



# Original Content QA Lab: Subtitling Guidelines

## DA-DK

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Last Revision August 9th, 2017

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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.

## 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. No space should appear between hyphens and dialogue.

### EXAMPLE:

- Jeg synes vi skal stemme om det.
- Igen? Vi har allerede 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: Jeg synes du skulle tage med,

SUB 2: men jeg tror ikke  
mor og far vil blive glade.

### **INCORRECT:**

SUB 1: Jeg synes du skulle tage med...

SUB 2: ... men jeg tror ikke  
mor og far vil blive glade.

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: Hov, har du spist...

SUB 2: ...det hele?

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

### **EXAMPLE:**

-Jeg tror du har glemt at lukke...

-Jeg lukkede det!

## On-screen Text

Include all plot-pertinent on-screen text.

This includes narrative text (text that is part of principal photography) and burn-in text (text that has been added in post-production). If the English text is understood in Danish, no need to add a subtitle.

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

**Note:** On-screen text and dialogue should be in different subtitles. Use ellipses in cases where the on-screen text interrupts the dialogue.

SUB 1: Det hele startede...

SUB 2: OVERLEVENDE

SUB 3: ...da bjerget pludselig rystede.

## Main and Episode Titles

The main title should not be subtitled, unless an Apple-approved translation exists.

Episode titles should not be subtitled if they do not appear on screen. If they appear on-screen, request/use an Apple-approved translation.

## 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 Dansk Sprognævn as the primary source for spelling.

<https://dsn.dk>

### 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.

## Acronyms

Acronyms are not to be translated, for example NATO, OPEC.

## Abbreviations

Abbreviations may be used if they improve line treatment, reading speed, timing, or mitigate character constraints etc., and if they otherwise comply with these guidelines and dsn.dk.

### EXAMPLE:

Hun er adm. dir. i DSB.

Commonly used abbreviations include Ms., frk., Mrs., hr., Mr., dr., f.eks., o.s.v., dvs., o.l., alm. etc.

Use capitalized Mr., Mrs. etc., i.e. do not translate 'Mrs. Robinson' to 'fru Robinson'.

## Brand Names

Brand names should be kept as-is. Consider using local brands or generic terms, if it is unlikely that the target audience would be familiar with the term.

### EXAMPLE:

EN: She loves Ford, Chevy, and crackers with jam and Skippy.

DA-DK: Hun elsker Ford, Chevy og kiks med syltetøj og jordnøddesmør.

## Character Names

Use the Danish name when a well-established Danish equivalent exists. For others, retain the English name or use a generic term/name that preserves the meaning of the original.

Nicknames may be translated, if plot-pertinent.

Proper names are never translated.

### EXAMPLE:

EN: Donald Duck

DA-DK: Anders And

## 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 er f\*\*\*\* brilliant.



## 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 sentence, then it can be titled.

### EXAMPLE:

Jeg siger *arrivederci* til søde sager for en stund.

## 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, and above that represented numerically. But there are common exceptions such as "5. sal", not "femte sal", and so on.

Numbers between 1000 and 9999 do not require a period. Numbers 10.000 and up should be written with a period.

Exceptions:

- Addresses should always be written numerically: Skolegade 5
- Numbers that begin a sentence should generally be spelled out.

## Currency and other Units of Measurement

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

### EXAMPLE 1:

Jeg vil sælge appen for 99 cents eller \$1,29.

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

### EXAMPLE 2:

Det vil koste dig 129 eller 199  
beroende på modellen.

Placement of the currency symbol, before or after the value, depends on the currency. However, three-letter currency codes are always placed after the value, regardless of currency.

### EXAMPLE 3:

129 kr.  
\$129 (no spacing)  
129 EUR

Always convert units of measurement to the metric system, unless central to the plot: kilo (kg), kilometer (km), meter (m), centimeter (cm), Celsius (°C), 24-hour clock etc.

Round numbers to nearest integer as appropriate. If the exact measurement is pertinent to the plot, it should be included. Keep the number of decimals within reason – as a rule of thumb, round to the same number of significant digits as the original.

Use kilo instead of kilogram.

Only abbreviate the unit when required by reading speed constraints.

### EXAMPLE 4:

EN: He lives 60 miles away and weighs 150 pounds.

DA-DK: Han bor 100 km væk og vejer 68 kilo.

## 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.

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:**

*Du troede jeg faldt  
Men nej*

### **INCORRECT:**

*Du troede jeg faldt,  
Men nej*

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.