



Subtitling Style Guide

Chinese, Traditional (ZH-TRA)



Date: 20th April 2025

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 16 characters per line (cpl).

T2.2 Maximum of 2 lines.

T3. Text formatting

T3.1 Font type: SimHei.

T3.2 Font size: point 35.

T3.3 Font colour: white.

T4. Background

T4.1 Do not use subtitle background.

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.

T5.5 In cases where the entire screen is covered with text, choose the option that causes the least disruption to the viewer.

T6. Maximum display rate

T6.1 9.0 characters per second (cps).

T6.2 The absolute maximum you are allowed to go is 11.0 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 9.1 and 11.0, but remember that no display rate should be 11.1 cps or above.

T7. Minimum subtitle duration

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

T7.2 In exceptional cases only, e.g., for only one word, the minimum duration can be 20 frames.

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.

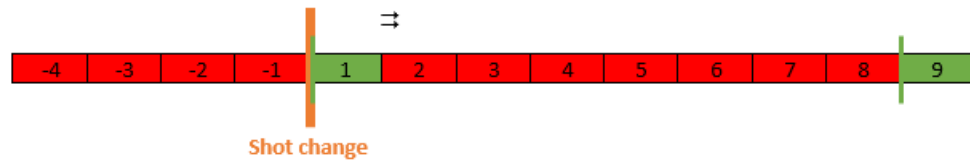
T10. Timing (see T12 Chaining subtitles)

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

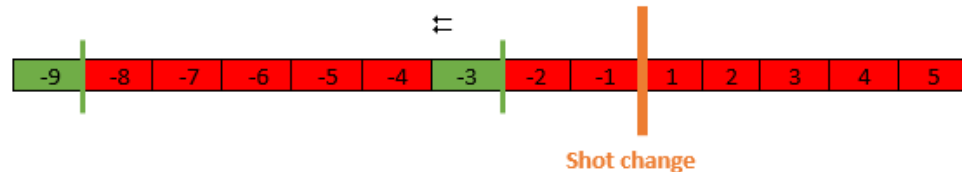
T10.2 If extra time is needed for the reading speed, the out-time can be extended by a maximum of 12 frames after the end of audio.

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 gap can be either 2 or 12 frames.

Linguistic dimension

L1. Line treatment

- L1.1 Text should normally be kept to one line unless it exceeds the character limitation.
- L1.2 Line breaks, within and across subtitles, should be syntactically segmented, keeping linguistic units together.
- L1.3 If possible, the bottom line should be longer than the top line, provided you do not violate L1.2.
- L1.4 In some cases, to enhance readability, it may be justified to use two lines even if the text is shorter than 16 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:

天涯地角有窮時
只有相思無盡處

- L1.5 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. Proper Names

- L2.1 Use a half-width interpunct (·) to divide transliterated first name and last name, except in the case of Korean, Japanese and Vietnamese names or names of well-known people/characters with a well-established traditional Chinese translation:

Leonardo DiCaprio 李奧納多·狄卡皮歐

Momoe Yamaguchi 山口百惠

Song Joong-ki 宋仲基
Ho Chi Minh 胡志明
Kamala Harris 賀錦麗

- L2.2 If multiple translations exist, follow the official translation used in the target region (i.e., Taiwan):

Donald Trump 唐納·川普 not 唐納德·特朗普
New Zealand 紐西蘭 not 新西蘭
Brisbane 布里斯本 not 布里斯班

- L2.3 When brand names or trademarks appear, you may either use the same name if it is known in the target region (with the flexibility of using English terms), adapt to the name that the brand or product is known by the target region, or use a generic name for that product or item. Avoid swapping out names of brands, companies or famous people for other names:

Volkswagen 福斯汽車
YouTube YouTube
Band-Aids OK 繃
Esky 保冷箱

Original text: Google it!
(correct) Google 一下!
(correct) 上網查一下!
(incorrect) 百度一下!

- L2.4 If a name is introduced in a forced narrative, always use the following format regardless of the onscreen format:

Prof. Matthew Walker, UC Berkeley
(柏克萊大學教授 馬修·沃克)

L3. Dual speakers

- L3.1 Use a hyphen without a space to indicate two speakers in one subtitle event, with a maximum of one speaker per line:

-最近好嗎?
-還不錯, 你呢?

- L3.2 Always use the shorter hyphen (-), as opposed to the en- and em-dashes (*— and *—).

L4. Acronyms

- L4.1 English acronyms should be translated where time and character count permits:

NASA 美國太空總署
WHO 世界衛生組織

- L4.2 Commonly known English acronyms can be kept and should be written without periods (e.g., DJ, DNA, CD).

- L4.3 Use Chinese acronyms well recognized in the target region (i.e., Taiwan):

The Olympics 奧運
FIFA World Cup 世足賽

L5. Italics

- L5.1 Do not use italics.

L6. Repetitions

- L6.1 Do not translate words or phrases repeated more than once.

Example: Go go go go go! 快走!

- L6.2 If the word or phrase is said twice in a row, time to audio but do not repeat the translation.

- L6.3 This rule may be disregarded if the context intentionally uses repetition for emphasis or comedic effect:

I wasn't scared. I wasn't scared. I WASN'T scared...Okay, I was scared.

我不怕，我真的不怕...
好啦，我很怕

L7. Numbers

- L7.1 Use half width numbers instead of full width numbers.

123 not 1 2 3

- L7.2 From 0 to 10, numbers should be written in Chinese:

一 二 三

- L7.3 From 11 and above, numbers should be written numerically:

13 265 3920

- L7.4 Combine Western Arabic numerals with Chinese number characters to take up less space:

11 億 500 萬

- L7.5 Four-digit numbers should not use spaces or separators. Use separators for five-digit numbers and above:

3500 歐元

這座小鎮人口為 45,680 人

- L7.6 For days of the week, use Chinese characters:

星期六

- L7.7 Use Arabic numerals for apartment numbers, street numbers, phone numbers, measurements, chapter numbers, page numbers, addresses, time, flight numbers, and dates:

立法院位於中山南路 1 號

請翻到課本第 23 頁

他的電話號碼是 0910123123

L8. Time

L8.1 Use a colon with times:

11:35 2:45

L8.2 For rounded times, use Chinese characters:

五點

L8.3 Use the 12-hour format to indicate the time and translate "am" and "pm" into Chinese based on the time of the day:

清晨五點 下午一點 晚上 8:25

L9. Dates

L9.1 Dates must be expressed with numerals, in the following format:

1970 年 5 月 25 日

L9.2 For historical or cultural content using a specific calendar, do not convert the year and date into the Gregorian calendar:

總統偕同副總統出席
民國 110 年國慶大會

今天是農曆 7 月 1 日鬼門開

L10. Currency and measurements

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

L10.2 Avoid using measurement or currency symbols:

100 歐元 not €100

L10.3 When translating into traditional Chinese, use standard Chinese terms of measurements in the target region (Taiwan):

Meter should be translated as 公尺, not 米
"cm" should be translated as 公分, not 厘米
"km" should be translated as 公里, not 千米

L10.4 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:

他身高 180 公分

我家距離學校 15 公里遠

今天氣溫攝氏 30 度

L11. Punctuation

L11.1 Only use full-width Chinese punctuation, except for the hyphens in dual speakers subtitles, the interpunct (·) in names, or the periods in abbreviations (e.g., M.B.A.)

L11.2 Use full-width Chinese comma (，) instead of space to separate two sentences in the same line:

好呀，我最喜歡吃牛排了
好呀 我最喜歡吃牛排了

L11.3 Enumeration commas can be used for lists:

韓國、臺灣、新加坡及香港
曾被稱為「亞洲四小龍」

L11.4 Use question marks to indicate questions and exclamation marks to stress the tone. Do not combine question and exclamation marks or use double question/exclamation marks (? ! , ? ? , ! !).

L11.5 Do not add an ideographic comma (、), comma (,), or any type of period at the end of a line/subtitle.

L11.6 Do not use any type of periods.

L11.7 A colon may be used to introduce an explanation or an example:

日期：1976 年 8 月 27 日

L11.8 Do not use semicolons.

L12. Quotation marks

L12.1 Use full-width Chinese quotation marks: 「 」

L12.2 Direct speech is introduced by a colon, followed by Chinese quotation marks. Note the colon can be at the end of the first line when required:

他說：「你走吧！」

他女朋友一氣之下就說：
「好！你從此別想找到我！」

L12.3 If a quote carries over more than one subtitle, use the Chinese quotation marks in pairs in each subtitle:

Subtitle 1	「你是笑，我是應和你的歌聲 你是淚，我是陪伴你的星光」
Subtitle 2	「當你埋葬土中 我願是依伴你的青草」

L12.4 Book chapters, articles and song titles should be wrapped in title marks:

《被討厭的勇氣》

L12.5 Use Chinese quotation marks without spaces for 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:

這盤炸蟋蟀讓我有點「蝗」恐

L12.6 Use Chinese quotation marks without spaces when a character reads out or quotes someone else.

L12.7 When using quotation marks within other quotation marks, use double Chinese quotation marks within single Chinese quotation marks:

他問我：「『中二』是什麼意思？」

L13. Continuity

L13.1 When including ellipses in subtitles, use the single smart character (U+2026) as opposed to three dots/periods in a row.

- L13.2 Do not use ellipsis (three dots) or dashes when an ongoing sentence is split between two or more consecutive subtitles:

Subtitle 1	如果圖片編輯、新聞編輯和主編 在五分鐘內相繼來電
Subtitle 2	那一定是發生什麼事了

- L13.3 Use ellipsis to indicate a pause in the delivery of the original, an intentional or accidental suspension of a part of the sentence, or an abrupt interruption:

今天真是…天啊！你沒事吧？

可是我…

- L13.4 Use ellipsis, without a space, to indicate that a subtitle is starting mid-sentence, e.g., when a character turns on the radio:

…正積極檢討現行安全措施
以防類似事故再次發生

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

Example 1:

我最愛海灘了，因為…

（導演）

…在海裡游泳最舒服了

Example 2:

我們還是…

還是什麼？

…還是走吧

L14. Regional slang, idioms and dialects

- L14.1 Use regional slang, idioms or dialects (e.g., Hokkien) whenever appropriate to mimic the tone and register of the original dialogue:

What the fuck are you doing?

(correct) 你在搞什麼啊？

(correct) 你在衝三小？

(incorrect) 你在做什麼？

- L14.2 Refrain from using Hokkien dialect for a whole sentence. Use your best judgement to maintain readability:

(correct) 阿嬤，你吃飽沒？

(incorrect) 阿嬤，哩呷飽未？

- L14.3 Do not use Mandarin phonetic symbols. Use alternative expressions in Mandarin or Hokkien dialect instead:

(correct) 你是嗑了什麼啊？

(incorrect) 你很丐—九耶！

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, provide your own translation.

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 Follow regular traditional Chinese punctuation rules. Use commas, exclamation and question marks as and when appropriate.

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.
L18.2 Do not translate text on screen when it is overlapping with the dialogue.
L18.3 If there is simultaneous, plot-pertinent speech, and no time to accommodate both spoken and written text, subtitling the dialogue should be given priority.
L18.4 Text on screen should be enclosed with full-width brackets:

(導演 約翰·史密斯)

- L18.5 Never combine a forced narrative with dialogue in the same subtitle.

L19. Special instructions

- L19.1 Specify if the person spoken to is a female or male, an animal or supreme being for third-person pronouns. For example: 他、她、牠、牠、它
L19.2 Always use the gender-neutral second-person pronoun 你, unless instructions to the contrary are given.