Original Content QA Lab:
Subtitling Guidelines
RO-RO

Last Revision
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Reading Speed

17 characters per second for most programming.
13 characters per second for programming intended for children 6 and under.

Duration

Minimum duration for subtitles is 20 frames.*
Maximum duration for subtitles is 7 seconds.

*Reading speed should always be considered. Avoid reading-speed violations whenever possible.

Intervals

A minimum of 2-frame intervals should be used between continuous subtitles.

Character Limitations

42 characters per line.

Timing + Duration

Text should be timed closely to the beginning and end of audio when possible. However, it's acceptable for subtitles to stay on-screen for up to a second after audio ends to meet reading-speed requirements.

Avoid subtitles that:
• Are not in sync with the audio
• Start well in advance of the corresponding audio (approximately 7 frames or more)
• Stay on-screen for too long (more than a second after dialogue ends or more than 7 seconds total)
• Flash on-screen too briefly to read

If the speed of delivery is very alert, the subtitle must be adapted for easy reading. It is important to make it as compact and concise as possible. For example:

ORIGINAL:

Uite cum stă treaba, să știi că eu am văzut filmul respectiv.

ADAPTED:

Eu am văzut deja filmul.

If the speed of delivery is slow, a good idea would be to have successive one-line subtitles to ideally match the beginning and end of audio.

EXAMPLE:

SUB 1: Uite cum stă treaba,
SUB 2: să știi că eu
SUB 3: am văzut filmul respectiv.

If the subtitle exceeds one line, both lines should be of comparable length. Line breaks should ideally match a logical break in the dialogue, i.e. after a punctuation mark, or before a preposition or conjunction. A noun should not be split from its article.

Line Treatment

Subtitles should occupy 2 lines maximum.

Positioning

Standard positioning is center-justified, at the bottom of screen.

If subtitles obscure pertinent text that appears in the lower third of the screen, or if overlapping with lower-third text will cause subtitles to become illegible, then they should be moved to the top of the screen.

Titling Dialogue

Dialogue should be subtitled as faithfully as possible within the limits of reading speed.

- When reading speed is exceeded, dialogue should be truncated without sacrificing or altering its intended meaning.
- Non-essential dialogue should generally be truncated first (verbal hedgers such as "Well" or "You know" for example).
- Conversely, subtitles should not add or rewrite dialogue for clarity.
- Do not title stand-alone utterances/exclamations such as oh, whoa, or wow. These can be titled when part of a larger sentence.

Dual Speakers

Use a hyphen to indicate two speakers in the same subtitle. There should be a space between hyphens and dialogue.

EXAMPLE:

- Cred că ar trebui să votăm.
- Din nou? Am făcut deja asta.

Continuity

Do not use ellipses when an ongoing sentence is split between two or more continuous subtitles. Commas should be used as usual when appropriate.

CORRECT:

SUB 1: Ți-aș spune să vii și tu,
SUB 2: dar nu cred că
mama și tata ar fi de acord.

INCORRECT:

SUB 1: Ți-aș spune să vii și tu…
SUB 2: … dar nu cred că
mama și tata ar fi de acord.

Use an ellipsis to indicate:
- Dialogue that trails off
- Dialogue that begins mid-sentence
- A significant pause (one second or more)
- If dialogue continues in the next subtitle after a significant pause, ellipses should be used at both the end of the first subtitle and at the beginning of the second subtitle.
- An interruption to the dialogue caused by on-screen text (see section "On-screen text").

Note: There should not be a space before an ellipsis that is used at the end of a sentence. However, there should always be a space between an ellipsis and the following word when the ellipsis is at the beginning of the sentence.

EXAMPLE:

SUB 1: Stai așa, ai mâncat…
SUB 2: … chiar și ultima bucățică?

EXAMPLE:

- Cred că ai uitat să închizi…
- Am închis-o!

On-screen Text

On-screen text that conveys important information to the scene should be included.

This includes narrative text (text that is part of principal photography, such as a sign hanging on the wall, a note on the fridge or a text on a cell-phone screen) and burn-in text (text that has been added in post-production, such as location text "BERLIN, 1942" or name/title information "James Corden - Host").

Subtitles should generally match the case of the on-screen text.

On-screen text should be deleted if it is understood by the audience and would be redundant to title. Dialogue subtitles should be re-timed to close any gaps that are created when narrative and burn-in subtitles are re-moved.

If the dialogue is interrupted by an on-screen text subtitle, use ellipses to indicate the interruption.

EXAMPLE:

SUB 1: Nu știam…
SUB 2: REGIZOR
SUB 3: … că era și dansatoare.

Notes: On-screen text and dialogue should be on different subtitles.

Glossaries

Keep a glossary of recurring terms and names to ensure consistency across episodes and seasons.

Glossaries should also include templates for recurring opening- and end-credits sequences when necessary.

Spelling & Research

Resources:
Please refer to the following online resource for spelling:
- Dicţionarul Explicativ al Limbii Române:
  http://dexonline.ro

The following resource also contains useful information (e.g. punctuation tips): http://publications.europa.eu/code/ro/ro-000100.htm

Characters:

Country/region	Romania
Lower-case characters	a, ă, â, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, î, j, k, l, m, n, o, p, q, r, s, ș, t, ț, u, v, w, x, y, z
Upper-case characters	A, Ă, Â, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, Î, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, Ș, T, Ț, U, V, W, X, Y, Z
Extended Latin characters	ă, Ă, â, Â, î, Î, ș, Ș, ț, Ț
Notes	• If the letters with diacritics are capitalized, they maintain their diacritical mark: Ă, Â, Î, Ș, Ț • The accent of words is not marked in writing

Capitalization:

The names of days, months, languages, nationalities, also adjectives derived from country names are not capitalized in Romanian unlike in English.

The first letter of cardinal points is only capitalized when they refer to geographic names (e.g. Coasta de Vest).

Titles and names:

When confirming the names of songs, albums, cast & crew, movies/TV shows, or apps, please remain consistent with how they appear in Apple Music and iTunes.

Translate brand names into a more generic term if the brand is unknown in Romanian and the viewer would miss out on meaning in context (e.g. "înălbitor" for "Clorox").

Translate character names or nicknames if their localized form is generally used and well-known in Romanian (e.g. "Albă ca Zăpada" for "Snow White"), or if the name is plot-pertinent (e.g. "Turnătorul" for "Snitch").

Translate historical or popular characters if there is a localized form (e.g. "Moș Crăciun" for "Santa Claus").

Apply localized spelling conventions for IP-protected names and terms (e.g. "Neville Poponeață" for "Neville Longbottom").
Do not translate proper first and last names (e.g. "Ion" for "John", etc.).

Foreign proper nouns should be transliterated in Romanian, not English (e.g. "Mișa" instead of "Misha").

Abbreviations and acronyms:
Only very well-known acronyms can be used freely (e.g. SUA, FBI, CIA, etc.), otherwise acronyms should be avoided. When used, acronyms must be used without periods.

Abbreviations should generally be avoided, except for the very common ones (e.g. "dl", "dna", etc.). Please note that there is no full stop used after the abbreviations obtained from the first and last letters of the word.

No full stop used after abbreviations of units of measurement.

There is no full stop after abbreviations such as Tarom as they have been assimilated to nouns.

The symbols and shortenings in chemistry, physics, mathematics (e.g. O, H, Km, l, Kg) as well as the cardinal points (e.g. N, S, E, V) are written without a period.

Slang:
Avoid using casual and slang spellings. If absolutely necessary, slang spellings should be confirmed with reputable sources whenever possible.

Note: Cacophony is to be avoided.

Expletives

Match the audio. Do not censor at will. If the expletive is audible, title the word.

If the expletive is bleeped, muted, or censored in any way, title the first letter of the word and represent the rest of the word with asterisks.

EXAMPLE:
<p style="text-align:center">Cum p*** mea să faci așa ceva?</p>

Foreign Dialogue

Foreign dialogue should only be translated if it is plot-pertinent and meant to be understood by the viewer.

Non-essential foreign dialogue should not be titled if it stands alone. If non-essential foreign dialogue is part of a larger English sentence, then it can be titled.

EXAMPLE:
> Vreau să-ți spun *merci* pentru ajutor.

Italics

Italics should be used for
- Voice-over dialogue (e.g. narration or a character's internal thoughts)
- Dialogue from an entirely different location (such as pre-lap dialogue from the next scene)
- Dialogue transmitted over phone, radio, TV, or other electronic device
- Song lyrics
- Foreign language
- Titles of books, albums and movies. (Song titles should appear in quotation marks.)
- Genus and species names (e.g. *E. coli, Triceratops*)

Numerals

Numbers one to ten should be spelled out. Numbers 11 and up should be represented numerically.

The digit grouping symbol is the period (e.g. 12.000). Numbers between 1000 and 9999 do not require a period. Numbers 10.000 and up should be written with a period.

The decimal symbol is the comma (e.g. 12,53).

Exceptions:
- Addresses should always be written numerically, in the localized format (e.g. Primrose Lane nr. 5).
- In case of an obvious quantitative, mathematical or scientific context, as well as hours or calendar dates, numbers one to ten should be represented numerically.
- Numbers that begin a sentence should generally be spelled out.

Date
- The long date format should generally be used, i.e. with the month spelled out (e.g. 17 martie 2017).
- Centuries should always be represented by Roman numerals, with or without articles, but no abbreviations: "secolul al XX-lea", "între secolul I și secolul X".
- Names of days and months must be used in their normal form, not abbreviated (e.g. luni, marți, ianuarie etc.). Please note that the first letter is never capitalized.

Time
- The 24 hour format should be used, with the colon (:) as a separator (e.g. 23:00).
- Romanian does not use the AM/PM designation.

Measurement Units
The metric system is commonly used and conversion to the metric system is generally necessary.

Measurement units that the Romanian viewer would not be familiar with must be converted to the metric system. Depending on context, conversion does not need to be exact, it can be approximate (e.g. three miles can be approximated to 5 km, instead of 4828 m). However, conversion is not necessary if the same unit is used in Romanian (e.g. "țeavă de doi țoli" for "two-inch pipe").

Temperature is measured in Celsius degrees and conversion is necessary.

Category	English	Romanian	Abbreviation
Linear Measure	Kilometer	kilometru	km
	Meter	metru	m
	Decimeter	decimetru	dm
	Centimeter	centimetru	cm
	Millimeter	milimetru	mm
Capacity	Hectoliter	hectolitru	hl
	Liter	litru	l
	Deciliter	decilitru	dl
	Centiliter	centilitru	cl
	Milliliter	mililitru	ml
Mass	Ton	tonă	t
	Kilogram	kilogram	kg
	Pound	livră	lb
	Gram	gram	g
	Decigram	decigram	dg
	Centigram	centigram	cg
	Milligram	miligram	mg
English Units of Measure	Inch	inch/țol	in
	Feet	picior	ft
	Mile	milă	n/a
	Gallon	gallon	n/a

Notes
- The English abbreviations are used for English units of measurement.
- If the unit of measurement is preceded by a number, there should be a (non-breaking) space between the number and the unit of measurement (e.g. 35 m, 800 km, 234 kg).
- No full stop used after abbreviations of units of measurement.

Currency

If a unit of currency is spoken in dialogue it should be spelled out. Currency symbols should not be used.

EXAMPLE 1:

Aș vinde aplicația pentru 25 de dolari.

If a unit of currency is not spoken in dialogue, the number should be written without it.

EXAMPLE 2:

Asta costă fie 129, fie 200,
în funcție de model.

Punctuation

Follow standard official rules.

Quotation marks should be used for dialogue and written text that is quoted, recited from memory, or read. It should also be used to convey irony.
- Use Romanian quotation marks („ "). **Note:** single quotation marks do not exist in Romanian. Use chevrons (« ») for a quote within a quote.
- Question marks and exclamation points should be placed outside of the quotation marks unless they are part of the quoted material.
- If quoted text continues over several subtitles, quotation marks should only be used at the very beginning and very end of the quote. (Not at the beginning of each subtitle within the quote.)

Colons can be used when appropriate. **Semicolons** should not be used.

Spacing issues:
- There should always be a space before question marks and exclamation points. However, no space should be left before other punctuation marks.
- There should not be a space before an ellipsis that is used at the end of a sentence (e.g. "Tastați o intrare…"). However, there should always be a space between an ellipsis and the following word when the ellipsis is at the beginning of the sentence (e.g. "… sau răsfoiți lista").

Songs

Song lyrics should generally not be titled unless they are actuated on-screen and plot-pertinent. Plot-pertinent doesn't simply mean thematically relevant—it means that the lyrics convey information that is necessary for a viewer's understanding of the plot.

No end punctuation should be used when titling lyrics, except for question marks or exclamation points when appropriate.

Commas should be used as usual within lyrics, but not at the end of a line.

The first letter in each line should be capitalized.

CORRECT:

Ai crezut că voi cădea
Dar nici vorbă

INCORRECT:

Ai crezut că voi cădea,
dar nici vorbă

In case of casual language/slang in song lyrics, the subtitles should try to match the original register, but poetic license should be minimized.

There is a bit more leniency with casual/slang spelling in song lyrics than in spoken dialogue.

Songs in which the lyrics have been altered or parodied for comedic effect can generally be titled.

Translation Credits

There should not be a subtitle for a translation/translator credit.