Original Content QA Lab: Subtitling Guidelines
TH-TH

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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

35 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:

-ฉันว่าเราควรจะโหวต
-อีกแล้วหรอ เพิ่งทำกันไปเองนะ

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: ฉันว่านายติดรถไปด้วยได้

SUB 2: แต่คิดว่า
พ่อกับแม่ไม่น่าจะโอเคด้วย

INCORRECT:

SUB 1: ฉันว่านายติดรถไปด้วยได้…

SUB 2: …แต่คิดว่า
พ่อกับแม่ไม่น่าจะโอเคด้วย

Use an ellipsis to indicate:
• Dialogue that trails off
• An abrupt interruption

EXAMPLE (trails off):

SUB 1: นางสาวไทยปีนี้ได้แก่...

EXAMPLE (abrupt interruption):

-คิดว่าลืมปิดประ...
-ปิดแล้วเหอะ!

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.

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

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 the Royal Society dictionary and/or website for reference on spelling.
พจนานุกรม คำใหม่ ฉบับราชบัณฑิตยสถาน (No.1 - 3)

Other reliable online dictionary is:
http://www.royin.go.th (based on the latest version only)

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.

When confirming the artist name, please remain consistent with how they appear in Apple Music and iTunes. Also, check with the artist's official homepage and album covers for how they want their name to be stylized.

- Names that should never be translated: song, company, and apps. (Example: เพลง Shape of You / บริษัท Apple / แอป Apple Store)
- Always transliterate a person name.
  (Example: เจสสิก้า แจ็กกี้ หลุยส์)
- Never translate: Apple, Apple Music, iTunes, App Store, Apple Watch, iPod, iPad, iPhone, Apple TV, Carpool Karaoke, Planet of the Apps, and other terms related to Apple. Check Apple's Trademarks here: https://www.apple.com/legal/intellectual-property/trademark/appletmlist.html

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 the first letter of the word and represent the rest of the word with asterisks.

EXAMPLE:

<div align="center">เท่ชิ***งเลย</div>

Foreign Dialogue

Foreign dialogue that's not English 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:

ขอ *arrivederci* ขนมหวานสักพักนะ

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

Numerals

Numbers should always be represented numerically.

Numbers 1,000 and up should always be written with a comma.

Exceptions:
- Addresses should always be written numerically: 5 Primrose Lane
- Numbers that begin a sentence should generally be spelled out.
- Specific name: โครงการ To Be Number One

Currency

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

Thai currency should always be represented with บาท.

EXAMPLE 1:

<div align="center">ขายแอปในราคา 99 บาท ไม่ก็ $1.29</div>

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

EXAMPLE 2:

<div align="center">แล้วแต่รุ่น
มีทั้ง 129 และ 199</div>

Punctuation

Follow standard official rules.

Some notes:
- One single space is required after the vowel ๆ but there should be no space in front of it. (Example: เด็กๆ ตั้งใจเรียน)
- One single space is required before and after a foreign word and/or a number. (Example: หนังสือของ Charles ทั้ง 7 เล่ม)
- 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:

You thought I took a spill
But I didn't

INCORRECT:

You thought I took a spill,
but I didn't

Songs in which the lyrics have been altered or parodied for comedic effect can generally be translated.

There is a bit more leniency with casual/slang spelling in song lyrics than in spoken dialogue. For example, using โผะ instead of ผม and ฟาม instead of ความ when the singer is singing in Northern Thai dialect.

EXAMPLE:

โผะเอาฟามรักมาฝาก อยากให้คุณได้รู้จัก

Translation Credits

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