

TALKING TYPE'S CAPTIONING STYLE GUIDE

LINES/CHARACTERS

1-2 lines per caption, no more than 32 characters per line across.

LINE BREAKS

Line breaks and caption breaks should follow the natural rhythm of speech for maximum readability, without breaking up complete clauses/names, separating articles from words, etc.

INCORRECT:

The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog.

INCORRECT:

John and Jane Doe have two children.

INCORRECT:

Yesterday, I was going to the store.

INCORRECT:

I needed apples.
I was planning to bake

a pie for my girlfriend.
She's been having a

tough time at work lately.

CORRECT:

The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog.

CORRECT:

John and Jane Doe have two children.

CORRECT:

Yesterday, I was going to the store.

CORRECT:

I needed apples.

I was planning to bake a pie for my girlfriend.

She's been having a tough time at work lately.

TIMING

Captions should be timed to when the speaker begins, and 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.

MINIMUM DURATION FOR CAPTIONS: 1 second
MAXIMUM DURATION FOR CAPTIONS: 7 seconds

DASHES AND POSITIONING

For center placed pop-on captions, all speaker changes should be identified by a dash and space at the beginning of the caption.

Example with two speakers:

- Hello, nice to meet you.
My name is Laura.

- Laura, the pleasure's mine.
How are you?

- Fine, thank you.

For speaker placed pop-on captions, the captions will be positioned left, right, or center, depending on where the speaker is located on screen to indicate who is speaking, with no dashes to indicate a change of speaker unless two people speak within one caption.

Any two-speaker captions, for center placed or speaker placed, should be center-placed and aligned left.

LOWER THIRDS

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Onscreen text must not be covered by captions. If there is text in the lower third, the captions will be positioned to the top of the screen. If there is text at the bottom and the top of the screen, the captions will be positioned above the lower third, unless this interferes with the action on screen.

SPEAKER IDENTIFICATION

Speaker identification will be required only if necessary for comprehension (Example: when someone is off screen, but it still apparent who is speaking, speaker identification is not required).

When speaker identification is required, the speaker's name should be 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 plot pertinent and do not interfere with spoken dialogue. When included, sound effects should be bracketed and formatted in all capital letters.

Example:

[PHONE RINGS]

The tense of the verb should indicate whether the sound is singular or continuous.

Example:

[DOG BARKS]
[DOG BARKING]

Be as specific as possible.

Example:

[OCEAN SOUNDS]

Versus

[WAVES CRASHING]
[SEAGULLS CRYING]

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
- Song lyrics

NUMBERS

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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

When appropriate, you may indicate speaker trailing off with ellipses, abrupt pauses or interruptions with a long dash.

Example:

- I don't know...
OR
- I am going –
- Quiet!

Stuttering or stammering should be indicated with hyphens.

Example:

I-I-I don't know! He w-was right there!

If a speaker is spelling out a word (unless it's an acronym), capitalize each letter and put a dash between.

Example:

M-I-S-S-I-S-S-I-P-P-I (spelling)

Example:

FCC (acronym)

QUOTATION MARKS

If a speaker is quoting or reading from a book/newspaper/etc., it must be in quotation marks. For quotes extending over multiple captions, each caption starts with an opening mark, and the final caption has only a closing mark.

INCORRECT:

These days, we should remember
President Kennedy's words:

"My fellow Americans,"

"ask not what your country
can do for you,"

"ask what you can do
for your country."

OR

These days, we should remember
President Kennedy's words:

"My fellow Americans,

ask not what your country
can do for you,

ask what you can do
for your country."

CORRECT:

These days, we should remember
President Kennedy's words:

"My fellow Americans,

"ask not what your country
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ask what you can do
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