



Subtitling Style Guide

German (DE)



Date: 19th March 2024

Please ensure that you always consult the latest Style Guide, by visiting the certification website on <https://avtpro.oona.net>

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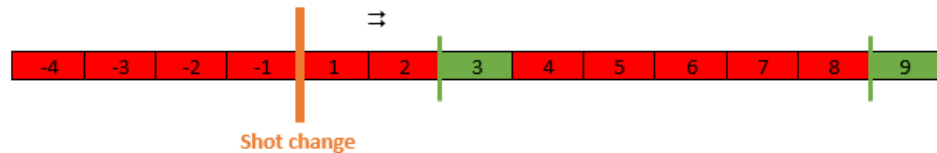
Technical dimension

- T1. Video framerate**
T1.1 All videos run at 25 frames per second (fps).
- T2. Line limitations**
T2.1 Maximum of 42 characters per line (cpl).
T2.2 Maximum of 2 lines.
- T3. Text formatting**
T3.1 Font type: Arial.
T3.2 Font size: point 30.
T3.3 Font colour: white.
- T4. Outline**
T4.1 Use a black subtitle outline, or border, (2 px width) to enhance the visibility of subtitles where appropriate.
- T5. Positioning**
T5.1 Horizontal: center-aligned.
T5.2 Vertical: bottom of the screen.
T5.3 Subtitles should be moved to the top of the screen to avoid overlap with onscreen text or other important information contained in the images.
T5.4 In long opening credit sequences, avoid switching back and forth between bottom- and top-positioned subtitles and stick to the same position throughout the sequence as much as possible. In these cases, it is recommended to keep all subtitles aligned at the top.
- T6. Maximum display rate**
T6.1 15.0 characters per second (cps).
T6.2 The absolute maximum you are allowed to go is 17.0 cps, but only in a limited number of cases (see T6.3).
T6.3 If need be, up to a maximum of 10% of the subtitles in any given file can be over the reading-speed limit, that is, between 15.1 and 17.0, but remember that no display rate should be 17.1 cps or above.
- T7. Minimum subtitle duration**
T7.1 The minimum duration of a subtitle on screen is 1 second.
T7.2 Short sentences containing 3 or more words should have a minimum display rate of 01:12.
- T8. Maximum subtitle duration**
T8.1 The maximum duration of a subtitle on screen is 6 seconds.
T8.2 In exceptional cases only, e.g., for song lyrics, the maximum duration can be exceeded up to 8 seconds.
- T9. Minimum gap between subtitles**
T9.1 Leave a minimum gap of 4 frames between subtitles.
- T10. Timing (see T12 Chaining subtitles)**
T10.1 Subtitles should be timed to audio (within 3 frames).
T10.2 If extra time is needed for the reading speed, the out-time can be extended by a maximum of 1 second after the end of speech.

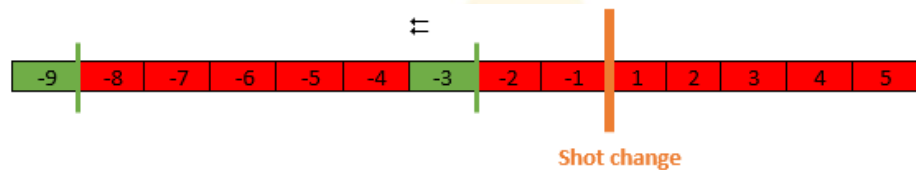
T10.3 The subtitle timing should generally adhere to the overall rhythm of the original, while keeping reading speeds (see T6) to an even pace as much as possible.

T11. Spotting around shot changes

T11.1 Where dialogue starts on the shot change, or within 8 frames past the shot change, set the in-time two frames after the shot change:



T11.2 If the out-time is within 8 frames before the shot change, extend the out-time so that the subtitle leaves the screen two frames before the actual shot change:



T12. Chaining subtitles

T12.1 In the case of consecutive subtitles, any gaps of 5 to 11 frames inclusive must be closed to 4 frames (chained subtitles). That is, the gap can be either 4 or a minimum of 12 frames.

Linguistic dimension

L1. Spelling

- L1.1 Use new German spelling rules (according to Duden).
- L1.2 When writing in capitals replace the letter ***ß** by **SS**.
- L1.3 Do not reproduce mispronunciations and/or misspellings unless it is relevant to the plot or a given character.

L2. Line treatment

- L2.1 Line breaks, within and across subtitles, should be syntactically segmented, keeping linguistic units together.
- L2.2 Text should normally be kept to one line unless it exceeds the character limitation.
- L2.3 In some cases, to enhance readability, it may be justified to use two lines even if the text is shorter than 42 characters. For instance, to break up syntactical units when a subtitle consists of two or more phrases, to highlight rhyming patterns (e.g., poetry and songs) or to follow the line break of an onscreen message:

*Was ich nicht weiß,
macht mich nicht heiß.*

- L2.4 Avoid having long sentences run over more than 3 or 4 subtitles. If possible, try to merge subtitles together, or break the sentence into several, shorter units.

L3. Abbreviations

- L3.1 The use of abbreviations should be avoided unless there are space or time limitations.
- L3.2 Titles such as **Doktor**, **Professor**, etc. can be abbreviated if used in combination with a name:

Darf ich vorstellen, Dr. Rosen.
 BUT:
 Das ist meine Professorin.

L4. Symbols

- L4.1 Add a space between a number and a symbol.

Sind das 300 ml?

- L4.2 The currency symbol comes after the number, with a space:

20 € 45 \$

L5. Dual Speakers

- L5.1 To indicate two speakers in one subtitle, use a hyphen followed by a space for the second speaker, with a maximum of one speaker per line and two speakers per subtitle:

Was hast du heute vor?
 - Ich gehe später ins Kino.

- L5.2 Always use the shorter hyphen (-), as opposed to the en- and em-dashes (*- and *-).

L6. Italics

- L6.1 Italics should be used sparsely.
- L6.2 Dialogue that is heard through electronic media, such as a phone, television set or computer, or through any other devices that modify the original voice of a character, such as a voice changer device.
- L6.3 Voiceovers and off-screen narration, unless the large majority of the content consists of off-screen speech. Only use italics when the speaker is not in the scene(s), not merely off screen or off camera.
- L6.4 The voice of a visible character expressing unspoken thoughts, flashbacks or inner monologue.
- L6.5 Foreign words unless they are part of regular usage (use Duden as a reference).
- L6.6 Song lyrics and recited poems.
- L6.7 Do not use italics to indicate emphasis on specific words.

L7. Quotation marks

- L7.1 English or straight double quotation marks without spaces should be used: " ", rather than * " *.
- L7.2 Follow the latest Duden rules for the use of quotation marks.
- L7.3 If a quote carries over more than one subtitle, quotation marks should be used only at the start and at the end of a quote:

"Es war Mitternacht
 und in den Wipfeln der uralten Bäume
 brauste der Sturmwind."

- L7.4 The titles of songs, albums, articles, books, films and other audiovisual productions, as well as book chapters should be in double quotation marks:

Wir lesen "Das Lied von der Glocke".

L7.5 Use double quotation marks without spaces for agrammatical phrases, neologisms, made-up expressions, and speech impediments or disorderly speech, if relevant for the plot, and when someone is imitating another person or placing special emphasis on a particular word or phrase.

L8. Numbers

L8.1 From 0 to 12, numbers should be written out, unless there are space or time limitations, in which case figures can be used:

eins zwei drei

L8.2 If figures are used instead of written out numbers because of space/time limitations, this should be used consistently in the whole file.

L8.3 From 13 and above, numbers should be written numerically:

13 23 37

L8.4 Do not combine numbers with letters (*11 hundert), except for millions and billions:

14 Millionen

L8.5 Four-digit numbers should not use spaces or separators:

3500 Euro

L8.6 Use a dot as a thousand separator for 5-digit numbers and above:

60.000 233.799

L8.7 Use a comma for decimals:

7,5 23,31

L9. Time

L9.1 Use a colon with times:

19:35

L9.2 Use the 24-hour format rather than "am" and "pm".

L9.3 In informal contexts, time can also be expressed in letters, unless there are space and/or time limitations:

Ich hole dich gegen sechs Uhr ab.

L10. Dates

L10.1 Dates must be expressed with numerals, in one of the following formats:

Ich bin am 13.04.1980 geboren.

Or:

Ich bin am 13. April 1980 geboren.

L11. Currency and measurements

L11.1 Do not convert currency unless required by the context.

L11.2 Convert measurements to the metric system, unless leaving the original units is required by the context/images, or there are instructions to keep the original units:

Kilometer (km) grad Celsius (°C) Kilogramm (kg) ...

L12. Hyphenation

L12.1 Do not split words with a hyphen over two lines.

L13. Continuity

L13.1 Do not use ellipsis (three dots) or dashes when an ongoing sentence is split between two or more continuous subtitles:

Er hatte sie bei der Eröffnung gesehen
und wollte sie jetzt zur Rede stelle.

L13.2 However, do use an ellipsis to indicate a distinct pause that lasts longer than 1 second. In this case, use an ellipsis at the end of the first subtitle (preceded by a space) and at the beginning of the second (followed by a space):

Ich habe dich dort gesehen ...
... und mich nicht getraut, dich anzusprechen.

L13.3 Use an ellipsis and comply with Duden rules to indicate abrupt interruptions (i.e., sentence or word remains unfinished):

Ich konnte doch nicht ...
Lass mich doch erk...

L13.4 Use ellipsis followed by a space, to indicate that a subtitle is starting mid-sentence, e.g., when a character turns on the radio:

... wurde das Medikament verboten.

L13.5 The ellipsis can be used when an utterance is interrupted by another character or by a forced narrative:

Example 1:
Beim Untertiteln ...
- Hier müssen wir aussteigen!
... gibt es viel zu beachten.

Example 2:
Die Sache ist ...
- Red nicht weiter!

Example 3:
Da, sieh mal wer ...

Da ist ja Karl.
- ... da ist.

L13.6 For combination of ellipsis with other punctuation marks follow the latest Duden rules.

L14. Profanity and taboo language

L14.1 The original content's dialogue must never be censored in the translated version. Expletives should be rendered as faithfully as possible, without using dialects or words that would otherwise introduce a level of obscenity not implied in the original.

L15. Titles

- L15.1 Titles of published works, existing movies and TV shows: if available, use official or well-known translations. If none are available, leave titles in the original language.
- L15.2 Capitalization of titles: the first letter of the title should be capitalized, the rest should follow German spelling:

Hast du schon
"Wie wirklich ist die Welt?" gelesen?

L16. Songs

- L16.1 Songs are only subtitled if they are relevant for the plot or part of the film (e.g., a character performs a song).
- L16.2 If coinciding with dialogue, whatever is more plot-pertinent should be subtitled.
- L16.3 Italicize lyrics.
- L16.4 Follow regular German punctuation and capitalization rules. Use commas, periods, exclamation and question marks as and when appropriate.

L17. Text on screen

- L17.1 Text on screen should be translated when it is relevant and not redundant, and does not coincide with dialogue. Text on screen becomes redundant when spelling is identical in both languages.
- L17.2 If there is simultaneous, plot-pertinent speech, and no time to accommodate both spoken and written text, subtitling the dialogue should be given priority.
- L17.3 Text on screen should be in ALL CAPS (e.g., movie/book/song titles, single words and word groups).
- L17.4 Use case sensitive spelling for long written passages and full sentences of text on screen (e.g., excerpts from books, magazines or newspapers, handwritten notes, social media messages and text messages).