsewhere
4. Main instruction
5. Supplemental explanations
6. Page title
7. Other static text in main body

You should also assume that once users have decided what to do, they will immediately stop reading and do it.



Eliminate Redundancy

- Redundant text not only takes valuable screen space, but also weakens the effectiveness of the important ideas or actions that you are trying to convey. It is also a waste of the reader's time, and all the more so in a context where scanning is the norm.
- Review each page and eliminate duplicate words and statements, both within and across UI controls.
- Don't avoid important text—be explicit wherever necessary—but don't be redundant and don't explain the obvious.

Avoid Over-Communication

- Even if text isn't redundant, it can simply be too wordy in an effort to explain every detail.
- Too much text discourages reading—the eye tends to skip right over it—ironically resulting in less communication rather than more.
- In UI text, concisely communicate the essential information.

- If more information is necessary for some users or some scenarios, provide a link to more detailed Help content.

If You Do Only Four Things:

1. Work on text early because text problems often reveal design problems.
2. Design your text for scanning.
3. Eliminate redundant text.
4. Use easy-to-understand text; don't over-communicate.

See also:

- [Constructing Labels](#)

[UI Text Guidelines](#) | [UI Cookbook](#)

Capitalization & Punctuation

Title Case

Title case means capitalize the first letter of the word or words referred to. Labels and titles are initial cap excluding prepositions. For example, “Add a Term Note”.

Sentence Case

Sentence capitalization specifies that only the first word and any proper nouns are capitalized.

Type of Text	Example	Rule
Control labels, headers, titles	Button (Create Copy) Field label (Template Name) Section label (Select Orders) Table heading (Order Number)	Use title case: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Capitalize first word and all following words except articles, conjunctions, and prepositions. 2. Do not use period (.). 3. Do not use colon (:). 4. Buttons and table/column headings are boldfaced.
Drop-down list menu & items Drop-down button & items Split button & items	List or drop-down menu (Apply Order Template) ¹	Use title case: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Capitalize first word and all following words except articles, conjunctions, and prepositions. 2. Do not use period (.). 3. Do not use colon (:). See footnotes for exceptions

		for list menus.
Control labels for checkboxes and radio buttons	Check box (Mask password, Selected as part of collection) Radio button (In Use, Not in Use)	Sentence case Not Bold No ending punctuation
Message or dialog titles/headers, Information pop-over titles	Save Order Item as a Template Delete Order	Use title case: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capitalize first word and all following words except articles, conjunctions, and prepositions. • Do not use period (.). • All text boldfaced.
Static, supplemental, help text (UI text)	Add title to one of the open approval plans below by using the [+] sign. Display item in WorldCat Local Show n rows per page Results n-n of n Held by my library n libraries own this item	Use sentence case: Capitalize first word of each sentence. Not bold
Dialog static/message text - The text in a dialog that is not in the heading/title.	Error message (Unknown branch. Select a branch.) Confirmation message (Technical error: contact support.) Warning message (If this order is deleted, all items are deleted. Do you want to continue?)	Use sentence case: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capitalize first word of each sentence. See Capitalization. • End all sentences with a period (.) or question mark (?), regardless of whether text is literally a sentence or not.
Input Hints, Input Prompts, Toasts, Tooltips	Search activity history The area in which you live Add Fund	Initial caps with no ending punctuation

1 Exceptions in list menus:

ISO codes

Follow ISO usage for any ISO standards used in WMS:

1. Language code is lowercase: en, de, fr, etc.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Language_code
2. Country codes are two or three uppercase characters:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Country_code
3. Currency abbreviations are three uppercase characters: EUR Euro.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Currency_code

Terms Always Capitalized

Term	Example	Note
ID	Vendor ID	Exceptions: eResources, not Eresources; WorldCat knowledge base (these are the official product names and come from Marketing)
Statuses	Due, On Order, No, Placed, Open	

Punctuation

The following table indicates standard rules of punctuation for UI controls:

Mark	Usage
Colons (:)	Do not use colons at the end of UI control or field labels.
Commas (,)	In a list of three or more items, always put a comma after the next-to-last item in the list.
Ellipses (...)	Ellipses mean incompleteness. Use ellipses in UI text as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commands: Indicate that a command needs additional information. Don't use an ellipsis whenever an action displays another page—only when additional information is required. • Data: Indicate that text is truncated. • Labels: Indicate that a task is in progress (for example, "Searching...").
Exclamation Points	In business applications, avoid.
Periods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't place at the end of control labels, main instructions, or Help links. • Place at the end of supplemental instructions, supplemental explanations, or any other static text that forms a complete sentence.
Question Marks	Place at the end of all questions. Unlike periods, question marks are used for all types of text. But not in headers, titles, or control labels.
Quotation Marks and Apostrophes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To refer to text literally, use italic formatting rather than quotation marks. • Put titles and control labels in quotation marks only if required to prevent confusion and you can't format using bold instead. • For quotation marks, prefer double-quotation marks (" "); avoid single-quotation marks.

Tip: Truncated text in a page with unused space indicates poor layout or a default screen size that is too small. Strive for layouts and default screen sizes that eliminate or reduce the amount of truncated text.



Quotation Marks Example

Correct	Are you sure you want to delete "Prof Long Overdue Bill"?
Incorrect	Are you sure you want to delete 'prof long overdue bill'?

Writing Specifications

- OCLC Style Guide - http://deptweb1.oa.oclc.org/docdept/style_guide/default.asp
- OCLC Style Guide for Support Materials - <http://www.oclc.org/support/help/oclcstyleguide/Default.htm>

See also:

- [Constructing Labels](#)

[UI Text Guidelines](#) | [UI Cookbook](#)

Constructing Labels

A label is the name or title of a UI control or a group of related controls.

General Labeling Rules

Be concise	Remove unnecessary words. Original: Name should not be empty or consist only of white space. Rewrite: Enter a user name.
Be specific	Give users the information they need to resolve issues.

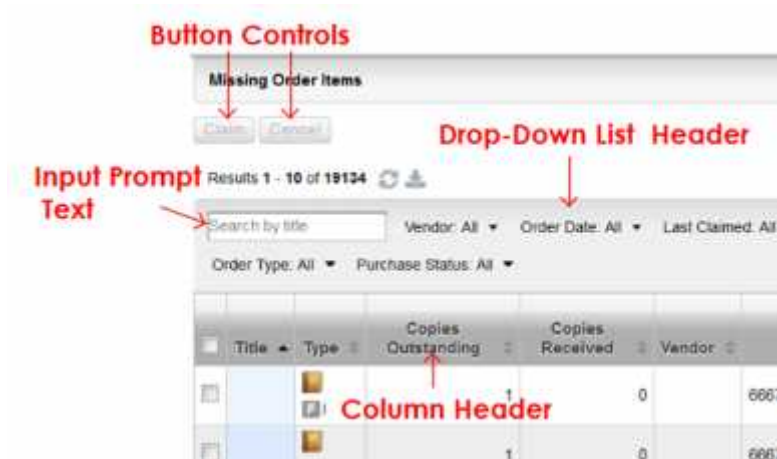
	<p>Original: Invalid tolerance value. Rewrite: The tolerance value cannot be greater than 100.</p> <p>Rewrite: Rescanning might take a few minutes.</p> <p>"A long time" is subjective and not that helpful to users. "A few minutes," "as much as 15 minutes," and "several seconds" are specific and give users a better idea of what to expect.</p>
Address the user as "you."	<p>Write text that is user-focused.</p> <p>Example: You have chosen to shutdown host 10.112.2.165.</p>
State instructions in the correct sequence.	<p>Tell users where in the UI to perform the action, and then tell them the action to perform.</p> <p>Original: Select Removable Devices from the VM menu. Example: On the VM menu, select Removable Devices.</p>
State the specific error or warning and recommend the user action to correct the error.	<p>Highlight the problem in a way that makes sense in the context in which the message is displayed.</p> <p>Original: Duplicate Role Name. Rewrite: The role name is already in use. You must provide a unique role name.</p>
Use active voice.	<p>Active voice makes writing more simple and direct.</p> <p>Original: Selection of a host is required. Rewrite: Select a host.</p>
Avoid noun phrases and stacking modifiers before a noun.	<p>Readability suffers when nouns that are normally separate are grouped together or when multiple modifiers are used to describe a noun.</p>
Avoid future tense.	<p>Describe the application's response to user input in present tense.</p> <p>Original: Will replace the existing... Rewrite: Replaces the existing...</p>
Do not use contractions	<p>Contractions pose a problem for translators and for people who are not native English speakers.</p> <p>Original: Can't connect to... Rewrite: Cannot connect to...</p>

- Do not use symbols instead of words (#, &).
- Do not use the word Please.
- Do not repeat words unnecessarily. Repetition makes it harder for the screen reader to scan the text and differentiate among the options.
- For accessibility purposes, ensure there is ALT text for graphics labels or unlabeled controls.
- Avoid writing labels as questions.
- Keep labels brief. Note, however, that adding a word or two to a label can help clarity, and sometimes eliminates the need for supplemental explanations.
- Prefer specific labels over generic ones. Ideally users shouldn't have to read anything else to understand the label.
- In general, use positive phrasing. For example, use *do* instead of *do not*, and *notify* instead of *do not notify*.
 - **Exception:** The check box label, "Don't show this message again," is widely used.

Header/Title Text

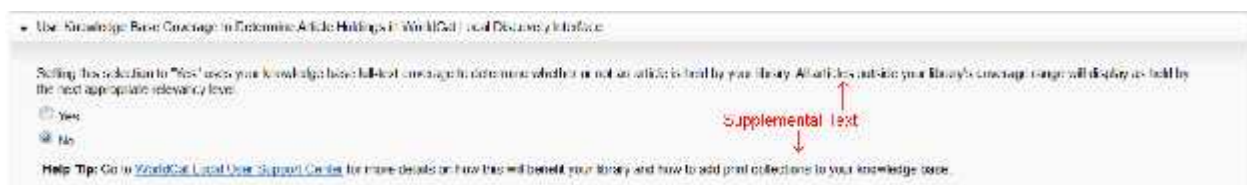
Use title bar text to identify a panel, dialog, table, list or column.

- The primary action should be included in the title/header text, message text and on the primary action button.



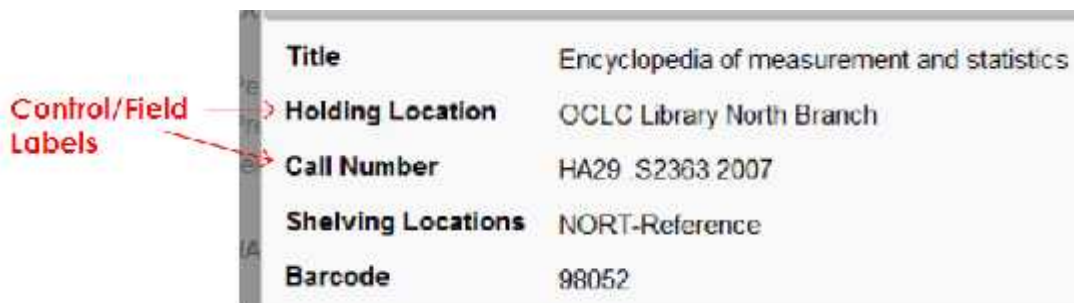
Static, Instructional, and Supplemental Text

- Good main instructions communicate the user's objective rather than focusing just on manipulating the UI.



- You can be more liberal with the length of this text. Use complete sentences and ending punctuation.
- Do not use: Could/would/should or may/might in supplemental explanations.
- Use supplemental explanations when controls require more information than can be conveyed by their label. But don't use a supplemental explanation if one isn't necessary—prefer to communicate everything with the control label if you can do so concisely.
- Typically, supplemental explanations are used with action links, radio buttons, and check boxes.
- Adding a supplemental explanation to one control in a group doesn't mean that you have to provide explanations for all the other controls in the group. Provide the relevant information in the label if you can and use explanations only when necessary. Don't use supplemental explanations that merely restate the label for consistency.
- The primary action should be included in the header/title text, static text and on the primary action button.

Control/Field Labels



Control/Field Labels

Title	Encyclopedia of measurement and statistics
Holding Location	OCLC Library North Branch
Call Number	HA29 S2363 2007
Shelving Locations	NORT-Reference
Barcode	98052

- A user interface control label is used to identify a nearby text box, checkbox, radio button, or other widget.

Collection Type

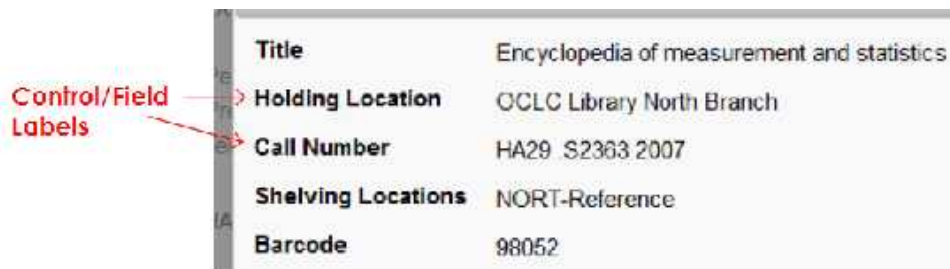
Demand driven acquisitions

Document delivery

Open access

- It is usually a static control; having no interactivity.
- Use a label to name or describe parts of your UI or to provide short messages to the user.
- Take care to make your labels legible.
- Drop-down list items should all follow a similar structure (verb + subject + object) and, if possible, the items should be singular or plural. So, we wouldn't want **Select record** and **Delete records** in the same menu item if they are all actions that are being performed on one record.

- In some cases, the following parenthetical annotations to control labels may be helpful:
 - If an option is optional, consider adding "(optional)" to the label.
 - If an option is strongly recommended, add "(recommended)" to the label. Doing so means the setting is optional, but should be set anyway.
 - If an option is intended only for advanced users, consider adding "(advanced)" to the label.
- Use title-style capitalization and no ending punctuation. Bold the label text.
- If you're labeling controls, write the label as a noun or a concise noun phrase, not as a sentence, and not as instructional text.
- Write a clear, concise label for every control on a page or screen.
- Use a label to indicate to the user what they should enter into an adjacent control, if it's not already obvious. For example, 'Name' above a text input box.
- Label every control. **Exceptions:**
 - Text boxes and drop-down lists can be labeled using input prompts.
 - Omit control labels that restate the main instruction.
- In HTML, you use the label element. Use the <label> tag to associate a particular html text label with its widget, e.g. textbox.



Control/Field Labels

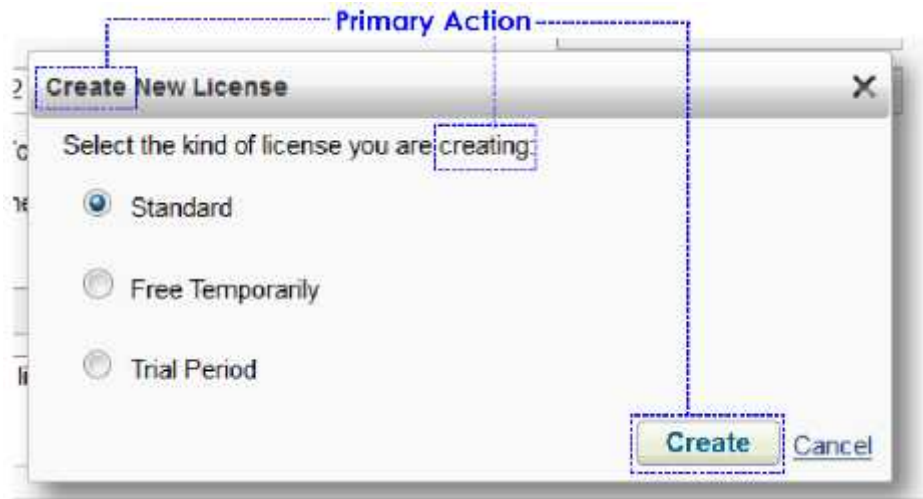
Title	Encyclopedia of measurement and statistics
Holding Location	OCLC Library North Branch
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Button and Action Link Labels

- A button or action link represents an action that users can initiate.
- Using verbs in labels on buttons and links makes the screens more usable because the labels contain all of the information the user needs to be able to make a decision. All the information is contained in the button labels.
- Use wording that describes the action that the button or action link represents.
- Use three or fewer words in the label. If the label needs further explanation, provide the details in a tooltip.
- The primary action should be included in the Title text, message text and on the primary action button.
- Always present action links in a set of two or more. Logically, there is no reason to ask a question that has only one answer.
- Provide an explicit Cancel command. Don't use a command for this purpose. Quite often, users realize that they don't want to perform a task. Using a command to cancel would require users to read all the commands carefully to

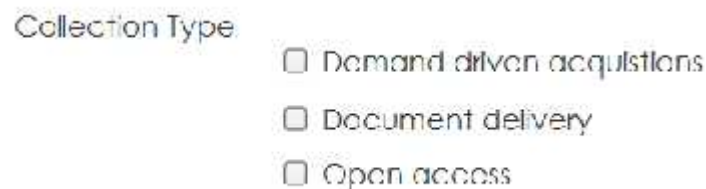
determine which one means to cancel. Having an explicit Cancel button or link allows users to cancel a task efficiently.

- Use title-style capitalization and no ending punctuation. Bold the label text.



Group of Controls

- You can also label a group of related controls, or display instructional text near a group of related controls.
- When clarity would be compromised, create separate labels for the superior and subordinate controls.
- For lists of labels, such as radio buttons, use parallel phrasing, and try to keep the length about the same for all labels.
- For lists of labels, focus the label text on the differences among the options. If all the options have the same introductory text, move that text to the group label.
- Label every group of controls. Exceptions:
 - Text boxes and drop-down lists can be labeled using input prompts.
 - Omit control labels that restate the main instruction.



Label Placement

- Check boxes, command buttons, group boxes, links, tabs, and progressive disclosure controls are labeled directly by the control itself.
- Drop-down lists, list boxes, list views, and text boxes are labeled above or to the left.

Writing Specifications

- OCLC Style Guide - http://deptweb1.oa.oclc.org/docdept/style_guide/default.asp
- OCLC Style Guide for Support Materials - <http://www.oclc.org/support/help/oclcstyleguide/Default.htm>

See also:

- [Buttons](#)
- [Primary & Secondary Actions](#)
- [Drop-Down List](#)
- [Action Links](#)
- [Radio Buttons](#)
- [Check Boxes](#)
- [Text Box](#)
- [Radio buttons](#)
- [Progressive Disclosure](#)
- [Input Prompt](#)
- [Form Guidelines](#)
- [Table Guidelines](#)

[UI Text Guidelines](#) | [UI Cookbook](#)

Standard Commands for Buttons & Action Links

- A button or action link represents an action that users can initiate.
- Using verbs in labels on buttons and links makes the screens more usable because the labels contain all of the information the user needs to be able to make a decision. All the information is contained in the button labels.
- Use wording that describes the action that the [button](#) or [action link](#) represents.

Command	Usage
Add	Use to add objects to a list, database, or other item; or add to one list from another.
Apply	Use to carry out pending changes without closing the dialog or page.
Browse	Use to manually look for a known object or file in a folder, tree structure, or Web site.
Cancel	Use to stop an action or end a process. Also, use to close a dialog without making pending changes.
Change	Use to replace one item, such as an icon, with another.
Clear	Use to empty a container of its contents.
Close	Use to close a dialog, page, or document. For error messages, use when either no solution is provided or none is available (instead of OK).
Copy	Make a copy of the selected object without removing the existing object. Typically the copy is put onto the clipboard for later pasting to the target.

Create	Use to create a new item. Use Create instead of New , except in cases where New is well established as a command (for example, the New command on most File menus). Do not use "Create New."
Delete	Use to permanently remove (or indicate intent to permanently remove) data. Do not confuse with Remove .
Done	Use as a well understood, obvious last step and gives users a sense of closure. A prominent button draws the user's attention to the most important information and allows them to scan the page quickly. The button appears as the obvious last step so the user knows transaction is complete.
Edit	Use to label buttons that open dialogs in which users can change settings for a selected object. In addition, use for menu commands when the user will be editing document content.
Execute	Do not use as a command.
Find	Use to locate text or a specific item on a Web page or in a document. Find is often paired with Replace . See also Search .
Modify	Avoid as a command label. Use Edit or Replace instead.
More	Use to show more information.
New	Use to create a new item, but only in cases where it is well established as a command. Otherwise, use Create . Do not use "Create New."
Next	Use to go to a subsequent page, such as in a wizard or report. This command is usually inactive until choices specific to the page have been made.
OK	Use to carry out pending changes, if any, and close the page or dialog. For error messages, use when a solution is provided.
Options	Use to display a set of controls with which the user can customize how a program looks or acts. If you need to use an additional dialog for more options, use More Options for the command button name. Do not use "Settings" for the command name.
Pause	Use to suspend a process or service that can be resumed with no data loss.
Preferences	Use to customize how the search results display.
Previous	Use to go to the previous page.
Print	To cause a printable view of the selected object to be passed to the default printer (optionally a Printer Selection Wizard can be displayed.)
Properties	Use to view or change characteristics of an object, such as a file.
Reboot	Do not use as a command. Use Restart .
Refresh	Use to redraw screen contents. This action can also update data on the screen. This command is synonymous with the F5 key on the keyboard.
Remove	Use to remove objects from a list, database, or other item, or to uninstall a program. Do not confuse with Delete .
Rename	To change the name of a selected object without changing its properties.
Replace	Use to change specified text with different specified text. Use only in conjunction with Find .
Reset	Use to return settings to the value they had when the user opened the page or dialog. Reset does not close the page or dialog.
Restart	Use to restart a service that is currently running.
Restore	Use to resize a page or recover previously deleted or corrupted data, files, or disk configurations. Also use to restore system default values.
Resume	Use to resume a process or service that has been paused.

Retry	Use to perform an action that previously failed.
Run	Use for queries and macros. Do not use for programs.
Save	Use to save information to a list, database, or other item.
Search	Use to look for an item or group of items in a database, on the Web, or in a container, such as a folder, by using one or more keywords.
Settings	Do not use as a command. Use Options instead.
Start	Use to start a service, computer, or program.
Stop	Use to stop an operation, process, or service. Once a process or service has been stopped, it cannot be resumed, it can only be started again.
Undo	Use to reverse the user's last action or several preceding actions.
Update	Use to update data from or to a data source.



Writing Specifications

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See also:

- [Action Links](#)
- [Buttons](#)
- [Primary & Secondary Actions](#)
- [Constructing Control Labels](#)
- [Commit Button Labels](#)

[UI Text Guidelines](#) | [Label Guidelines](#) | [UI Cookbook](#)

Commit Button Labels

The following table shows the most common commit button labels and their usage.

Button Label	Meaning	When to Use	Access Key
Apply	Apply the pending changes (made since the page was opened or the last Apply), but leave the page open.	Provide an Apply button only if the property sheet has settings (at least one) with effects that users can evaluate in a meaningful way.	A

	<p>Doing so allows users to evaluate the changes before closing the property sheet.</p>	<p>Typically, Apply buttons are used when settings make visible changes. Users should be able to apply a change, evaluate the change, and make further changes based on that evaluation.</p> <p>If not, remove the Apply button instead of disabling it.</p>	
Cancel	<p>Discard all changes or work in progress.</p> <p>Revert to the previous state (leaving no noticeable side effect).</p> <p>Close the screen.</p> <p>Return to the hub page from which the task was launched.</p> <p>If there is no such hub page, close the control panel item page instead.</p>	<p>Use when all pending changes or actions can be discarded and any side effects can be undone.</p> <p>For changes that can't be discarded, use Close.</p> <p>For actions in progress that can be stopped, use Stop. If initially changes or actions can be discarded, you can use Cancel initially then change to Close or Stop once it can't be undone.</p>	Esc
Clear	<p>To erase everything on the display screen or remove information entered into a form.</p>	<p>Use with forms</p>	
Close	<p>Close the page.</p> <p>Any changes or side effects are not discarded.</p>	<p>Use when changes or side effects can't be discarded.</p> <p>Use Close instead of Cancel for primary pages.</p> <p>Use for pages in which users can't make changes.</p>	Alt+F4, Ctrl+F4
Done	<p>A well-understood, obvious last step gives users a sense of</p>	<p>Use a visually prominent button for the final step of any</p>	Enter

	closure or completion.	transaction.	
Next	Advance to the next record without committing to the task.	The effect of a Next button can always be undone by clicking Previous.	N
OK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply the changes • Commit the task • Close screen • Keep changes • Apply the changes 	<p>Use with pages that aren't task specific, such as property sheets.</p> <p>For pages used to perform one specific task, use a specific label instead that starts with a verb (example: Print).</p> <p>For screens in which users can't make changes, use Close.</p> <p>Use with pages that aren't task specific, such as property sheets.</p> <p>For screens used to perform one specific task, use a specific label instead that starts with a verb (example: Print).</p> <p>For screens in which users can't make changes, use Close.</p>	Enter
Refresh	Use to update the screen with new data.	<p>Use this command to update the screen you are currently viewing.</p> <p>This action can also update data on the screen.</p>	F5
Reset	Use to return settings to the value they had when the user opened the screen. It does not close the page or dialog.	Use this command to clear the user's input.	
Restore	Use to recover	Use this command to	

	previously deleted or corrupted data, files.	recover a screen and values that were corrupted or deleted. Use to restore system default values.	
Save	Use this button to save information on a form or any changes made to a file or record.	Use this command to save information or any changes to information.	
Stop	Stop a currently running task and close the page. Any work in progress or side effects are not discarded.	Use when work in progress and any side effects can't or won't be discarded, typically with progress bars or animations.	Esc
Yes/No	Yes is the affirmative response to a yes or no question, whereas No is the negative response.	Use Yes and No buttons only to respond to yes or no questions. Never use OK and Cancel for yes or no questions. Prefer specific responses over Yes and No buttons. While there's nothing wrong with using Yes and No, specific responses can be understood more quickly, resulting in efficient decision making. However, consider using Yes and No responses if the phrasing of specific responses turns out to be long or awkward. Don't use Yes and No buttons if the meaning of the No response is unclear. If so, use specific responses instead. Yes and No must always be used as a pair.	Y and N

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See also:

- [Buttons](#)
- [Primary & Secondary Actions](#)
- [Constructing Labels](#)
- [Standard Commands For Buttons and Links](#)

[UI Text Guidelines](#) | [Label Guidelines](#) | [UI Cookbook](#)