



Original Content QA Lab: Subtitling Guidelines CS-CZ

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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

Line Treatment

Subtitles should occupy 2 lines maximum. Line breaks should ideally match a logical break in the dialogue, i.e. after a punctuation mark, or before a preposition or conjunction. A one-letter preposition should not be left at the end of a line. A number and its unit should not be split into two lines.

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:

- Myslím, že bychom měli hlasovat.
- Už zase?

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: Řídím hudební vydavatelství
SUB 2: a vyhledávám nové talenty.

CORRECT:

SUB 1: Řekl bych ti, abys šel taky,
SUB 2: ale mámě a tátovi
by se to asi nelíbilo.

INCORRECT:

SUB 1: Řekl bych ti, abys šel taky...
SUB 2: ...ale mámě a tátovi
by se to asi nelíbilo.

Use an ellipsis to indicate:

- Dialogue that trails off
- Dialogue that begins mid-sentence
- An abrupt interruption
- An interruption to the dialogue caused by on-screen text (see section "On-screen text")
- 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.

EXAMPLE:

SUB 1: Počkej, tys to...
SUB 2: ...vážně snědl všechno?

On-screen Text

Provide subtitles for all plot-pertinent on-screen text. 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 "BERLÍN").

Subtitles for on-screen text should always be in upper case.

On-screen text should not be titled if it is understood by the audience. For on-screen text that includes details about the speaker, only subtitle their title (translate as appropriate). Do not subtitle speaker details that are redundant, such as the speaker name, the name of their company, or the name of their character.

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

EXAMPLE:

SUB 1: Nevěděl jsem,...
SUB 2: REŽISÉR
SUB 3: ...že byla také tanečnicí.

Note: On-screen text and dialogue always have to be on separate subtitles (as shown above).

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:

Refer to the following sources as the primary sources for spelling and grammar:

- Online source:
 - Internetová jazyková příručka ÚJČ AVČR:
<http://prirucka.ujc.cas.cz>
- Printed sources:
 - Pravidla českého pravopisu
 - Slovník spisovné češtiny
 - Slovník spisovného jazyka českého

- Stručná mluvnice česká

As a general reference for creating Czech subtitles, the following book is recommended:

- Pošta, Miroslav (2012): Titulkujeme profesionálně. Apostrof. ISBN: 978-80-87561-16-4
- **Note:** Pages 68-82 are of particular interest as they offer guidance and tips concerning shortening and quality of subtitles. A preview can be found on here:
<https://books.google.cz/books?printsec=frontcover&id=cw9xwsDy2C0C&hl=cs#v=onepage&q&f=false>

Titles and names:

Main title and episode titles should not be subtitled.

In general, do not translate proper first and last names. Exceptions:

- Character names known to the Czech audience (such as "Strýček Skrblík" for "Scrooge McDuck")
- Historical or mythical characters ("Jindřich VIII." for "Henry VIII")
- Plot-pertinent nicknames ("Práškač" for "The Snitch")

In line with this rule, do not adapt women's last names to the traditional Czech form.

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

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.

Abbreviations and acronyms:

Only very well-known acronyms can be used freely (e.g. FBI, CIA, etc.), otherwise acronyms should be avoided. Abbreviations should generally be avoided, except for the very common ones (e.g. "Kč" etc.).

Slang:

Avoid using slang spellings. If necessary, slang spellings should be confirmed with reputable sources whenever possible.

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:

On ví h****.

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:

Arrivederci, milé dámy,
mějte se tu hezky.

Italics

Italics should be used for

- Voice-over dialogue (examples: 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 (examples: *E. coli*, *Triceratops*)

Numerals

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

Numbers that begin a sentence should generally be spelled out.

Phone numbers and addresses should always be written numerically:

EXAMPLE:

- Adresa?
- Liliová 3.

The number format must always follow the Czech rules, as described in <http://prirucka.ujc.cas.cz>, such as:

- In case of four or more digit numbers, the digits should be grouped into groups of three counting from the end of the number, and separated from one another by a space.

EXAMPLE:

- Kolik vás přišlo?
- Asi 5 000.

Exception: Numerals referring to years and addresses.

EXAMPLE:

Stalo se to v roce 1986.

- A number should not be split between lines. Ideally, when combined with a noun, it should not stand alone at the end of a line.

CORRECT:

Soutěže se zúčastnilo
500 mužů a 637 žen.

INCORRECT:

Soutěže se zúčastnilo 500
mužů a 637 žen.

- Use a comma as a decimal separator.

Date, Time, Currency, Symbols and Measurements

Always use the Czech formats for dates, times and currencies, as described in <http://prirucka.ujc.cas.cz>.

When rendering dates, use one of the following formats, as appropriate:

OPTION 1: 13. 3. 2017

OPTION 2: 13. března 2017

OPTION 3: 13. březen 2017

When rendering times in the 24h format, use a colon:

EXAMPLE:

V 9:30 mám jednání.

If a unit of currency is spoken in dialogue it should be spelled out or represented with the appropriate symbol.

EXAMPLE 1:

Prodával bych to za 99 centů.

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

EXAMPLE 2:

Bude tě to stát 129 nebo 199,
podle toho, jaký model chceš.

Note: Currency should never be converted.

Measurements and symbols: Always use a space between a number and a measurement, an abbreviation or symbol (6 km, 5 °C, 14 %), unless they are used as an adjective, in which case there should be no space and no other character (3leté dítě, 6km běh, 14% roztok).

Metric system: Convert to the metric system: kilometers (km), centimeters (cm), meters (m), kilograms (kg).

Punctuation

Follow standard official rules as described in <http://prirucka.ujc.cas.cz>.

Some notes:

- Make sure to use the correct Czech quotation marks: „“
- Quotation marks should be used for dialogue and written text that is quoted, recited from memory, or read.
- Periods, commas, 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.)
- Use single quotes for a quote within a quote: , ‘
- Colons can be used when appropriate. Semicolons should not be used.

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.

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

Song lyrics should be italicized.

Punctuation and capitalization of lyrics should be governed by general language rules for Czech.

Translation Credits

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