Original Content QA Lab: Subtitling Guidelines
ZH-CN

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Table of Contents

Reading Speed

- 17 EN characters = 9 Chinese characters per second for most programming/Adult.
- 13 EN characters = 7 Chinese 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.

Repetitions

- Do not translate words or phrases repeated more than once.
- If the repeated word or phrase is said twice **in a row**, time subtitle to the audio, but translate only once.

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 readLine Treatment
- Subtitles should occupy 2 lines maximum. If the subtitle exceeds one line, both lines should be of comparable length. Line breaks should ideally match a logical break in the dialogue, i.e. after a punctuation mark, or before a preposition or conjunction.

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.

Simplified Chinese vs. Traditional Chinese subtitle

- Do not use Traditional Chinese expression/terminology.
  EXAMPLE:

<div align="center">

Correct: 所以我们有个收件箱
Incorrect: 所以我们有个收件匣

Correct: 然后你还在中情局跟航天局工作过
Incorrect: 然后你还在中情局跟太空总署工作过

</div>

Titling Dialogue

Dialogue should be subtitled as faithfully as possible within the limits of reading speed. And plot-pertinent dialogue always takes precedence over background dialogue.

- 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.

Titles

- Main titles (show/movie): do not subtitle the main title unless an approved translation is provided by Apple.
- Episode titles: do not subtitle episode titles if they do not appear on screen. If on-screen, either as part of the principal photography or burned into video, please obtain approved translations from Apple.
- If a main title or episode title is provided, use the following format:

<div align="center">

片名： App 星球

剧名： App 星球

</div>

- Titles of published works, existing movies and TV shows: use official or well-known translations that either found in iTunes Store or trusted website (豆瓣 https://movie.douban.com,万达 http://www.wandafilm.com, 爱奇艺 http://www.iqiyi.com,时光网 http://www.mtime.com). If none are available, please stay as same as original translation.
- The following titles should be in Chinese brackets: albums, films, songs, TV programs, newspapers, magazines, books, works of art, trilogies.

EXAMPLE:

Subtitle: 你看过《App 星球》这部系列剧吗?

Dual Speakers

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

EXAMPLE:

<div align="center">

Subtitle 1: -我认为我们应该举手表决。

Subtitle 2: -再来一次?我们已经表决过了。

</div>

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:

<div align="center">

Subtitle 1: 我觉得你可以跟着一起

Subtitle 2: 爸妈应该不会同意

</div>

INCORRECT:

<div align="center">

Subtitle 1: 我觉得你可以跟着一起...

Subtitle 2: ...爸妈应该不会同意

</div>

Use an ellipsis to indicate:

- Dialogue that trails off
- Dialogue that begins mid-sentence (To indicate mid-sentence pick-ups)
- A significant pause (one second or more)
- To indicate a pause or an abrupt interruption. In the case of a pause, if the sentence continues in the next subtitle, do not use an ellipsis at the beginning of the second subtitle.
- an interruption to the dialogue caused by on-screen text (see section "On-screen text").

EXAMPLE 1:

Subtitle 1: –但你说...
Subtitle 2: –我知道他说什么

EXAMPLE 2:

Subtitle 1: –今天的天气很...
Subtitle 2: –她很漂亮

On-screen Text

Provide subtitles for 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).

For on-screen text that includes details about the speaker, only subtitle their title (translate as appropriate). Do not subtitle speaker details that are redundant, such as the speaker name, the name of their company, or the name of their character.

- Forced narrative titles should only be included if plot pertinent.
- Forced narratives that are redundant (e.g., identical to onscreen text or covered in the dialogue) must be deleted.
- Never combine a forced narrative with dialogue in the same subtitle.
- When a forced narrative interrupts dialogue, use an ellipsis at the end of the sentence in the subtitle that precedes it and at the beginning of the sentence in the subtitle follows it.
- Use Chinese parentheses for on-screen text.

EXAMPLE:

Subtitle 1: -我最爱海滩了 因为...
Subtitle 2: - （导演）
Subtitle 3: -...在海里游泳最好了

Note: On-screen text and dialogue always have to be on separate subtitles (as shown above).

Character Names

- If approved translations of proper names (e.g., Peter=彼得, Martin=马丁) are not provided, please transliterate.
- Nicknames should only be translated if they convey a specific meaning. Do not use made-up nickname from social website。

Example：

    Correct: The Rock = 巨石强森 Elvis = 猫王

    Incorrect: Katy Perry ≠ 水果姐 Benedict Cumberbatch ≠ 卷福

- Use language-specific translations for historical/mythical characters (e.g., Santa Claus = 圣诞老人).
- When introducing a cast member in a narrative, regardless of the on-screen presentation, always use the following format: John Smith – Director = （导演 约翰史密斯)
- When introducing an actor in a narrative, regardless of the on-screen presentation, always use the following format: Vivien Leigh – "Scarlett O'Hara" = （费雯莉饰郝思嘉)

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.
- 新华社公布禁用词: http://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/Bz5OVXDsGcgHbXyevh3v6A

Quotes

- Use full width quotation marks.
- Quotes: Double quotation marks ("") without spaces.
Example:

<div align="center">Subtitle: 我问：“你有什么？”</div>

- Single quotation marks ('') for quotes within quotes.
Example:

<div align="center">Subtitle: 他站起来问：“老师比‘较’的‘较’怎么写？”</div>

- Quotes should be used at the start and end of a sentence and not at the start of every subtitle.
- When only a portion of a sentence is in quotes, the punctuation comes after the quotation mark.
Example:

<div align="center">Subtitle: “沙呦娜啦”改天见！</div>

- When a whole sentence is in quotes, the punctuation mark comes before the quotation mark.
Example:

<div align="center">Subtitle: 他站起来问：“老师‘比较’的‘较’怎么写？”</div>

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:

<div align="center">Subtitle: 这真是太他***聪明了。</div>

Foreign Dialogue

Foreign dialogue should only be translated if it is plot-pertinent and meant to be understood by the viewer (i.e., if it was subtitled in the original version).

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.

Foreign words or phrases should be translated when possible (i.e. hello, goodbye, thank you, merci) or transliterated when no accurate translation exists.
EXAMPLE:
> Subtitle: 我一时半会要跟所有甜品说 arrivederci 了。

Italics

- Do not use italics.

Numerals

- Chinese numbers from 1 to 10 should be written out if space permits: 一 二 三
- Use half width numbers (1, 2, 3) instead of full width numbers （１，２，３）.
- Do not use a comma to separate the thousandth digit where there are only four digits.
- Do not use financially used characters (壹, 贰, 叁, etc) to represent rounded large numbers, use characters for common writing instead (e.g., 五千, 四十亿).
- Use Arabic numerals for apartment numbers, street numbers, phone numbers, measurements, chapter numbers, monetary amounts, page numbers, addresses, time, flight numbers, dates.
- Do not abbreviate years(e.g., 她1992年来过).
- Convert to the metric system: kilometers (km), centimeters (cm), meters (m), kilograms (kg).
- Money: Do not convert currency to RMB (e.g., $10 > 10元; £20 > 20英镑; ¢25 > 2角5分).

Punctuation

Follow standard official rules.

- Curly double-byte quotation marks should be used for dialogue and written text that is quoted, recited from memory, or read.
- When punctuation marks are part of the quoted material, they should be placed inside 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.
- Do not use commas or as. Use one single space instead.
- Enumeration commas can be used for lists (e.g. "A、B、C").
- Only question marks or exclamation marks are allowed at the end of a line/subtitle.
- Use a full-width colon to introduce quoted speech (e.g., 我问："你有什么？").
- A colon may be used to introduce an explanation or an example (e.g., 日期：1976年8月27日)
- Use a full-width question mark or exclamation mark when necessary.
- Do not use:
  - A question mark with an exclamation mark (!?)
  - Double question marks (??)
  - Double exclamation marks (!!)

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. Only question marks and exclamation marks should be used.
- Do not use italics or quotes for song lyrics.
- Use an ellipsis when a song continues in the background but is no longer subtitled to give precedence to dialogue.

CORRECT:
> Subtitle: 背影是真的人是假的　没什么执著
> 一百年前你不是你我不是我

INCORRECT:
> Subtitle: 背影是真的人是假的　没什么执著，
> 一百年前你不是你我不是我。

Translation Credits

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