



Original Content QA Lab: Subtitling Guidelines

IW-IL

Last Revision
August 16th, 2017

Table of Contents

Reading Speed	3
Duration	3
Intervals	3
Character Limitations	3
Timing + Duration	3
Line Treatment	4
Positioning	4
Titling Dialogue	4
Dual Speakers	4
Continuity	5
On-screen Text	6
Glossaries	6
Spelling & Research.....	7
Titles and names:.....	7
Abbreviations and Acronyms.....	8
Repetitions	8
Expletives	8
Foreign Dialogue.....	9
Italics.....	9
Numerals.....	9
Date and Time	11
Measurements	11
Punctuation	12
Quotation marks	12
Songs	13
Translation Credits.....	13

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.

Flag 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.

If multiple lines are necessary, each line must be broken so that they are of similar character lengths.

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, or whoa. These can be titled when part of a larger sentence.

Dual Speakers

Use a hyphen to denote a second speaker when two speakers appear in the same subtitle (one speaker per line).

No space should appear between hyphens and dialogue.

EXAMPLE:

אתה בא?
-רק רגע, אני כבר מגיע

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: לא הייתי בטוחה שתבין
SUB 2: למה אני מתכוונת

INCORRECT:

SUB 1: לא הייתי בטוחה שתבין...
SUB 2: למה אני מתכוונת...

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.

EXAMPLE:

SUB 1: רגע, אתה באמת מתכוון לאכול...
SUB 2: ...את כל זה?

Use ellipses (...) to indicate an abrupt interruption.

EXAMPLE:

נראה לי ששכחת לסגור...
-סגרתי אותו!

On-screen Text

Include all plot-pertinent on-screen text, enclosed in hyphens on both sides.

This includes narrative text (text that is part of principal photography) and burn-in text (text that has been added in post-production).

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

EXAMPLE:

Location text:

- ברלין, 1942 -

Name/title information:

- ג'יימס קורדון, מנחה -

Use ellipses in the end of a sentence preceding on-screen text, in cases where the on-screen text interrupts the dialogue (but do not use ellipses at the beginning of the sentence following the on-screen text).

EXAMPLE:

Subtitle 1: עבדתי על הסרט הזה...

Burn-in: - מרטין סקורסזה, במאי -

Subtitle 2: במשך שישה חודשים

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

Spelling:

Refer to the Academy of Hebrew Language as the primary source for spelling. <http://hebrew-academy.org.il>

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.

Main title and episode titles should not be subtitled. When spoken during show/film, should be transliterated.

Names of songs should appear in English with quotation marks.

Names of albums should be transliterated with quotation marks.

Names of tours, singers, and music production companies should be transliterated.

Use Hebrew-specific translations for historical events and mythical characters.

EXAMPLE:

Iraq War

Incorrect:

מלחמת עיראק

Correct:

מלחמת המפרץ השנייה

Character names should be translated or transliterated, depending on how well known they are in Hebrew. Mickey Mouse would be transliterated – ג'ק המרטש, but Jack The Ripper would be translated – מיקי מאוס.

Names of people and places should be transliterated (not translated). Make sure to remain consistent with how these nouns are usually transliterated in Hebrew.

EXAMPLE:

New York

Incorrect:

יורק החדשה

Correct:

ניו יורק

Brand names:

- Use transliterated names for known brands (Apple, Sony, Adidas).
- Translate into a generic term if brand is unknown for Hebrew speakers (for example, for Panera, use café).

Abbreviations and Acronyms

Abbreviations and acronyms should be used in subtitles when they are commonly used in Hebrew and understood by most Hebrew viewers (וכו', ע"י, רה"מ, ת"א).

Transliterated Acronyms (DJ) should usually use hyphen(s) (די-ג'יי).

Slang:

Slang spellings should be verified using reputable sources whenever possible.

Repetitions

Do not translate words or phrases repeated more than once (unless the repetition is meaningful).

If the word or phrase is repeated twice in a row, time subtitle to the audio but translate only once.

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, omit the word or use an appropriate synonym.

EXAMPLE:

This is my f***** house
זה הבית שלי

Foreign Dialogue

Translation is generally not required unless the dialogue is plot-pertinent or clearly meant to be understood by the viewer (consult EN subtitles).

Well-known phrases, expressions or words (such as *Merci*, *Gracias*, etc.) can be exempt from translation.

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 translated.

Use quotation marks for transliterated foreign words and sentences.

EXAMPLE:

I'm saying *arrivederci* to sweets for a while.

אני אומר "שלום ולא להתראות" למתוקים
או
אני אומר "ארווודרצ'י" למתוקים

Italics

Do not use *italics*.

Numerals

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

Numbers between 1000 and 9999 do not require a comma. Numbers 10,000 and up should be written with a comma.

Exceptions:

- Addresses should always be written numerically: רח' תל אביב 5
- Numbers that begin a sentence should generally be spelled out.
- A range of numbers should always be written numerically: 6-4 שעות

Some nouns use the singular form for multiples of 10, starting at 20.

EXAMPLES:

30 שנה, 50 איש, מיליארד דולר

For some nouns in Hebrew, the word "one" is usually redundant.

EXAMPLE:

Incorrect:

כעבור שבוע אחד

Correct:

כעבור שבוע

When a prefix precedes a numeric, a hyphen (with no space) is inserted between them.

EXAMPLE:

זה התחיל ב-1987

טקס האוסקר ה-47

Numbers (as well as dates) should be written from right to left.

EXAMPLES:

English:

25-30

Hebrew:

30-25

Date and Time

For ranges of dates and times place the earlier number to the right.

EXAMPLE:

15.4.1997-28.3.1990

Date format should be dd.mm.yyyy (but do not use "0" for single-digit days or months).

EXAMPLE:

June 3rd, 1985 would be written as 3.6.1985

Use 24-hour annotation to indicate time - 8:30pm would be translated to 20:30.

Measurements

Units of currency, weight, and distance should be spelled out. Do not use signs (\$, %).

EXAMPLES:

30 דולר
120 ק"מ
50 אירו

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

EXAMPLE:

אנחנו מחפשים מימון של 50 אלף.

Weight and distance should be converted from the royal system (inches, miles) to the metric system (kilometers, kilograms, etc.). Use common Hebrew designations for units.

The number and the name of the unit should be separated by a space.

EXAMPLES:

ג"ב (ג'יגה בייט), ק"מ (קילומטר)

40 ק"ג

Punctuation

Follow standard official rules.

Quotation marks

Some notes:

- Quotation marks should be used for dialogue and written text that is quoted, recited from memory, or read.
- For regular quotations use double quotation marks.

EXAMPLE:

"כמה זה עולה?", היא שאלה את המוכרת

- 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.)

EXAMPLE:

Correct:

Subtitle 1: "אני לא רעבה עכשיו,
Subtitle 2: אתפוס משהו אחר כך"

Incorrect:

Subtitle 1: "אני לא רעבה עכשיו,
Subtitle 2: "אתפוס משהו אחר כך"

- Use single quotes for a quote within a quote.

EXAMPLE:

"את זוכרת את 'מגילת העצמאות' בעל פה?"

- Since Hebrew does not have Capital Letters, use quotation marks when referring to terms that are not in Hebrew, like a brand name, as part of a sentence.

EXAMPLE:

אנחנו הולכים היום ל"דיסנילנד"...

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.

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.