Original Content QA Lab:
Subtitling Guidelines
RU-RU (SDH)

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Reading Speed

20 characters per second for most programming.
17 characters per second for programming intended for children.

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

40 characters per line.

Timing + Duration

Text should be timed closely to the beginning and end of audio when possible. However, it is 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 causes subtitles to become illegible, 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.

SDH files should include stand-alone utterances/exclamations such as «Oh», «Whoa», and «Wow».

Dual Speakers

Use a long dash (—) to indicate two speakers in the same subtitle with a maximum of one speaker per line. On Mac, use the combination [**Option Shift -**] for a long dash. Space should appear between a dash and a sentence following it. If a speaker identifier is needed, it should replace the dash (see Speaker Identifiers section).

EXAMPLE:

— Ты уже закончил?
[Питер] Нет, мне нужно еще пять минут.

Continuity

Do not use ellipses when an ongoing sentence is split between two or more continuous subtitles. Commas and other relevant punctuation should be used as usual when appropriate.

DON'T:

SUB 1: Прошло уже две недели…

SUB 2: …а мы так и не продвинулись
с презентацией ни на шаг.

DO:

SUB 1: Прошло уже две недели,

SUB 2: а мы так и не продвинулись
с презентацией ни на шаг.

Use ellipses to indicate:
· a dialogue that trails off;
· a dialogue that begins mid-sentence;
· a significant pause (one second or more) which is intended to be noticed. 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: Мне нужно сначала закончить одну вещь…
SUB 2: …хотя нет, потом сделаю.

· an abrupt interruption;

EXAMPLE:

— Ты забыл позвонить…
— Я ей позвонил!

Speaker Identifiers

Speaker identifiers (speaker IDs) should be used when it is not clear from visuals or context who is speaking. Speaker IDs should appear on their own line when possible.

DON'T:

[Питер] Что случилось?

DO:

[Питер]
Что случилось?

Speaker identifiers should be used in dialogues if two or more people are talking at the same time or their phrases are closely timed so it is not clear who is speaking. In this case a speaker ID should appear on their own line replacing a dash:

DON'T:

[Питер] — Поздравляю!
[Кэтрин] — Я так рада!

DO:

SUB 1: [Питер] Поздравляю!
[Кэтрин] Я так рада!

Avoid SDH subtitles with:
· incorrect speaker IDs (the wrong person is identified);
· redundant speaker IDs (the person is clearly speaking on-screen);
· missing speaker IDs (it is not clear from visuals or context who is speaking without an ID).

Qualifiers should be used when a speaker alters their regular speaking voice in a way that is not obvious from context or visuals.

EXAMPLES:
· If it is not clear from visuals/context who is speaking:

[Питер шепотом]
Тсс, я слышу какой-то шум.

· If it is clear from visuals/context who is speaking:

[еле слышно]
Ты же закрыла дверь на замок?

A qualifier should also be used when the speaker resumes speaking in their normal voice:

[обычным голосом]
Да ладно, я пошутил.

Sound Effects

Sound effects that are plot-pertinent or lend helpful context to a scene should be identified when they are not obvious from visuals or context.

It is preferred to use nouns for sound effects description:

English: [applause]; [glass shatters]; [knocking].
DON'T: [аплодируют]; [стекло разбивается]; [стучит].
DO: [аплодисменты]; [звук бьющегося стекла]; [стук].

If the noun fails to describe the type of sound — single or repeated, use the appropriate verb:

English: [door slams].
DON'T: [хлопанье двери].
DO: [захлопывается дверь].

Effects produced by the speakers should be also described in nouns with some exceptions:

English: [mumbles]; [clicks tongue]; [laughs]; [stammers]
DON'T: [бормочет]; [цокает языком]; [смеется]; [запинка].
DO: [бормотание]; [цоканье языком]; [смех]. **BUT:** [запинается].

The speaker identifier and the sound effect used next to each other should be merged:

English: [Taylor stammering]; [Taylor laughs]

DON'T: [Тейлор] [запинается]; [Тейлор] [смех]
DO: [Тейлор запинается]; [Тейлор смеется]

Avoid SDH subtitles with:

· redundant sound effects (if we see someone pour a glass of water or shoot a gun, it is not necessary to indicate that as [water pouring] or [gunshot]);
· missing plot-pertinent sound effects (if someone reacts to a noise heard off-screen, for example, the sound should be indicated);
· inaccurate sound effects (a door slam is indicated as a gunshot, for example).

Note: Sound effects and dialogue should not appear in the same subtitle unless absolutely necessary due to time/reading-speed constraints.

EXAMPLE 1 (preferred)**:**

SUB 1: [выстрел]

SUB 2: Что это было?

EXAMPLE 2 (only if needed in extreme cases):

[выстрел]
— Что это было?

On-screen Text

SDH streams should not subtitle any redundant on-screen text. This applies to both narrative text (text that is part of principal photography) and burn-in text (text that has been added in post-production).

If an English template that contains on-screen text is reformatted into an SDH file, dialogue subtitles should be re-timed to close any gaps that are created when narrative and burn-in subtitles are removed.

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.

Translation Recommendations

Avoid literal translation. Remember to use the same speech register as the one used in the original. Always read a translated sentence out loud to hear what it sounds like. It must sound idiomatic and natural as a native Russian would say it. A few things to keep in mind:

Avoid long-winded sentences, parentheses and participial phrases that make copy harder to comprehend and are rarely used in spoken everyday Russian.

In Russian, subjunctive forms are less common than they are in English and should rendered with verbs in the indicative mood.
English: I'd like to tell you this.
DON'T: Я хотел бы вам сказать вот что.
DO: Я хочу вам сказать вот что.

Depending on the context, sentences containing modal verbs *should*, *need*, *ought to*, *have to*, or *must* are likely to sound more natural in Russian if rendered with an imperative verb.
English: You must hear this.
DON'T: Ты должен это услышать.
DO: Послушай.

Phrases that are not essential for understanding the message of the utterance and can be omitted without sacrificing its meaning may be dropped in translation («I think», «it seems to me», «you know», etc.).

Below are a few other examples to illustrate how staying too close to the source text can result in poor, awkward-sounding translation.
English: D.C., Lorde is here for you tonight.
DON'T: Округ Колумбия, сегодня для вас поет Лорд.
DO: Вашингтон, сегодня для вас поет Lorde.

English: Los Angeles, make some noise because Selena Gomez is here.
DON'T: Лос-Анджелес, давайте пошумим, потому что здесь Селена Гомес.
DO: Лос-Анджелес, встречайте Селену Гомес.

English: I know when Justin Timberlake walks into a room it's-it's his room then.
DON'T: Я знаю, когда в помещение входит Джастин Тимберлейк, оно становится его.
DO: Когда в помещение входит Джастин Тимберлейк, все внимание на него.

English: Everyone has a little voice in their head that is, you know, telling them, like, "This isn't good, you're not good enough".
DON'T: Порой каждый из нас слышит голоса, которые нашептывают ему: «Плохо получилось. Надо лучше».
DO: Иногда что-то внутри нам подсказывает: «Плохо получилось! Надо лучше».

English: I mean, it was such a crazy experience coming here the first time and this is kind of where it all started for us.
DON'T: Когда мы были здесь впервые, это стало безумием. Здесь для нас все и началось.
DO: Это было незабываемо. Именно так все начиналось.

English: …those dancers, you know, woke up one day when they were four, and decided dancing was all they ever wanted to do.
DON'T: …знаете, эти танцоры проснулись однажды, когда им было четыре, и решили, что танцевать - это все, что они хотят делать.
DO: …эти танцоры однажды, когда им было четыре, проснулись и решили: все, что они хотят делать, — это танцевать.

Spelling

Spelling
Refer to Gramota.ru as the primary source for spelling. Refer to Orthographia.ru as an extra source for spelling.

Slang
Slang spellings should be confirmed with reputable sources whenever possible.

Letter ё
The letter **ё** should only be used to distinguish between words that would otherwise look the same («небо» — «нёбо», «передохнет» — «передохнёт») and in proper names whose pronunciation viewers may not be familiar with (do not use it in well-known names such as «Пугачева»).

Titles and names
When verifying the names of songs, albums, cast and crew, movies, TV shows, or apps, remain consistent with how they appear in Apple Music and iTunes (if the titles are available there).

Notes
· Do not localize band names (Arcade Fire, The Beatles).
· Do not localize artists' aliases and stage names (Rihanna, Elton John).
· Artists' real names should be localized (Бритни Спирс, Джонни Кэш).
· Company names and any brand names, including apps that do not have official localized names, should not be localized (Alpha Classics, Clash of Clans).
· Music venues (night clubs, bars, etc.), shops, stores, stadiums, movie theaters should not be localized (The Roundhouse, бар Glady's).
· Names of well-known awards (премия «Оскар», премия «Грэмми») should be localized.
· Names of characters should be localized (Микки Маус, Лора Палмер).
· Established translations should be used for well-known abbreviations and acronyms (ФБР, ЦРУ, ООН).
· The names of Apple products and services must stay in English (App Store, Apple, Apple Music, iBooks, iBooks Store, iCloud, iPad, iPhone, iPod, iTunes, iTunes Store, iTunes U, Mac, Mac App Store).

Expletives

Due to the Russian law restricting the use of foul language in media, expletives, their forms and their derivatives must not be used in subtitles. The most appropriate non-expletive equivalent should be found for each instance.

EXAMPLE:

English: That's f****** brilliant.
Russian: Офигеть.

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.

Well-known phrases, expressions or words should be rendered in the form they are traditionally translated into Russian («моветон», «комильфо», «се ля ви»).

EXAMPLE:

English: Can you pass me the salt, s'il vous plaît?
Russian: Передай-ка мне соль, сильвупле.

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.

Do not use italics in song, album, book, or movie titles. Use quotation marks instead.

Speaker identifiers and qualifiers should be added as needed but should not be italicized.

EXAMPLES:

[Марк] *Здесь все и началось*
30 лет назад.

[автоответчик] *Абонент не отвечает.*
Оставьте сообщение после сигнала.

Numerals

· Numbers from one to ten should be spelled out («два-три дня», «шесть номинаций», «второй сын»).
· Numbers from 11 and up should be represented numerically («20 долларов», «15-й альбом»).
· Single-digit numbers should be represented numerically if they are in one line with other two-digit numbers («Повторять с интервалами в 5, 10, 15 секунд»).
· Generally numbers of four and more digits require a space as a thousand separator («Стадион вмещает 44 875 зрителей»).
· Use comma as a decimal separator: 14,99.
· Big round numerals such as thousands, millions, billions, etc. should be rendered as words rather than digits «Мы хотим привлечь 20 миллионов долларов»).
· Numbers that begin a sentence should generally be spelled out.
· Unless the dialogue otherwise specifies the time of the day, use 24-hour format representing time. Do not use AM/PM. («Она вышла на сцену в 22.15»).
· Use standard official date format: 13 августа 1980 года.
· Days of the week and months should be written with lowercase letters at the beginning («Это было в прошлую пятницу, 28 июля»).

Currency

If a currency unit is mentioned in dialogue it should be spelled out.

EXAMPLE:

Я купил это приложение за 99 центов.

Do not convert original currency to local currency.

Measurement units

Measurements (weight, temperature, distance, etc.) should generally be converted to the metric system.

EXAMPLES:

English: Boy, it's hot today!
It's almost 100 degrees outside.
Russian: Ну и жара сегодня!
На солнце градусов 40.

English: Stop eating! You are
over 200 pounds.
Russian: Хватит есть. Ты уже весишь
больше 90 килограммов!

A space should always separate a number and a measurement unit (6 км, 5 ºC, 14 %).

Punctuation

Refer to Gramota.ru as the primary source for punctuation rules.

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 «…» quotes. On Mac it can be turned on automatically by going to Settings -> Keyboard -> Text -> Enable «Use smart quotes».
· Use „…" quotes for a quote within a quote.
· Use of semicolons is discouraged. If a sentence is very long, it is better to break it in shorter sentences.

· Do not overuse exclamation points and ellipses.

In Russian quotation marks are used in some other cases, for example, for song, album, book, movie, music tour titles.

Do not use quotes with names spelled in Latin characters: artist and band names, app titles, company and brand names. If an app title or a band name has words in Cyrillic, quotes should be used.

EXAMPLES:
<div align="center">

группы The Rolling Stones и The Beatles
группа «Иванушки International»
альбом The Rolling Stones «Bridges to Babylon»
песня The Beatles «Here Comes the Sun»
тур «Days Are Gone»
магазин App Store

</div>

Hyphen (-) with no spaces is used inside words.

EXAMPLES:
<div align="center">

Лос-Анджелес, кто-нибудь, рок-группа, кавер-версия

</div>

Long dash (—) is used to indicate two speakers in the same subtitle and between words inside one sentence. Use the combination **[Option Shift -]** for a long dash.

EXAMPLE:
<div align="center">

Это было здорово —
почувствовать энергетику.

</div>

Short dash (–) is used to indicate numeric intervals. Use combination (Option -) for a short dash.

EXAMPLES:
<div align="center">

XX–XXI век, 70–80-е годы

</div>

Songs

Song lyrics should generally only be titled if they are actuated on-screen and plot-pertinent. Plot-pertinent does not simply mean thematically relevant—it means that the lyrics convey information that is necessary for a viewer's understanding of the plot.

Songs actuated on-screen or heard within the scene should be identified if possible.

EXAMPLE:

English: [Taylor Swift's "Blank Space"
playing over speakers]

Russian: [Taylor Swift «Blank Space»]

Generic descriptors should be used for non-identifiable songs actuated or heard within the scene.

EXAMPLE:

English: [rock music playing on stereo]

Russian: [рок-музыка]

Songs heard on the soundtrack should generally not be identified or indicated.

Punctuation within song lyrics should follow general Russian punctuation rules.

The first letter in each line should be capitalized.

DON'T:

*Разлук так много на земле и разных судеб
надежду дарит на заре паромщик людям*

DO:

*Разлук так много на земле и разных судеб,
Надежду дарит на заре паромщик людям*

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 credit.