

Subtitling Style Guide

In order to provide consistent service and the most readable subtitles, Talking Type Captions follows a strict style guide to maintain our high standards for excellent subtitling.

In the style guide below, you'll find how Talking Type ensures every word, every sound, and every punctuation mark of your project is subtitled properly.

LINES/CHARACTERS:

- 1-2 lines per subtitle placed at bottom center.
- No more than 32 characters per line across.

TIMING & LINE BREAKS:

Subtitles should be timed when the speaker begins, disappear once the speaker is finished and before a camera change, unless that causes the caption to be on the screen for less than one second. The maximum length a subtitle should appear on-screen is 7 seconds.

For spoken dialogue, line breaks should follow the natural rhythm of speech for maximum readability.

Example:

“He saw the red car
and ran after it.”

But for operas and musicals, the line breaks occur like they are being sung. Time the text according to the lyrics. In the above example, if the singer holds the word ‘saw’, the line break would look like this:

“He saw
the red car and ran after it.”

In short, the line break has to follow the singing.

*Please fill in any missing lyrics/dialogue/spoken words. All spoken and sung words must be there in the file.

SPEAKER IDENTIFICATION:

Speaker identification will be required only if necessary for comprehension.

Example:

When someone is off screen, but it is still apparent who is speaking, speaker identification is not required.

When speaker identification *is* required, the speaker's name should be formatted in all capital letters, with a colon and a space.

Example:

JOHN: I went to the library.

SOUND EFFECTS:

Sound effects will only be required when pertinent to the plot, and when included, they should be bracketed and formatted in all capital letters.

Example:

[PHONE RINGS]

ITALICIZATION:

Italicization will only be required in the following instances:

- Narration/voiceover speech (make sure to include a speaker identification)
- Dialogue from on-screen television or radio
- When a character is heard speaking over a phone and is not physically present in the scene

NUMBERS:

Numerals 1-12 should be written out. All other numbers should be written as digits.

Example:

– I bought five books,
so now I have a total of 15.

SPECIAL DIALOGUE:

A speaker trailing off should be formatted with ellipses. Abrupt pauses or interruptions are formatted with a long dash.

Example:

I don't know...

OR:

– I am going—