



Translations & Publishing Management Toolkit

SUBTITLING GUIDELINES

Timing: Time the subtitles to match the dialogue. Thus, it should appear and disappear exactly when the words are spoken. However, ensure captions appear on-screen long enough to be read.

Number of lines: A maximum of two lines of subtitles should be presented at a time. In the case of a single-line subtitle, this should occupy the lower of the two lines.

Text positioning: Subtitles should be positioned at the lower part of the screen, and it should occupy no more than 2/12 of the screen image, otherwise it interferes with the background image action. The text should be displayed centered.

Fonts Types: Typefaces with no serifs are preferable to fonts with serifs, since the visual complexity added to the latter results in a decrease in the legibility of the subtitled text. Typefaces like Helvetica and Arial are preferable.

Line Length: Text should be limited to a maximum 38 characters per line.

Captions: Subtitles should not appear on screen at the same time as captions, which should be cleared before subtitling starts.

Average duration of a two-line subtitle: Allow 2 seconds per line of text (a very rough estimate). Text must be reduced as necessary to be readable in the time available.

Maximum Duration of a full two-line subtitle: The reading speed of the “average” viewers for a text of average complexity range between 2,5 to 3 words per second. Thus, a full two-line subtitle containing 14-16 words should remain on the screen for a maximum time of 6 seconds.

Minimum Duration of a single-word subtitle: The minimum duration of a single-word subtitle is at least 1,5 seconds, however simple the word is. Less time would render the subtitle as a mere flash on the screen, irritating the viewers’ eye.

Lagging-out time: Subtitles should not be left on the image for more than two seconds after the end of the utterance.

Time Break: Between two consecutive subtitles, about 0,25 of a second is needed in order to avoid the effect of subtitles’ “overlay.” This time break is necessary to signal to the brain the disappearance of one subtitle as a piece of linguistic information, and the appearance of another.

Meaning: Translate meaning and not just words, making sure to get the point across to the audience. Ensure that all actual words are captioned, regardless of language, dialect, or slang.

Translation: In terms of videos with Kundalini Yoga content, remember to use the most common used translations for yogic terms. If you don’t know then, make sure you have The Aquarian Teacher Textbook and Yoga Manual in the language in question for double-checking the terminology frequently used.

Editing: Don't automatically edit out words like "but", "so" or "too". They may be short but they



are often essential for expressing meaning. Similarly, conversational phrases like "you know", "well", "actually" often add flavor to the text.

Capitalization: Do not emphasize a word using all capital letters except to indicate screaming.

Other style considerations: Bold and underline are not permitted in subtitling.

Sources:

- "A Proposed Set of Subtitling Standards in Europe", by Fotios Karamitroglou, PhD, available at <https://translationjournal.net/journal/04stndrd.htm>
- Channel 4 Subtitling Guidelines, Available at http://www.channel4.com/media/documents/corporate/foi-docs/SG_FLP.pdf
- BBC Subtitles Guidelines, 2008