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

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Reading Speed

20 characters per second for most programming.
17 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. 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. A noun should not be split from its article.

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.

SDH files should include stand-alone utterances/exclamations such as oh, whoa, and wow.

Dual Speakers

Use a hyphen to indicate two speakers in the same subtitle. No space should appear between hyphens and dialogue. If a speaker identifier is needed, it should follow the hyphen (see Speaker Identifiers section).

EXAMPLE:

-Ich denke, wir sollten abstimmen.
-[John] Noch einmal?

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">

SUB 1: Ich würde ja vorschlagen,
dass du mitkommst,

SUB 2: aber ich glaube nicht,
dass Mutti und Vati es erlauben.

</div>

INCORRECT:

<div align="center">

SUB 1: Ich würde ja vorschlagen,
dass du mitkommst ...

SUB 2: ... aber ich glaube nicht,
dass Mutti und Vati es erlauben.

</div>

Use an ellipsis to indicate:
- Dialogue that trails off
- Dialogue that begins mid-sentence
- A significant pause (one second or more)
- an abrupt interruption
- an interruption to the dialogue caused by on-screen text (see section "On-screen text").

EXAMPLE 1:

<div align="center">

SUB 1: Warte mal, hast du etwa …
SUB 2: … wirklich alles gegessen?

</div>

EXAMPLE 2:

<div align="center">

-Du hast vergessen ...
-Habe ich nicht!

</div>

If the ellipsis precedes or follows a complete word, leave a space (as shown in the example above). If the ellipsis is used to indicate that part of a word is missing, do not use a space.

EXAMPLE 3:

<div align="center">

Wo sind meine Schlüssel, verd...?

</div>

Speaker Identifiers

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

CORRECT:

[John]
Was ist hier los?

INCORRECT:

[John] Was ist hier los?

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's not clear from visuals or context who's 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's not clear from visuals/context who's speaking:

[John flüstert]
Kommst du?

If it is clear from visuals/context who's speaking:

[auf Sächsisch]
Guten Morgen.

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

[mit normaler Stimme] Keine Ahnung,
warum ich gerade im Dialekt sprach.

Sound Effects

Sound effects that are plot-pertinent or lend helpful context to a scene should be identified when they aren't obvious from visuals or context. The sound description should accurately convey the sound that can be heard.

EXAMPLES:

When a sound is heard once:

[Türenknallen]

When a sound is heard repeatedly:

[Mann hustet mehrmals]

Avoid SDH subtitles with:
· redundant sound effects (if we see someone pour a glass of water or breaking glass, it's not necessary to indicate [water pouring] or [glass shattering])
· 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: [entferntes Türenknallen]

SUB 2: Was war das?

EXAMPLE 2 (only if needed in extreme cases):

-[entferntes Türenknallen]
-Was war das?

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).

Subtitles for on-screen text should always be in upper case.

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.

If the dialogue is interrupted by an on-screen text subtitle, use ellipses to indicate the interruption.

EXAMPLE:

SUB 1: Ich wusste nicht, …

SUB 2: REGISSEUR

SUB 3: … dass sie auch Tänzerin war.

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

Main and Episode Titles

Main titles 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.

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 Duden as the primary source for spelling: http://www.duden.de/woerterbuch
- Follow new German spelling rules. In particular, the Duden covers the following issues in detail:
    - use of the hyphen: rules 21-31
    - writing as one or several words: rules 47-66
    - case sensitivity: rules 67-97

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.
- Translate brand names into a more generic term if the brand is unknown in German and the viewer would miss out on meaning in context (e.g. "Bleiche" for "Clorox").
- Translate character names or nicknames if their localised form is generally used and well-known in German (e.g. "Bob der Baumeister" for "Bob the Builder"), or if the name is plot-pertinent (e.g. "die Petze" for "the snitch").
- Translate historical or popular characters if there is a localised form (e.g. "Weihnachtsmann" for "Santa Claus").
- Apply localised spelling conventions for IP-protected names and terms (e.g. "Micky Maus" for "Mickey Mouse").
- Do not translate proper first and last names (e.g. Peter, Smith, etc.).

Abbreviations and acronyms:
- Only use abbreviations if they are in the Duden (e.g. "evtl."). Follow the Duden rules for when to use a period following abbreviations or acronyms. Common abbreviations with period include: Fr., Frl., Dr., evtl., Hr., Nr., Prof., usw.
- The plural of acronyms is formed by adding -s, e.g. "LKWs", "GmbHs".

Apostrophes:
Use apostrophes do indicate:
- the genitive case of proper names ending in s, ss, ß, tz, z, x, and ce (e.g. "Hans' Hot-Dog-Bude".
- omitted letters in casual, spoken language (e.g. "So 'n Blödsinn!", "Wie geht's?").

Do not use apostrophes when melding prepositions and articles (e.g. "aufs", "überm") or when shortening words such as "heran, herauf, herein, herüber" ("ran, raus, rein, rüber").

Casual/slang spelling:
- Two key characteristics of casual, spoken language are sound/syllable omissions and truncated sentences. Subtitle translations can reflect this where common, or where needed if plot-pertinent, but as a general rule of thumb, casual spelling should be used sparsely.
- Avoid using slang spellings. If absolutely needed, confirm with reputable sources whenever possible.

Useful source: Besides the Duden, another reputable source for linguistic matters in German can be found at: www.canoo.net

Expletives

Match the audio. Do not censor at will. If the expletive is audible, title the word.

If the original expletive is bleeped, muted, or censored in any way, and the translation results in an equal expletive that should be bleeped, muted or censored, then title the first letter (or letter combination "Sch") of the word and represent the rest of the word with asterisks.

EXAMPLES:

So ein W******!
Das ist echt Sch****, Mann!

If the expletive forms part of a compound, then only represent the letters of the expletive word with asterisks.

EXAMPLE:

Er ist ein Sch***kopf erster Klasse!

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:

Ich sage zunächst *arrivederci* bis zum nächsten Mal.

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*)

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

EXAMPLES:

[John] *Unsere Geschichte beginnt hier,*
vor genau 30 Jahren.

[Telefonstimme] *Bitte bleiben Sie dran.*
Ihnen wird in Kürze geholfen.

Numerals

Numbers one to twelve should be spelled out. Numbers 13 and up should be represented numerically.

Numbers between 1000 and 9999 do not require a decimal point. Numbers 10,000 and up should be written with a decimal point, e.g. 23.000.

Exceptions:
- Numbers that begin a sentence should generally be spelled out.
- Phone numbers and addresses should always be written numerically.

EXAMPLES:
"0800-2000 136" or "030-590 09 00 00"
"5 Primrose Lane, Denville, NJ 07834" or "Unter den Linden 6, 10117 Berlin"

Date: Provide dates in the format [dd.mm.yyyy] whereby the year is to be omitted unless it is included in the dialogue or on-screen text. Spell out the month if the month is spoken in dialogue.

EXAMPLES:
11/18/2012 > 18.11.2012
November 18 > 18. November

Note: For information on punctuation of dates included in sentences, consult Duden rule 32.

Time: Provide the time in the format [hh:mm] followed by "Uhr". Unless the dialogue otherwise specifies the time of the day, use the 24-hour clock.

EXAMPLES:
Der Termin war um 15:30 Uhr.
Der Termin war nachmittags halb vier.

Decades: Provide decades in one of the following formats depending on the the actual wording used in the dialogue: 1960er, 1960er-Jahre, 2000er, 2000er-Jahre

Currency, Symbols & Metric System

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

EXAMPLE 1:
Ich würde die App für 99 Cents oder 1,29 $ verkaufen.

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

EXAMPLE 2:

Das wird je nach Modell 129 or 199 kosten.

Note: Currency should never be converted.

Symbols: Always use a space between a number and an abbreviation or symbol (6 km, 5 ºC, 14 %).

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

Punctuation

Follow standard official rules. This includes using German quotation marks („ … ") and introducing a direct quotation with a colon.

Some notes:
- 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.

EXAMPLE:

„Wie funktioniert das?", fragte er mich.

- 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.

Songs

Song lyrics should generally only be titled if 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.

Songs actuated on screen with the artist singing along should be identified with a single musical note symbol before and after the title of the song.

EXAMPLE:

[♪ Gettin' Jiggy Wit It ♪]

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

EXAMPLE:

[Taylor Swifts „Blank Space"
ertönt aus den Lautsprechern]

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

EXAMPLE:

[Rockmusik aus dem Radio]

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

When titling lyrics:
· omit end punctuation, except for question marks or exclamation points when appropriate.
· use commas as usual within lyrics, but not at the end of a line.
· capitalise the first letter in each line.

CORRECT:

*Wie viele Straßen auf dieser Welt
Sind Straßen voll Tränen und Leid?*

INCORRECT:

*Wie viele Straßen auf dieser Welt
sind Straßen voll Tränen und Leid*

There is a bit more leniency with more frequent casual/slang spelling in song lyrics than in spoken dialogue. For example, shortening the indefinite article "ein" to "'n"—as in "wie 'n Vulkan"—is acceptable when the audio calls for it.

Translator Credits

There should not be a subtitle for a translator credit.