

When designing game interfaces, every word matters. Microcopy—the small bits of text found in menus, buttons, and headings—is the silent guide that directs players, clarifies choices, and speeds up interactions. Done right, it enhances the player’s experience; done poorly, it can confuse, frustrate, or even cause abandonment.

In this post, we’ll explore how to write effective microcopy for menus and headings in games, focusing on **menu headings**, **short labels**, and **information grouping**. We’ll reference insights from companies like MrQ, a UK-facing casino platform known for its clear slot page wording, and guidance from Cumberland Council, whose plain English principles for online content make complex information accessible. We’ll also consider the constraints unique to mobile interfaces and online slot UI screens.

Understanding Microcopy as Game Grammar

Think of microcopy as the *grammar* of your game’s interface. Just as grammar structures language to convey meaning clearly and quickly, microcopy organizes UI text to guide players effortlessly through game mechanics and navigation.

Menus and headings are the building blocks of this grammar. They serve as signposts that group information and provide context. Writing them well means using language that is:

- **Concise and clear**—every word counts, especially with limited screen real estate.
- **Consistent**—players expect the same words to mean the same thing throughout the experience.
- **Action-oriented**—especially in instructions and buttons, verbs should engage players directly.

Imperative Verbs: Powering Fast, Clear Instructions

In fast-paced games, players don’t have time to read or interpret complex instructions. Using imperative verbs in your microcopy is essential for driving swift understanding and action.

Imperative verbs are commands that tell the user what to do in a concise way, such as *Play*, *Spin*, *Collect*, or *Buy*. These verbs compress game mechanics into single words or very short phrases that fit neatly into mobile UI constraints.

For example, consider the online slot games on MrQ. Their <https://grammarflick.com/the-grammar-of-a-game-screen-how/> slot page menus use clear action labels like **Spin** instead of ambiguous terms like *Start Game* or *OK*, which can cause hesitation. Spin directly describes the mechanic and invites immediate action.

Why Imperative Verbs Work

- **They reduce cognitive load:** Players instantly know what to do.
- **They fit mobile screens better:** Short, punchy commands take less space and avoid text overflow.
- **They maintain pace:** Clear instructions keep gameplay smooth, especially in fast mechanics like spinning slots or opening loot crates.

Verbs That Compress Mechanics

Games often have complex actions beneath seemingly simple commands. Good microcopy compresses these mechanics into verbs that communicate the entire action efficiently.

For example, instead of “*Confirm purchase of power-up*”, a label that simply says **Buy** compresses the entire mechanic into one clear action. This is crucial on smaller UI elements like menu buttons or headings.

Here are some examples of verbs that compress complex mechanics:

Game Mechanic	Compressed Verb	Why It Works
Start the game/session	Play	Universal, clear, direct; implies entering gameplay
Spin slot reels	Spin	Specific to slots; immediate action
Accept a bet or wager	Bet	Clear and actionable, especially for casino audiences
Claim rewards or prizes	Collect	Action-oriented and concise
View more info or details	Details	Short label encouraging exploration

Consistency Is Key: Uniform Terminology Across Screens

One of the most common pitfalls in game microcopy is inconsistency. Using different verbs or labels for the same action across screens confuses players and increases friction. Instead, deliberate consistency helps players develop intuition about game functions.

MrQ exemplifies this best practice on their platform. They maintain consistent labeling for actions like spinning, staking bets, and collecting winnings across all slot game pages, making the experience feel seamless and reliable.

Cumberland Council

Tips to Maintain Consistency

- **Keep a glossary of approved terms and verbs relevant to your game’s mechanics.**
- **Use the same short label for actions everywhere in the game—don’t swap out “Play” for “Start” or “Proceed.”**
- **Review UI screens side by side to catch any variance before release.**

Grouping Information With Effective Menu Headings

Menus, particularly on mobile interfaces, must use headings that efficiently group related information and help players find what they need without frustration.

Effective menu headings are:

- **Descriptive but brief:** They explain what’s inside the menu without overwhelming text.
- **Consistent:** Use the same heading labels across screens when grouping the same kind of info.
- **Logical:** Organize options into intuitive categories, e.g., *Settings, Store, Inventory, Stats*.

For example, in mobile slot games designed for platforms like MrQ, menu headings like *Jackpots, Bonuses, and Paytable* clearly segment gameplay information. This helps players quickly locate and understand different aspects of the game, important when UI real estate is limited.

Applying Cumberland Council’s Plain English Tips

Plain English guidance from Cumberland Council recommends:

- **Using familiar, everyday words in headings.**
- **Keeping headings short—think one or two words when possible.**
- **Ensuring headings reflect the content accurately to avoid “mystery labels” that confuse players.**

So, avoid vague headings like “Success” or “Results.” Instead, use clear headers like *Winning Spins* or *Prize History*, depending on what the screen shows.



Conquering Mobile Interface Constraints

Mobile screens introduce unique challenges. Space is limited, and text truncates quickly. Microcopy must adapt:



- **Prioritize brevity:** Use the shortest possible words or phrases that still communicate intent.
- **Use recognizable verbs and nouns:** Players are accustomed to certain slot and casino lingo—leverage that familiarity.

- **Test for readability:** Always preview your microcopy in real device scenarios to avoid text clipping.

Consider the *Spin* button: not only is it shorter than “Start Game” or “Begin,” it visually fits perfectly beneath reels on small phones, encouraging tap action without hesitation.

Final Checklist for Writing Game Menu Microcopy

1. **Use imperative verbs:** Write commands like Play, Spin, Collect that prompt action.
2. **Compress mechanics:** Summarize complex game actions into single verbs when possible.
3. **Maintain consistent terminology:** Use identical labels for the same actions throughout.
4. **Group information clearly:** Use descriptive, brief, and logical menu headings.
5. **Follow plain English guidelines:** Avoid jargon and unclear labels; keep language accessible.
6. **Adapt to mobile constraints:** Prioritize brevity and test readability on real devices.

Conclusion

Microcopy may be small, but it shapes the entire player experience in menus and headings. By thinking of it as game grammar and using imperative verbs, compressed actions, and consistent terminology, you empower players to navigate and enjoy your game intuitively.

Take inspiration from platforms like MrQ, where clear slot page wording elevates player clarity, and implement plain English principles from sources like Cumberland Council to keep your writing simple and effective.

Remember: in the cramped world of mobile screens and fast online slots, every word earns its place. Write microcopy that pulls its weight—your players will thank you.