



Subtitling Style Guide

Italian (IT)



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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 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. Background

T4.1 Use a subtitle background 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 17.0 characters per second (cps).

T6.2 The absolute maximum you are allowed to go is 19.0 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 17.1 and 19.0, but remember that no display rate should be 19.1 cps or above.

T7. Minimum subtitle duration

T7.1 The minimum duration of a subtitle on screen is 1 second.

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 7 seconds.

T9. Minimum gap between subtitles

T9.1 Leave a minimum gap of 2 frames between subtitles.

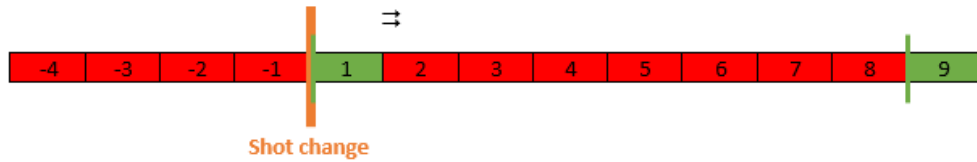
T10. Timing (see T12 Chaining subtitles)

T10.1 Subtitles should be timed to audio (within 3 frames).

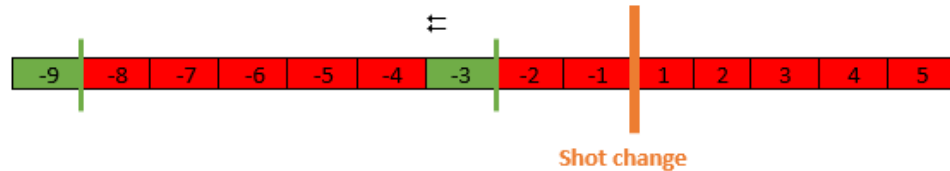
T10.2 If extra time is needed for the reading speed, the out-time can be extended by a maximum of 12 frames after the end of audio.

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 to coincide with 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 3 to 11 frames inclusive must be closed to 2 frames (chained subtitles). That is, the separation can be either 2 or a minimum of 12 frames.

Linguistic dimension

L1. Line treatment

- L1.1 Line breaks, within and across subtitles, should be syntactically segmented, keeping linguistic units together.
- L1.2 Text should normally be kept to one line unless it exceeds the character limitation.
- L1.3 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:

*O come la quaglia
passato il mare.*
- L1.4 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.

L2. Abbreviations

- L2.1 The use of abbreviations should be avoided unless there are space or time limitations.

L3. Symbols

- L3.1 Add a space between a number and a symbol, except for %:

L'auto andava a 200 km orari.

La temperatura ieri superava i 45 °C.

Il costo del grano è aumentato del 50%.

- L3.2 The currency symbol comes after the number, with a space:

20 € 99 \$

L4. Acronyms

L4.1 Acronyms should be written without periods between letters:

FBI

L5. Dual speakers

L5.1 Use a hyphen followed by a space to indicate two speakers in one subtitle, with a maximum of one speaker per line.

- John, dove sei?
- Sono in cucina.

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

L6. Italics

L6.1 Titles of albums, books, films and audiovisual productions.

L6.2 Foreign words unless they are part of regular usage.

L6.3 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.

L6.4 Song lyrics if plot pertinent and recited poems.

L6.5 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.

L6.6 The voice of a visible character expressing unspoken thoughts, flashbacks or inner monologue.

L6.7 Do not use italics to indicate emphasis on specific words.

L7. Numbers

L7.1 From 0 to 10, numbers should be written out, unless there are space or time limitations, in which case figures can be used:

uno cinque sette

L7.2 11 and above, numbers should be written numerically, except for *cento* and *mille*:

13 23 37

L7.3 If a number starts a sentence, write it out instead.

L7.4 Four digits numbers should not use spaces or separators, but a period before the last three digits:

3.500 euro

L7.5 Use also a period as a thousand separator for five-digit numbers and above:

60.000 333.987

L7.6 Use a comma for decimals:

7,5 33,95

L8. Time

L8.1 Use a colon with times:

19:35 03:45

- L8.2 Use the 24-hour format to indicate the time rather than “am” and “pm”.
- L8.3 In informal contexts, time can also be expressed in letters, unless there are space and/or time limitations:

Ci vediamo al bar alle otto e mezza.

L9. Dates

- L9.1 Dates must be expressed in the following format:

Sarah vinse la gara il 23 aprile 1977.

L10. Currency and measurements

- L10.1 Do not convert currency unless required by the context.
- L10.2 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:

chilometri (km) gradi centigradi (°C) chilogrammi (kg)

- L10.3 Leave a space between the number and the symbol:

Sarah aveva già percorso ben 20 km.

L11. Hyphenation

- L11.1 Do not split words with a hyphen over two lines.

L12. Quotation marks

- L12.1 English or straight double quotation marks without spaces should be used: “ ”, rather than * « ».
- L12.2 Direct speech is introduced by a colon, followed by double quotation marks and capital case:

Sarah disse: "Il parco è meraviglioso!".

- L12.3 Use double quotation marks without spaces for regular quotes, making sure that the closing quotes end before the full stop:

Sarah disse: "Vieni domani".

- L12.4 If the quotation is an independent clause, the punctuation mark comes before the quotation mark:

"Sarah non voleva andare alla festa."

- L12.5 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:

"Il sole sorgeva all'orizzonte,
aveva appena smesso di piovere
e gli uccelli riprendevano a volare."

- L12.6 Book chapters, articles and song titles should be in double quotation marks:

Mi piace la canzone "Material Girl".

- L12.7 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.
- L12.8 Use double quotation marks without spaces when a character reads out or quotes someone else.

L13. Continuity

- L13.1 Do not use ellipsis (three dots or single Unicode character: Alt+0133) or dashes when an ongoing sentence is split between two or more continuous subtitles:

In più di un milione si sono accalcati
alla Porta di Brandeburgo
per vedere i fuochi d'artificio.

L14. Continuity (interruptions)

- L14.1 Use an ellipsis to indicate a significant pause, abrupt interruptions or dialogue trailing off. For a significant pause within a subtitle, there should be a space after the ellipsis:

Direi... manteniamo la promessa.

- L14.2 If the sentence continues in the next subtitle, only use an ellipsis at the end of the first event:

Il tuo nome...
è Alice, giusto?

- L14.3 The ellipsis can be used when an utterance is interrupted by another character or by a forced narrative.

Example 1

La sottotitolazione...
Attenta, una bicicletta!
...è molto importante.

Example 2

Ti ho già detto mille volte...
- Attenta, una macchina!
- ...devi guardare prima di attraversare.

L15. Profanity and taboo language

- L15.1 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 dialogue.

L16. Titles

- L16.1 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.

L17. Songs

- L17.1 Songs are only subtitled if they are relevant for the plot or part of the film (e.g., a character performs a song).
- L17.2 If coinciding with dialogue, whatever is more plot-pertinent should be subtitled.
- L17.3 Italicize lyrics.
- L17.4 Use an uppercase letter at the beginning of each line.
- L17.5 Follow regular Italian punctuation and capitalization rules. Use commas, periods, exclamation and question marks as needed and ellipses when songs continue in the background but are interrupted by dialogue.

L18. Text on screen

- L18.1 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.
- L18.2 If there is simultaneous, plot-pertinent speech, and no time to accommodate both spoken and written text, subtitling the dialogue should be given priority.
- L18.3 Text on screen should be in ALL CAPS, except for written passages (e.g., excerpts from books, magazines or newspapers, handwritten notes, social media messages and text messages), which must match the use of uppercase/lowercase as it appears on screen.
- L18.4 To improve readability, sentence case can be used for long passages of onscreen text (e.g., long written passages used as prologue or epilogue).