Original Content QA Lab:
Subtitling Guidelines
FR-FR (SDH)

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Reading Speed

20 characters per second for most programming.
17 characters per second for programming intended for children

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 must absolutely respect any cut of video. 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.

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. In addition, subtitles should never hide the interlocutors' lips to allow lip/speech reading.

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.

SDH files should include stand-alone utterances/exclamations such as « oh, waouh, ah ».

Dual Speakers

Use a hyphen to indicate two speakers in the same subtitle. No space should appear between hyphens and dialogue. If a speaker identifier is needed, it should follow the hyphen (see Speaker Identifiers section).

EXAMPLE:
- Je pense qu'on devrait voter.
- (Jean) : Encore ? Mais on l'a déjà fait.

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: Tu pourrais nous accompagner,

SUB 2: mais je ne pense pas
que maman et papa seraient d'accord.

INCORRECT:

SUB 1: Tu pourrais nous accompagner…

SUB 2: … mais je ne pense pas
que maman et papa seraient d'accord.

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: Attends, tu as vraiment…
SUB 2: …tout mangé ?

• An abrupt interruption.

EXAMPLE:

- Je pense que tu as oublié de fermer...
- Je l'ai fermé !

Speaker identifiers

Any change in speaker should be preceded with a hyphen. Speaker identifiers should be used when it's not clear from visuals or context who is speaking.

CORRECT:

- (Marie) : Que se passe-t-il ?

INCORRECT:

(Marie) : Que se passe-t-il ?

Avoid SDH subtitles with:

· incorrect speaker IDs (the wrong person is identified)
· redundant speaker IDs (the person is clearly speaking on-screen)
· missing speaker IDs (it's not clear from visuals or context who's speaking without an ID)

Qualifiers should be used when a speaker alters their regular speaking voice in a way that is not obvious from context or visuals.

EXAMPLES:

If it's not clear from visuals/context who's speaking:

- (Jean murmure) : Tu viens ?

If it is clear from visuals/context who's speaking:

- (avec un accent irlandais) Je vous souhaite
le meilleur des bonjours.

A qualifier should also be used when the speaker resumes speaking in their normal voice:

- (d'une voix normale) Je ne sais pas
pourquoi j'ai pris cet accent.

All capital letters should only be used when several people speak at the same time.

EXAMPLE:

- (Pierre et Julie) : À DEMAIN !

Sound effects

Sound effects that are plot-pertinent or lend helpful context to a scene should be identified when they aren't obvious from visuals or context.

EXAMPLES:

When a sound is heard once:

(claquement de porte)

If the sound effect is described by a sentence, capitalize the first letter and use a period:

(La porte claque.)

When a sound is heard repeatedly:

(homme qui tousse)

Avoid SDH subtitles with:
· redundant sound effects (if we see someone pour a glass of water or shoot a gun, it's not necessary to indicate (eau qui coule) or (coup de feu))
· missing plot-pertinent sound effects (if someone reacts to a noise heard off-screen, for example, the sound should be indicated)
· inaccurate sound effects (a door slam is indicated as a gunshot, for example)

Note: Sound effects and dialogue should not appear in the same subtitle unless absolutely necessary due to time/reading-speed constraints.

EXAMPLE 1 (preferred)**:**

SUB 1: (Une porte claque au loin.)

SUB 2: Qu'est-ce que c'était ?

EXAMPLE 2 (only if needed in extreme cases):

(Une porte claque au loin.)
- Qu'est-ce que c'était ?

On-screen Text

SDH streams should not subtitle any redundant on-screen text. This applies to both narrative text (text that is part of principal photography) and burn-in text (text that has been added in post-production).

If an English template that contains on-screen text is reformatted into an SDH file, dialogue subtitles should be re-timed to close any gaps that are created when narrative and burn-in subtitles are removed.

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

Accents:
Whenever applicable, always put the accent on a capitalized letter.

Abbreviations:
Here are some of the most common abbreviations in French:
Monsieur = M. (period);
Madame = Mme (no period);
Docteur = Dr (no period);
Professeur = Pr (no period)

Acronyms:

Use periods between letters when you have enough space, otherwise they can be dismissed: S.W.A.T. or FBI, NYC, GIGN.

Brand names:

Use brand names when it's relevant to the plot. For example, in the movie *The Social Network*, you can use "Facebook". Otherwise, you can replace by a generic, for example replace "a Ferrari" by "une voiture de luxe" or "a Rolex" by "une montre de luxe".

Character names and nicknames:

Never translate names, for example do not replace "John" by "Jean" or "Michael" by "Michel".

About nicknames, they should be translated if there is a meaning, for example the nickname of "Popcaan" (the rapper) is "The Unruly Boss". We will not replace it by "Le patron indiscipliné", we will keep the English nickname.

For historical characters, we should translate their names. For example, "Christopher Columbus" will be replaced by "Christophe Colomb".

Grammar and rules

For linguistic and grammar questions, you can refer to:
- L'Académie française: http://www.academie-francaise.fr/questions-de-langue
- Le Projet Voltaire: https://www.projet-voltaire.fr/regles-orthographe/

Spelling:

Refer to *Le Trésor de langue française* as the primary source for spelling: http://www.cnrtl.fr/definition/

Translation

For bilingual dictionaries, refer to:
- WordReference: http://www.wordreference.com/
- Linguee: http://www.linguee.fr/

For monolingual dictionaries in English (useful to find definitions of words), refer to The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English: http://www.ldoceonline.com/

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.

Slang:
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:

P*****, c'est génial !

Foreign Dialogue

Foreign dialogue should only be translated if it is plot-pertinent and meant to be understood by the viewer. If the foreign dialogue lasts longer than 1 subtitle, a green ellipsis should appear for the remaining time.

EXAMPLE 1:

- Buongiorno !

EXAMPLE 2:

SUB 1: (Jean parle en italien)

SUB 2: ...

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:

J'ai dit *bye bye* aux sucreries pour un bon moment.

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. These dialogues should also be preceded with an asterisk (except for the first one, where the speaker should be indicated.
- 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*)

Speaker IDs and qualifiers should be added as needed, but should not be italicized.

EXAMPLE 1:

(Jean) : *C'est ici que notre histoire a commencé
il y a tout juste 30 ans.*

EXAMPLE 2:

SUB 1: - (Personne au téléphone) : *Veuillez patienter.*

SUB 2: * *Votre appel sera bientôt transféré.*

Numerals

Numbers one to ten should be spelled out. 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: 5 Primrose Lane
- Numbers that begin a sentence should generally be spelled out.

Indicate time on a 24-hour format, using the following spacing:

EXAMPLE 1: It is 11:00 am. > Il est 11 h (space).
EXAMPLE 2: It is 10:30 pm. > Il est 22h30 (no space).

Measurements must be converted.

EXAMPLE 1: 10 ft > 3 m
EXAMPLE 2: 10 lbs > 4,5 kg
EXAMPLE 3: 100 °F > 38 °C
EXAMPLE 4: 34 fl oz > 1 l

Currency

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

EXAMPLE 1:

Je vais vendre l'app à 99 cents ou 1,29 $.

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

EXAMPLE 2:

Cela vous coûtera 129 ou 199
selon le modèle.

Unless in USD, currency must be converted to euros.

EXAMPLE 1: 100 $ > 100 $
EXAMPLE 2: 13 000 ¥ > 100 €

Punctuation

Follow standard official rules.

Some notes:

- Quotation marks should be used for dialogue and written text that is quoted, recited from memory, or read. lease use French quotation marks « ».

EXAMPLE:

- J'ai pensé lui dire : « Tu es très belle ».

- Question marks and exclamation points should be placed outside of the quotation marks unless they are part of the quoted material. Periods and commas are always placed inside the quotation marks.

EXAMPLE 1: - Je me suis demandé : « Qu'est-ce que je fais là ? »
EXAMPLE 2: - Je lui ai dit : « Coucou ! »
EXAMPLE 3: - Comme le disait Jean de La Fontaine : « Rien ne sert de courir, il faut partir à point.»

- 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:

SUB 1: « Rien ne sert de courir,
SUB 1: il faut partir à point.»

- Colons and semicolons can be used when appropriate.
- Space should be used before a colon and percentage sign, and before and after French quotation marks.
- Space should be used in front of question marks and exclamation points.

Songs

Song lyrics should generally only be titled if 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 actuated on-screen or heard within the scene should be identified if possible.

EXAMPLE:

(« Blank Space » de Taylor Swift
est diffusé dans les haut-parleurs)

If the song lasts longer than 1 subtitle, magenta music symbols (♪♪) should appear for the remaining time. (Provided that there is no additional information to subtitle.)

EXAMPLE:

SUB 1: (« Blank Space » de Taylor Swift
est diffusé dans les haut-parleurs)

SUB 2: ♪♪

Generic descriptors should be used for non-identifiable songs actuated or heard within the scene.

EXAMPLE:

(La chaîne hi-fi diffuse une musique rock)

Songs heard on the soundtrack should generally not be identified or indicated.

When titling lyrics:
· 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:

Je vais l'attraper, lui et son chapeau
Les faire tourner comme un soleil

INCORRECT:

Je vais l'attraper, lui et son chapeau,
les faire tourner comme un soleil.

There is a bit more leniency with casual/slang spelling in song lyrics than in spoken dialogue. For example, dropping the "e" from "petit" ("p'tit") is acceptable when the audio calls for it.

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

Translator Credits

There should not be a subtitle for a translator credit.