



# Original Content QA Lab: Subtitling Guidelines

## SV-SE

---

Last Revision  
August 4, 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 .....	5
Continuity .....	5
On-screen Text .....	6
Glossaries .....	7
Spelling & Research.....	7
Expletives .....	8
Foreign Dialogue.....	8
Italics.....	9
Numerals.....	9
Currency & Units of Measure.....	10
Punctuation .....	11
Songs .....	11
Translation Credits.....	12

## 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. If a line break is necessary, each line must be broken so that they are of similar character lengths and it makes sense grammatically.

### **CORRECT:**

Jag tror att den hästen  
kommer att vinna.

### **INCORRECT:**

Jag tror att den hästen kommer  
att vinna.

### **INCORRECT:**

Jag tror att den  
hästen kommer att vinna.

## 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.
- Keep the subtitles as concise and unambiguous as possible by using proper syntax and avoiding straight translations.

**CORRECT:**

Google kom ut med en produkt  
som liknar Companion.

**INCORRECT:**

Google kom ut med en liknande  
produkt som Companion.

**CORRECT:**

Om ni inte har jobbat med det  
varenda minut, så ställer jag in mötet.

**INCORRECT:**

Om ni inte har jobbat med det  
varenda minut, så tar jag inte mötet.  
(Literal translation of "take the meeting".)

## Dual Speakers

Use a hyphen to indicate two speakers in the same subtitle. No space should appear between hyphens and dialogue.

**EXAMPLE:**

-Jag tycker vi ska rösta.  
-Igen? Vi har ju redan gjort det.

## 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: Jag tycker du kan få följa med,

SUB 2: men mamma och pappa  
går nog inte med på det.

**INCORRECT:**

SUB 1: Jag tycker du kan få följa med...

SUB 2: ...men mamma och pappa  
går nog inte med på det.

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: Nej men, har du ätit upp...  
SUB 2: ...precis alltihop?

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

**EXAMPLE:**

-Du glömde visst stänga...  
-Jag stängde den!

## On-screen Text

All plot-pertinent, non-redundant on-screen text should be subtitled.

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

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

Keep dialogue and on-screen text on separate subtitles.

Use ellipsis in cases where the dialogue gets interrupted by on-screen text subtitling.

**EXAMPLE:**

SUB 1: Jag jobbade med den här filmen...  
Burn-in: REGISSÖR  
SUB 2: ...i tio månader

## 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:

Swedish:

Refer to Svenska Akademien and Institutet för språk och folkminnen as primary sources for spelling and grammar.

<http://www2.svenskaakademien.se>

<http://www.sprakochfolkminnen.se/sprak.html>

### Titles and names:

- Do not translate proper names (e.g., Peter, Smith etc.)
- Translate nicknames (e.g., Cranky Maria) if it is plot pertinent or otherwise relevant.
- Translate and/or localize names of historical or cultural figures (e.g., Santa Claus = Tomte. Tooth Fairy = Tandfen, Mickey Mouse = Musse Pigg etc.)
- Do not translate brand names if it is a known brand and/or relevant to the plot (e.g., Apple. Nike, Rolex etc.)
- If a brand name is synonymous with a particular item or activity (e.g., Kleenex, Xerox etc.), translate it to have the similar meaning for your territory (e.g., Kleenex = Näsduk, Xerox = Fotokopiering etc.)
- 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:

Use abbreviations sparingly and appropriately if and when they are relevant. Please note that abbreviations is not commonly put to use in Swedish, but in the event that it should apply, please follow the format below:

- Herr = Hr.
- Fru (not abbreviated)
- Fröken = Frk.

- Professor = Prof.
- Doktor = dr (period omitted on purpose. This should remain in lowercase unless it is at the start of a sentence)

Mr., Mrs. and Miss will remain in English, but note that it should remain all lowercase and without a period at the end.

**Acronyms:**

All acronyms are to be written out without periods between the letters.

E.g., BBC, UK, FBI, CIA, USA etc.

**Slang:**

Slang spellings should be confirmed with reputable sources whenever possible.

Swedish:

Slangopedia <http://www.slangopedia.se>

English:

Urban Dictionary <http://www.urbandictionary.com>

## 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:**

Det är f\*\*\*\*\* briljant!

## 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:**



Jag säger *arrivederci* till sötsaker ett tag.

Foreign words should be italicized unless:

- They have become part of regular usage. E.g., in English, the following no longer need to be italicized: bon appétit, rendezvous, doppelgänger, zeitgeist, persona non grata.
- They are proper names (e.g. company names).

## 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 (unless it falls in one of the exempt categories listed above)
- 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 in the thousands should be divided in groups of three digits (counting from the end), separated by spaces. Numbers in the millions or larger should be spelled out.

### EXAMPLES:

1 000  
123 250  
15 miljoner  
7 miljarder

Exceptions:

- Addresses should always be written numerically: Storgatan 5

- Numbers that begin a sentence should generally be spelled out.

## Currency & Units of Measure

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

### EXAMPLE 1:

Jag säljer appen för 99 cent eller 1,29 dollar.

### EXAMPLE 2:

Den kostar 15,50 kr.

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

### EXAMPLE:

Den kostar 129 eller 199,  
beroende på modell.

Units of measure should be converted to the metric system and rounded to max one decimal. Fahrenheit should be converted to Celsius.

### EXAMPLES:

10 miles - 16 km  
30 inches - 76 cm  
100 ounces - 2,8 kg  
50 fluid ounces - 1,5 liter / 1,5 l  
70°F - 21 °C / 21 gr / 21 grader

Hours should be written in a 24 hour format. Either periods or colons can be used to separate hours and minutes, as long as it kept consistent. Use the abbreviation *kl* unless the character count allows for spelling out *klockan*.

### EXAMPLES:

10:00 am - kl 10.00 / klockan 7.00 / kl 7:00  
7:15 pm - kl 19.15 / klockan 19.15 / kl 19:15

Dates are written without an article or a colon (i.e. not *20:e* or *den 20*) and with the month spelled out.

### EXAMPLES:

20 maj  
3 november 1997

## 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.
- 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 of the quotation marks.
- 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. They should only be translated if the rights have been granted.

Song titles should be written in quotes, while album titles and lyrics should be in italics.

Use an ellipsis to indicate that a song is continuing in the background when its' subtitle is removed to give precedence to dialogue.

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.

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.