

# Captioning Best Practices

## Verbatim Captioning

It is important to caption a speaker's words verbatim. It is not necessary to caption false starts or filler sounds like, "umm..." or "err..." Do not attempt to correct any misspoken words or grammar as it could change the meaning of what is said. If what was said is incorrect, consider re-recording, or provide an additional means of clarification for all viewers/listeners.

## Spelling/Punctuation/Capitalization

All spelling, punctuation and capitalization must be accurate and follow the basic rules of the English language. Words should consist of both upper- and lower-case letters and never use all caps. Be especially attentive to words that sound the same but have a different meaning or spelling [Reel vs. Real]. When necessary break sentences in places normal pauses occur.

## Sound/Sound Effects

Any sounds or sound effects present should be descriptive and placed within brackets, such as [Applause] or [Loud Laughter]. Capture background or off-screen sounds, only if they are relevant to the overall plot. When used, off screen sounds should be specific, in brackets, and italicized [police car sirens].

## Music

All music lyrics should be captioned verbatim. Indicate musical lyrics by beginning and ending the song lyrics with a musical note, like ♪What a wonderful day♪. Musical notes can be obtained by pressing Alt + 13 on the Windows platform. Indicate instrumental music with descriptions such as [Music], [Slow Tempo Music], etc. If the name of the song, artist, title or lyrics are available, provide that information as well, within brackets.

## Mathematical Equations

When captioning mathematical equations spell out the mathematical symbols in text form, such as [equals], [square root of], [minus], etc. With numbers 1 through 10, these should be spelled out in text form while 11 or higher should be captioned in numeric form [He is number two in line vs. He was second out of 2,000 participants].

## Multiple Speakers

If multiple speakers are on screen, provide a description of each in parenthesis before their spoken words appear. (John) Today is sunny (Sabrina) It's hot. If the speaker's names are unknown, labels such as (Speaker 1) and (Speaker 2) can be used.

For more detailed information, view the [Captioning Best Practices video](#).