

# Best Practices for Creating Captions

*All captioning files should be created using these accessibility guidelines. Please note that this is not a comprehensive list and is subject to change.*

- Keep subtitle length to about 42 characters (maximum of 7 - 12 words per line)
  - ❖ Avoid more than 2 lines per caption.
  - ❖ Captions should not be less than 1 second.
  - ❖ Split captions lasting more than 7 seconds.
- Use standard rules for spelling and punctuation as much as possible.
- Determine natural breaks in the dialogue (verbs and conjunctions - use your own judgment).
- Exclude “um’s” and “ah’s” from captions.
- Add music, meaningful sounds, or other descriptions inside square brackets.  
Example: [car honking]
  - ❖ Describe relevant music which does not have relevant lyrics. Example:  
♪[rock music]♪
  - ❖ Write relevant lyrics with musical notes. Example: ♪ You’re the one that I want, ♪
- Use parenthesis to indicate when someone is speaking off-screen. Example:  
[Jeanine] Hey you!
  - ❖ If it is not obvious who is speaking, identify the speaker by putting their name or descriptor in parentheses (e.g., [John] Good morning, everyone.).
- If you see people talking, but there’s no sound, or if there are long periods with no sound, caption it as [no audio].