



# Original Content QA Lab: Subtitling Guidelines

## VI-VN

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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 when translated (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 followed by a space to indicate two speakers in one subtitle, with a maximum of one speaker per line.

### EXAMPLE:

- Tôi sẽ theo học ngành kinh tế.
- Thật ư? Ngành học đó rất khó đấy nhé!

## 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: Bạn có thể đi Việt Nam cùng chúng tôi,

SUB 2: nhưng tôi không chắc rằng  
bố và mẹ bạn sẽ đồng ý.

### **INCORRECT:**

SUB 1: Bạn có thể đi Việt Nam cùng chúng tôi...

SUB 2: ...nhưng tôi không chắc rằng  
bố và mẹ bạn sẽ đồng ý.

Use an ellipsis to indicate:

- Dialogue that trails off
- Dialogue that begins mid-sentence
- A significant pause (one second or more)

### **EXAMPLE:**

SUB 1: Cái bánh ngọt...

SUB 2: nó biến mất rồi!

- If dialogue continues in the next subtitle after a significant pause, or dialogue continues in the next frame, ellipses should be used at both the end of the first subtitle and at the beginning of the second subtitle.

### **EXAMPLE:**

SUB 1: Cái bánh ngọt...

SUB 2: ...nó biến mất rồi!

Use two hyphens (--) to indicate an abrupt interruption.

### **EXAMPLE:**

- Tôi nghĩ là bạn đã quên đóng--
- Tôi đóng rồi!

## On-screen Text

All plot-pertinent 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 be in all CAPS except for written passages which should match the case of the on-screen text.

Note: on-screen text and dialogue should be on different subtitles. When the dialogue is interrupted by onscreen text, put dialogue subtitles at lower horizontal subtitle, put onscreen text at upper horizontal subtitle.

### EXAMPLE:

Onscreen text shows up all the way to the top:

Jessica Alba - Tổng giám đốc công ty Honest

Dialogue shows up as lower horizontal subtitle when Jessica is talking:

Mục tiêu của tôi là tìm ra và đầu tư cho những ứng dụng điện thoại về phong cách sống!

## 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 soha online dictionary as the primary source for spelling.

<http://tratu.soha.vn/>

### 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 (VN storefront).

**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 in a more polite way, cutting out the inappropriate meaning.
- If there is a single expletive, consider translating it gently.

**EXAMPLE:**

You're f\*\*\*\*\* smart!  
Mày thông minh thật đấy!

Fuck.  
Chết tiệt.

## 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).

When using foreign words, always verify spelling, accents and punctuation, if applicable.

**EXAMPLE:**

Anh ấy là chủ một nhà hàng *taco*.

## 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 (if needed)
- Foreign language
- Titles of books, albums and movies in narrative context only. (Song titles should also appear in quotation marks.)
- Genus and species names (examples: *E. coli*, Triceratops)

#### **EXAMPLE:**

Khuẩn *E. coli* là một loại khuẩn nguy hiểm.

Narrative: For example, in the background, a newspaper said:  
 Bài hát "Hello" đã vươn lên hạng nhất trên bảng xếp hạng "Billboard".

Dialogue: Bài hát "Hello" đã vươn lên hạng nhất trên bảng xếp hạng  
 "Billboard".

## **Numerals**

Numbers one to ten should be spelled out: một, hai, ba, etc. Numbers 11 and up should be represented numerically: 11, 12, 13, etc.

Numbers between 1000 and 9999 do not require a comma.

For decimals, please use commas: 5,5 triệu người.

For thousands, please use periods: 5.000 đồng.

For sports, competitions, games or quizzes, always use numerals to display points, scores or timings.

Exceptions:

- Addresses should always be written numerically: số 7 đường Tây Hồ
- Numbers that begin a sentence should generally be spelled out: Năm người đã chiến thắng.
- Spell out numbers when used in a metaphorical context: Anh ta có cả trăm lý do.
- Keep the version number as it is: nâng cấp lên iOS 10.1.1 đi.



## Currency

If a unit of currency is spoken in dialogue it should be spelled out or represented with words. Don't use symbols and acronyms when translating currency.

### EXAMPLE:

USD (\$): đô la Mỹ  
AUS (\$): đô la Úc  
CAD (\$): đô la Canada  
Euro (€): euro  
GBP (£): bảng Anh  
CNY (¥): nhân dân tệ  
JPY (¥): yên Nhật  
KRW (₩): won

I'd sell the app for \$1.29.  
Tôi bán ứng dụng giá 1.29 đô la Mỹ.

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

### EXAMPLE:

That'll cost you 129 or 199  
depending on the model.  
Nó sẽ tốn của bạn 129 hoặc 199 tùy thuộc vào mẫu mã.

## Measurement and Temperature

Use metric system and units for measurement, temperature, height, weight, and distance. If the original content is using imperial system, convert it into metric system so that Vietnamese audience can understand the context thoroughly.

### EXAMPLE:

He follows the instruction and run 5 miles everyday.  
Anh ấy làm theo hướng dẫn và chạy 8 ki-lô-mét mỗi ngày.

However, in some cases, if it is plot pertinent, names of shows, movies, books, or songs; you should keep the unit as it is, and only localize the unit.

**EXAMPLE:**

Critics praise the movie "93 miles" as a heartfelt love story in modern world.

Các nhà phê bình khen ngợi bộ phim "93 dặm" như một câu chuyện tình yêu chân thành trong thế giới hiện đại.

## Abbreviations

Do not use abbreviations when translating, unless it is really necessary and other workarounds fail.

## Acronyms

Do not translate acronyms unless there is a very common localized equivalent. Acronyms should be written without periods between letters: BBC, CIA (except for etc.)

**EXAMPLE:**

English expression	Vietnamese expression	Accepted abbreviation
etc.	vân vân	v.v.
IT	Công nghệ Thông tin	CNTT
DB	Cơ sở Dữ liệu	CSDL
Phone	Điện thoại	ĐT

## Characters, brands name

Do not translate proper names (e.g., Rose Chen, Susan Cadwallader).

Nicknames should only be translated if they convey a specific meaning.

Don't translate brands' name (e.g., Apple, Apple Bee, NAKED). Trademarks, trademarked slogans and terms as well as product names and particular Apple Marketing terms must not be translated nor transliterated unless instructed to do so by Apple (e.g., iCloud, iTunes, iBooks).

## 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.
- Quotation marks should also be used for song titles, people's names, albums, tours, movies, etc.
- 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.

## Date & Time

English	Vietnamese
February 24, 2014	Ngày 24 Tháng 2 Năm 2014
MM/dd/yyyy - 02/24/2014	dd/MM/yyyy - 24/02/2014
Days of Week: Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday	Chủ nhật, Thứ 2, Thứ 3, Thứ 4, Thứ 5, Thứ 6, Thứ 7
Months in a year: January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, December	Tháng 1, Tháng 2, Tháng 3, Tháng 4, Tháng 5, Tháng 6, Tháng 7, Tháng 8, Tháng 9, Tháng 10, Tháng 11, Tháng 12
Time: 6:00 AM	06:00 hoặc 6 giờ sáng
Time: 6:00 PM	18:00 hoặc 6 giờ tối

Notes:

- When days and months shown up in the middle of sentence, there is no need to capitalize the first letter of words.

**EXAMPLE:** Căn cứ vào hợp đồng ngày 19 tháng 01 năm 2011

- Time can be translated in either ways (using 24 hour system or adding on "sáng", "tối"), but it has to be consistent throughout the video.

## 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.

Lyrics should be italicized.

### **CORRECT:**

*Người ta bảo thời gian sẽ xoa dịu tất cả  
Mà vết thương lòng tôi cứ nhức nhối chẳng lành*

### **INCORRECT:**

*Người ta bảo thời gian sẽ xoa dịu tất cả,  
mà vết thương lòng tôi cứ nhức nhối chẳng lành*

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.