



Original Content QA Lab: Subtitling Guidelines

ES-ES

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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	4
Continuity	5
On-screen Text	6
Glossaries	6
Spelling & Research.....	7
Expletives	8
Foreign Dialogue.....	9
Italics.....	9
Numerals.....	9
Currency	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.

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. There should be a space between hyphen and dialogue.

EXAMPLE:

- Creo que deberíamos votar.
- ¿Otra vez? Ya lo hicimos.

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: Yo diría que podrías venir con nosotros,
SUB 2: pero no creo
que mamá y papá lo aprobasen.

INCORRECT:

SUB 1: Yo diría que podrías venir con nosotros...
SUB 2: ...pero no creo
que mamá y papá lo aprobasen.

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: ¿Espera, te lo comiste...
SUB 2: ...literalmente todo?

Use an ellipsis to indicate an abrupt interruption.

EXAMPLE:

- Creo que te olvidaste de cerrar...
- ¡La cerré!

On-screen Text

Should 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).

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

When ongoing dialogue is interrupted by an onscreen text subtitle, we should use ellipsis. Please note that this is an exception to the standard continuity rule of not using ellipses for ongoing dialogue across subtitles.

SUB 1: Su corazón ha dejado de latir...

SUB 2: DOCTOR

SUB 3: ...por un minuto.

Onscreen text and dialogue should never be on the same subtitle.

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

Grammar rules:

Refer to the Real Academia Española dictionary as the primary source for orthography, punctuation, accents, conjugation of verbs and grammar rules. <http://www.rae.es/>

Fundeu, an NGO that promotes the proper use of Spanish, is also a good resource: <http://www.fundeu.es/sobre-fundeu/quienes-somos/>

Another useful resource is the Diccionario panhispánico de dudas: <http://www.rae.es/recursos/diccionarios/dpd>

Titles and names:

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.

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:

- Please try to avoid abbreviations. Use them when the space on screen is limited.
- EE.UU. and EUA are the correct abbreviations to refer to Estados Unidos. USA and US are not accepted by the RAE.
- Abbreviations keep the accent if the original word has an accent (e.g. telef., de teléfono; pról., de prólogo)
- Some abbreviations commonly used are: Ud., Sr., Sra., Dr., Dra.
- Please note that the shortened versions of measurement units are written without a dot at the end (km, cm, m, mm, etc.)
- More information about the proper use of abbreviations: <http://lema.rae.es/dpd/?key=abreviatura>
- A list of the most common ones: <http://www.rae.es/diccionario-panhispanico-de-dudas/apendices/abreviaturas>

Capital letters:

They are written with an accent if the grammar rules establish so. This rule applies when the word is fully written with capitals and also when only the first letter is uppercase (e.g. Su hijo se llama Ángel; ATENCIÓN, POR FAVOR).

Acronyms:

- Acronyms (siglas) are written without spaces or periods: ONU, OTAN, FBI
- They do not have accent when they are all in capitals.
- Some acronyms have become common names and follow the regular accentuation rules (e.g. láser).
- For a more detailed explanation please check: <http://lema.rae.es/dpd/?key=siglas>

Brand names and nicknames:

- Don't translate/change brand names if known and relevant to the plot (such as Apple, Nike, Rolex).
- Translate into a more generic term if the brand is unknown in your geo and the viewer will miss the meaning because of it (e.g., if Clorox isn't known in Spain, translate as bleach).
- Proper names (such as Peter, Smith...) — do not translate.
- Nicknames (such as Cranky Maria) — translate if relevant/plot-pertinent.
- Other historical or popular characters (such as Santa Claus, Tooth Fairy) — translate.

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:

Esto es j***** brillante.

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:

Les estoy diciendo *arrivederci* a los dulces por una temporada.

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 (uno, dos, tres). Numbers 11 and up should be represented numerically.

Numbers between 1000 and 9999 do not require a dot. Numbers 10 000 and up should be written with a space before the zeros. Here is a link with a useful explanation about numbers: <http://www.fundeu.es/recomendacion/numeralescompuestos/>

Exceptions:

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

Convert to the metric system: kilometers (km), centimeters (cm), meters (m), kilograms (kg)

Also convert temperature from Fahrenheit to "grados centígrados" or Celsius.

Time references should reflect what is being said on screen (e.g. if someone is saying "we should meet at noon", we shouldn't write "we should meet at 12:00pm" or viceversa). The only exception to this rule would be space limitations. Also, when writing the times do not omit the zeros (1:00 pm, 3:00 pm and not 1 pm, 2 pm).

When it comes to decades, please write the numbers without the apostrophe ('). Following that rule we would write "la década de los 90" and not "la década de los '90" or "la década de los noventa"; "los 80" and not "los '80". For the decade that goes from the year 2000 to 2009, we use "la década de los 2000".

Currency

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

EXAMPLE 1:

Vendería la aplicación por 99 céntimos o 1,29 €.

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

EXAMPLE 2:

Eso te costará 129 o 199
dependiendo del modelo.

Do not convert dollars or other currencies. Also, please remember that a US billion corresponds to "mil millones" and one trillion is "un millón de billones" for Spain. For more detailed information: <http://www.fundeu.es/recomendacion/elbillion-inglesno-equivaleal-billon-espanol-858/>

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 outside 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 (example: Ella dijo: “No me digas ‘Relájate’ ni una vez más”).
- Colons can be used when appropriate. Semicolons should not be used.

For detailed information about punctuation, you can check: <http://lema.rae.es/dpd/?key=signos%20ortogr%C3%A1ficos>

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:

*Ahora es demasiado tarde princesa
Búscate otro perro que te ladre princesa*

INCORRECT:

*Ahora es demasiado tarde princesa,
búscate otro perro que te ladre princesa*

There is a bit more leniency with casual/slang spelling in song lyrics than in spoken dialogue.

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.