Original Content QA Lab: Subtitling Guidelines
ZH-TW

Last Revision
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Reading Speed

9 characters per second for most programming.
7 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

Maxima 16 mandarin characters per line. (including punctuation)

Note：Although it allows 16 characters, the translation subtitles should be both precise and concise, avoid any redundant words.

CORRECT:
<div align="center">

-只有我們，沒有別人
-沒有別人在這
</div>

INCORRECT:

<div align="center">

-這裡就只有我們，沒有別人
-這裡本來就沒有別人啊
</div>

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.

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.
- Although translated subtitles aren't strictly required to match the verbal timeline for overall content understanding purpose, try to match it if it is

possible. So that it makes sense for the audience who understands partial english dialog.
- 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. No space should appear between hyphens and dialogue.

EXAMPLE:

-我們開始吧
-Will像是個太空人.

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: 我猜你應該可以標記

SUB 2: 但我不覺得爸媽會同意

INCORRECT:

SUB 1: 我猜你應該可以標記.......

SUB 2: ......但我不覺得爸媽會同意。

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: 等等，你剛吃了......
SUB 2: ......真的吃了全部?

On-screen Text

Provide subtitles for all plot-pertinent on-screen text, includes narrative text (text that is part of principal photography) and burn-in text (text that has been added in post-production).

But no need to provide subtitle during title music or repeatedly character's name. For example, judges's name are introduced and subtitled previously, it can be ignored when the name appear again during on-screen text of title music.

Note: Onscreen text and dialogue should be on different subtitles. Keep dialogue and burnt-ins/forced narratives separate at all times. You can use ellipsis in cases where the burnt-in/forced narrative interrupts the dialogue.

Note: Keep the onscreen text short and efficient. Avoid redundant words.

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.

Names

Character: Matching what is appeared on the Apple Music if it can be found. Otherwise, for the celebrities including their nicknames, use the name well-known to Taiwanese. For the general character, use the transliterations. Same rule applied to historical/mythical characters.
Example:
Ludwig van Beethoven > 貝多芬
Edward VIII > 溫莎公爵
Santa Claus > 聖誕老人

Brand, App, Company: Remain original name, only provided translated name if it is official.
Example:

<div align="center">

Incorrect : Apple -> 蘋果

Correct：Pokémon GO-> 寶可夢

</div>

Historical & Building: Find the common way to express it If it is well-know. Leave as it is otherwise.
Example

<div align="center">

Cattedrale di Santa Maria del Fior
聖母百花大教堂

</div>

Albums, Songs, Tour: It should remain the same as in Apple Music and iTunes.

Note : All the names should be remain consistent in the same film, video. Make sure to build master glossary for series.
Note : Do not use Chinese middle period separator (·) between first name and last name.

Spelling & Research

Spelling:
Refer to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary as the primary source for spelling.
https://www.merriam-webster.com/ (English)
http://dict.mini.moe.edu.tw/cgi-bin/gdic/gsweb.cgi?o=ddictionary (Mandarin)

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. The slang translation should express the meaning of it instead of directly translation.

EXAMPLE:

<div align="center">

EN: Give a ring

</div>

Correct : 打電話
Incorrect : 給戒指

Expletives

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

EN: That's fucking brilliant.
ZH-TW: 真他媽的太棒了

If the expletive is bleeped, muted, or censored in any way, find alternative way to express it.

EXAMPLE:

EN: That's f****** brilliant.
ZH-TW: 真是太棒了

Note : Although vulgar wording is not necessary expletives, it should be avoided.

EXAMPLE:

「機車」、「很鳥」、「俗辣」、「爽到爆」、「幹」

Acronyms

Acronyms shall not be translated.

Examples: NATO, BRICS, OPEC, etc.

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:

Bon Appétit. > 用餐愉快

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 (Only if it is necessary)

Numerals

- Chinese numbers from 1 to 10 should be written out if space permits, such as 一，二，三. And **do not mix with Arabic**. such as 四億3千萬.
- Numbers 11 and up should be represented numerically.(e.g. 1992年)
- Use half width numbers (1，2，3) instead of full width numbers（１，２，３）.
- Do not use financially used characters (壹, 貳, 參, etc).
- Carefully about the western Arabic numerals converting:

Example：

10 millions > 一千萬

Note：If space limited, 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.

Currency

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

EXAMPLE 1:

I'd sell the app for 99 cents or $1.29.
這個應用程式售價是美金99分，或美金1.29。

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

EXAMPLE 2:

That'll cost you 129 or 199
depending on the model.
根據不同的型號，價格是129或199。

Note : Do not convert currency to Taiwan dollar.

Measurement

Please convert the measurement of the wight, hight, volume and dimension to Taiwanese local use if it is possible. No need to convert if it is specific for certain field, such as light-year should not be converted to kilometer.

Punctuation

Follow standard official rules.

- Only use full width Chinese punctuation, except for the hyphens in dual speakers subtitles or the periods in abbreviations (e.g., M.B.A. and "A、B、C")
- Full-width question marks or exclamation marks are allowed at the end of a line/subtitle only. Do not use any type of periods at the end of line.
- Colons can be used when appropriate. (e.g., 日期：1976年8月27日).
- Do not use : "!?" or "??" or "!!"
- Quotation marks(Double) should be used for dialogue and written text that is quoted, recited from memory, or read. (e.g 我媽曾說："善良最重要")

- Question marks(Double) 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.

Songs lyrics

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.

Use an ellipsis when a song continues in the background but is no longer subtitled to give precedence to dialogue.

Translation Credits

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