

Introduction: Getting to Know Captioning at Rev

This Style Guide will help you understand Rev's captioning expectations and learn how to produce high-quality captions for the customer.

What Are Captions?

The goal of captions is to provide a hard-of-hearing viewer the same experience of watching a video as anyone else. Captioning a video is more than just writing out what is said, but also includes speaker identifications, sound effects, and music descriptions. Another way to think of this is, if you were to turn the sound off on a video, do the captions provided give you the same viewing experience as someone who is watching the video with the sound on?

This Style Guide will cover the three main areas of captioning at Rev:

1. Accurately conveying audio information
2. Formatting captions in a readable way
3. Correctly timing captions to the audio

In addition to the Style Guide, our [Help Center](#) contains resources with details on best practice (preferred) as well as standard guidelines (graded). **You are required to review the key articles linked throughout the Style Guide.**

NOTE: You must be logged in to see Revver Help Center articles

Learn more about:
[Help Center](#)



This graphic indicates that a Help Center article is available.

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Help Center Articles

These are additional resources that you are required to review. They are also linked throughout the guide.

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Additional Resources

[Dash User Guide](#)

[Help Center](#)

[Forum](#)

RULE Caption **all** spoken words, only lightly editing when necessary for readability. Use US spelling.

WHY To provide a hard-of-hearing viewer the same experience of watching a video as anyone else.

Rules of thumb for caption accuracy:

- Maintain the integrity of the spoken words.
 - Do not paraphrase, rearrange, or change the speaker's words.
 - Caption contractions, formal and informal, as spoken.
- **Lightly edit unscripted productions, but do not omit intentionally spoken words.**
- You are expected to research proper nouns and terminology for representation and proper spelling.
 - Watching for terms on screen can be helpful.
 - Googling with a bit of context from your video/audio is also helpful.
 - URLs, hashtags, social media tags should be captioned using common convention:
www.rev.com / #revcaptions / @rev
- **Never type out a censored word.**
 - Use an appropriate atmospheric for the sound heard when the word is censored,
e.g. (beep)
- Include proper punctuation per common English grammar rules.

Learn more about:

[Accuracy](#)



Learn more about:

[Lightly Editing](#)



Learn more about:

[Punctuation](#)



RULE Always indicate speakers and speaker changes in the following way when captioning:

1. Use a dash and a space at the beginning of **each** speaker's dialogue. This includes the first speaker.
2. When the speaker **cannot be obviously identified using visual cues** that make it clear who is talking, include an identifier, also called a *speaker ID*.

Learn more about:

[Speaker Labels](#)



Learn more about:

[Audio Only Files](#)



When the speaker **can** be visually identified:

Use a *dash and space* at the beginning of the speaker's dialogue.

Why? So that a hard-of-hearing viewer will know someone different has started speaking.

- I didn't know you were there.

Do you remember the last time they did something
that had such a big impact on everyone?

When the speaker **cannot** be visually identified:

Use a *dash, space, and ID in brackets* at the beginning of the speaker's dialogue.

Why? So that a hard-of-hearing viewer will know who is speaking.

- [Harry] I didn't know you were there.

Do you remember the last time they did something
that had such a big impact on everyone?

NOTE: These labels are visible to the customer and audience. Always use appropriate language for speaker labels.

RULE Captions need to indicate sounds heard on screen. We call these identifiers **atmospherics**.

WHY **Atmospherics** provide visual indicators of non-verbal sounds to the viewer. This allows the hard-of-hearing audience to pick up on sounds that are important to the content of the video.

Learn more about:
[Atmospherics](#)



How to create atmospherics:

Do	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use parentheses () and lowercase unless a proper noun is used• Describe the sound or sounds heard on screen by following this convention:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ noun + descriptor/verb in present tense form e.g. (water boiling), (door slams)○ The noun lets viewers know who or what is making the sound, while the descriptor/verb lets them know what the sound is• Always use present tense, e.g. (Erin coughs)• If you are unsure if a sound is important, include an atmospheric to be safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Don't use a dash or speaker label in a caption group containing only atmospherics• Don't use onomatopoeia e.g. (ribbit ribbit); instead, describe what's creating the sound, e.g. (frog croaking)

For extended periods of music (minutes) refer to [Slide 6: Music](#)

RULE Caption music and lyrics when there is no spoken dialogue occurring at the same time.

WHY When there are no spoken words, the lyrics become the dialogue to be captioned. It is important to indicate when these are heard on screen for the hard-of-hearing audience to experience it as well.

Lyrics

When there is no other dialogue, lyrics should be captioned.

Learn more about:

[Lyrics](#)



Music Atmospherics

- When a file also contains spoken words, only include a background music atmospheric or lyrics if there's a significant time gap and it would benefit the viewer to include.
- A common format is a descriptor followed by the word “music.” You can indicate the progression of music with words like *begins* and *continues*. E.g. (orchestral music begins)
- Introductory music is a common use case. E.g. (bells chiming)
- Use the title for easily-recognizable songs without audible lyrics. E.g. (“The Star-Spangled Banner”)

How to notate lyrics:

Include a musical note ONLY at the beginning of the caption group. In Dash, use ## followed by a space to create the musical note.

♪ Mary had a little lamb

♪ Its fleece was white as snow



Tip: Customers may sometimes provide resource files, and Googling portions of the lyrics can be helpful.

RULE For **atmospherics-only projects**, accurately caption all sounds that are heard using atmospherics.

WHY Even when there is no spoken audio in the file, atmospherics tell the story for the viewer.

What is an atmospherics-only project?

- No spoken dialogue
- Contains sounds or music
- File with only cartoon gibberish


What is NOT an atmospherics-only project?


- File is entirely foreign language
- Audio is corrupt OR entirely silent
- File has no spoken words OR meaningful sounds

**Projects should be unclaimed as "no audio present" or "no English audio/ no atmospherics"*

How to caption an atmospherics-only project:

- Include atmospherics more frequently than you would in a normal file.
- Caption all environmental sounds, action sounds, character noises or gibberish using an atmospheric.
- Use detailed atmospherics to capture music. Does the instrument convey a tone?
Does the volume or tempo increase or drop off?

Learn more about:
[Atmospherics-only Projects](#) 

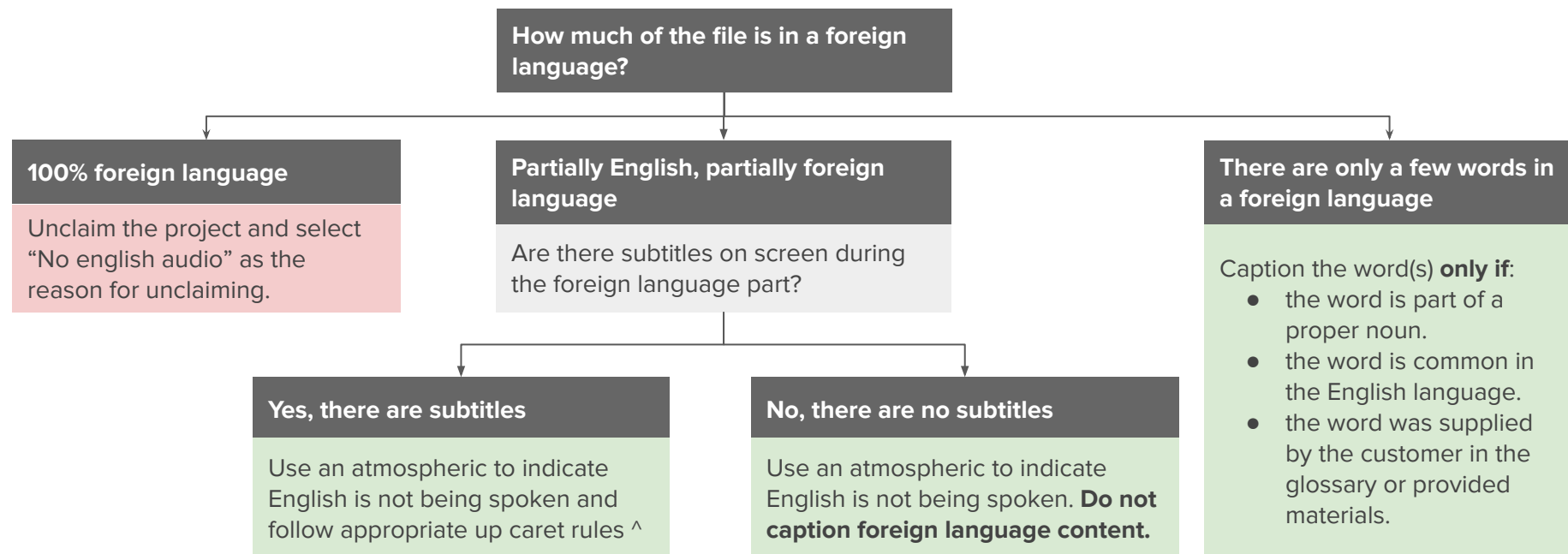
Learn more about:
[Music Atmospherics](#) 

Atmospherics are inherently subjective, and we understand that this isn't a black and white area. Please do your best to caption these projects in a way that creates valuable content for hard-of-hearing viewers.

RULE For foreign language in a file, follow the guidelines below.


WHY Some customers place orders with foreign languages spoken within the content. We want to be sure we are delivering a product the customer expects, so we've put together guidelines on how to handle foreign language.

Learn more about:
[Foreign Language](#)



RULE Numbers should follow common writing conventions so they are easily understood by the reader.

WHY Presenting numbers in an easy to read, “visually normal” format is important so that a person reading the captions will be able to interpret what value is being discussed.

Learn more about:
[Number Conventions](#) 

NOTE: Some common conventions can be used with **flexibility**, but **only** when it’s in the best interest of the viewer.

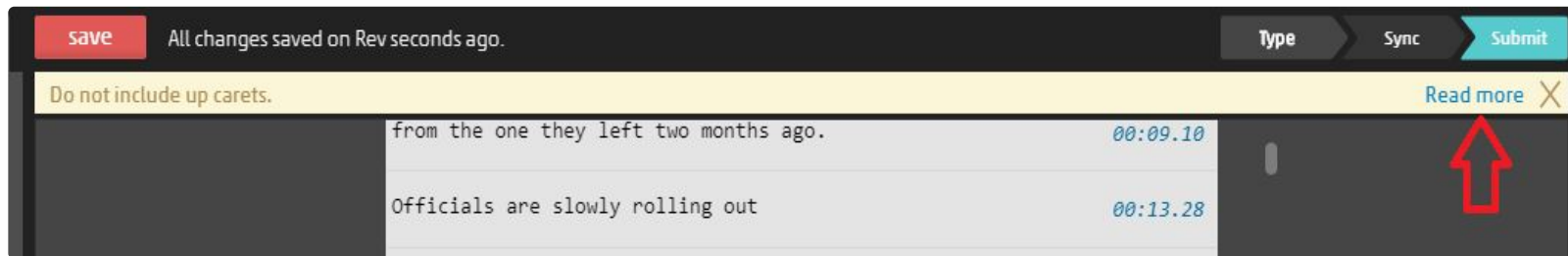
Number type	Most Common Convention	Example
Currency	Numeric	\$5,000
Dates	Follow common writing principles	Saturday, June 5, 2007
Times	Follow common writing principles	9:30 a.m., 9:30 am, nine o’clock, half past nine
Numbers 0 - 9	Typed out	Three apples, nine friends
Numbers 10 - 999,999	Numerical format	6,000 people, 35 laptops
Numbers > 1 million	Numerical or text depending on how it’s spoken.	1 million, 99 million, 100 million 1.9 million NOT one point nine million
Bible verses	2 Corinthians, 1 John	View examples

RULE Special instructions that appear in the yellow banner in Dash should always be followed, even if they fall outside of the Rev Style Guide.

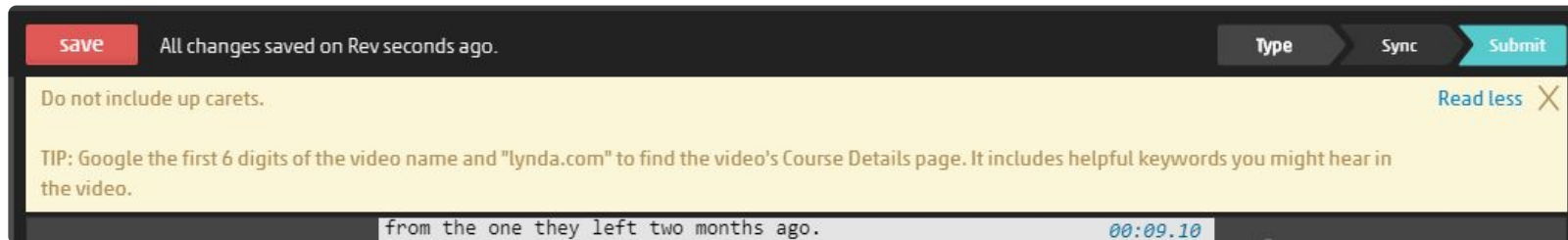
WHY Rev has come to an agreement with some customers to honor special instructions related to how to complete their files to best suit the customer's and their audience's needs.

Any *additional instructions* included in customer resources (glossary terms, speaker names, script) are **not approved** and should be ignored if they do not align with the Style Guide.

Example of Special Instructions



The screenshot shows the Rev Dash interface. At the top, there is a 'save' button and a status message 'All changes saved on Rev seconds ago.' To the right are 'Type', 'Sync', and 'Submit' buttons. A yellow banner contains the instruction 'Do not include up carets.' with a 'Read more' link and a close icon. Below the banner, a video transcript is visible with two entries: 'from the one they left two months ago.' at 00:09.10 and 'Officials are slowly rolling out' at 00:13.28. A red arrow points to the 'Read more' link in the banner.



The screenshot shows the Rev Dash interface. At the top, there is a 'save' button and a status message 'All changes saved on Rev seconds ago.' To the right are 'Type', 'Sync', and 'Submit' buttons. A yellow banner contains a tip: 'TIP: Google the first 6 digits of the video name and "lynda.com" to find the video's Course Details page. It includes helpful keywords you might hear in the video.' with a 'Read less' link and a close icon. Below the banner, the start of a video transcript is visible: 'from the one they left two months ago.' at 00:09.10.

RULE You should do your best to caption all spoken words. For extremely challenging content, follow the guidelines below.

WHY When dealing with challenging content, consider the best interest of the customer and the final product that will be seen by the hard-of-hearing viewer.

If your project is entirely too challenging to accurately caption the spoken words:

- Unclaim the project and select “difficult audio” as the reason for unclaiming.

Learn more about:
[Unclear Words](#)



If your project contains **both** challenging content, and clear content:

- Accurately caption the spoken words that can be clearly heard.
- For certain challenging sections of audio where it's not crucial to understand every word, use an atmospheric to provide context to the viewer, e.g. (women conversing quietly) (group chattering)
- If an occasional word cannot be understood, use (indistinct) in place of the word.
 - (indistinct) should only be used if you absolutely cannot determine the word; excess tags could result in a lower grade.



Tip: You can take advantage of [Lend an Ear](#) and see if the community of Revvers are able to help.

RULE Individual caption groups must always contain less than 60 characters.

WHY Captions that fall within certain character limits are easier to read quickly. This ensures that viewers do not miss spoken content.

The typing area turns **green** and then **yellow** as you add more characters and near the 60 character limit. **It's perfectly acceptable to submit captions with a white, green or yellow caption group.**

The typing box turns **red** when you are over the 60 character limit. Split the text across multiple caption groups until the red color disappears.

Learn more about:

[Advanced Caption Formatting](#)



A caption will start white|

00:09.44

This is green due to the number of characters|

00:10.28

the group will turn yellow as you add more characters

00:11.94

If you type a caption group that exceeds 60 characters, the caption box turns red to let you know to break the caption group.

00:00.00

RULE Captions should be split into individual caption groups such that whole phrases, nouns, sentences, and flow of dialogue is interrupted as **minimally** as possible, while abiding by the 60 character limit.

WHY This allows the captions to be easily read by the viewer, with logical breaks and enough time on screen.

Learn more about:
[Caption Grouping](#)



Split captions	Do	Don't
After punctuation marks	<p>I need to call her.</p> <p>I was in my office this morning</p> <p>and got the message that she called.</p>	<p>I need to call her. I was in my office this morning</p> <p>and got the message that she called.</p>
Before conjunctions	<p>They are just a handful,</p> <p>but they all have their pros and cons.</p>	<p>They are just a handful, but they all have</p> <p>their pros and cons.</p>
Before prepositions	<p>The flock of geese flew gracefully</p> <p>over the large oak trees that were</p> <p>nearest to the babbling brook.</p>	<p>The flock of geese flew gracefully over the large</p> <p>oak trees that were nearest to the</p> <p>babbling brook.</p>

RULE Captions should be split into individual caption groups such that whole phrases, nouns, sentences, and flow of dialogue is interrupted as **minimally** as possible, while abiding by the 60 character limit.

Learn more about:
[Caption Grouping](#)



WHY This allows the captions to be easily read by the viewer, with logical breaks and enough time on screen.

Don't split captions if	Do	Don't
It separates a noun from an article or adjective	<p>She hopes her efforts will result in finding some inexpensive furniture this weekend.</p>	<p>She hopes her efforts will result in finding some inexpensive furniture this weekend.</p>
It separates a first name from a last name	<p>I went to the department store with Jim Smith to find that couch I was talking about.</p>	<p>I went to the department store with Jim Smith to find that couch I was talking about.</p>
It separates a verb from a subject pronoun	<p>I saw the black car hit Susan's bike before they drove quickly out of sight.</p>	<p>I saw the black car hit Susan's bike before they drove quickly out of sight.</p>

RULE When added text appears anywhere in the lower $\frac{1}{3}$ of the video, use an up caret ^ to move captions to the top of the screen, with a few exceptions.

WHY Captions should not cover important text that exists within a video.

Learn more about:
[Up Carets](#)



Use an up caret when there is both...

Added text that appears in the lower third of the screen that is intended to be readable.

Some examples are:

- Names/Titles
- Websites/URLs/hashtags
- Opening credits
- Scoreboards
- News tickers
- Existing subtitles/captions

AND No text in the upper third at the start time of the caption group

Don't use an up caret for...

- Text that is native to the video recording and was not added in later, such as a software or game interface.
- Video property text:
 - Production timecodes
 - Logos (or functioning as a logo)
- Graphics/images

If there is also text in the upper third at the start time of the caption group, **do not** use an up caret.

NOTE: Anything that falls under the Don't Use list would also not count as text in the upper third. That means that if there is qualifying text in the lower third, the items in this list would not count as "upper third text" when deciding if a caret is needed for the lower third text.

RULE Sync each caption group (atmospherics and speech) so it appears on-screen when the audio **begins**.

WHY The hard-of-hearing viewer should see the text on screen at the same time it would have been heard by anyone else.

1. The start time needs to align with the beginning of the sound.

- Aim for precision, but it's ok for the start time to be up to a ½ second early or late from the true beginning of the sound.

2. Do not worry about the end time.

- Rev automatically calculates the end time for a caption group after you submit the project (post-processing).
- **NEVER** add extra spaces to a caption group **OR** double up the captions in an attempt to adjust the amount of time the caption group is on-screen. This causes errors in the file format for customers.

3. Keep in mind the readability of the caption groups.

- **Split the caption groups** if a speaker is talking very slowly (>5 seconds to say a sentence) or there is a long pause. This maintains proper timing with the speech and ensures the caption group does not end too early.
- **Use advanced caption format** if multiple speakers are talking very quickly. This combines two quick phrases into the same caption group for readability.



Learn more about:
[Advanced Caption Formatting](#) 



Tip: For more details on how to sync captions, see the [Dash User Guide](#)

As a Revver, your work is graded by experienced Revvers. Grading provides you with constructive and actionable feedback on your work and ensures customers receive high-quality, consistent captions.

- **For Rookies:** all of your projects are graded prior to being delivered to the customer.
- **For Revvers / Revver+:** a portion of your projects are graded to give you continuous feedback.

Error Impact Guide	LOW error frequency and/or minimal impact to quality of captions Examples: error fell within challenging content, error does not impact the context/viewer's overall understanding.	 Grade Range	HIGH error frequency and/or large impact to quality of captions Examples: error occurred during clear audio with minimal crosstalk, error impacts the context/viewer's understanding.	 Grade Range
Error Type	Errors likely not noticed by the customer. Grader discretion advised.	3 - 5	Errors detected are numerous, impactful, and would be noticed by the customer.	1 - 4

Graders consider the file from the perspective of a customer.

Keep in mind that graders are only viewing small sections. If a grader sees errors in the sections that have been reviewed, they can deduce that this is repeated and score accordingly.

Your caption files are graded on three categories: accuracy, formatting, and alignment. Below you will find the type of errors that are considered in each category. Graders use these to assign a score of 1-5 for each category.

Accuracy

- Typos/misspellings
- Contraction use
- Proper nouns
- Mishears/paraphrasing/changing order of speech
- Word omissions
- Missing content
- Addition of content
- Lyrics missing
- Grammar/punctuation
- Number conventions
- Homophones
- Expletives/cursing

Formatting

- Indicating speaker changes
- Speaker label format
- Up carets
- Pre-existing on-screen Subtitles missing atmospheric
- Caption group formatting
- Atmospherics
- Improper format of lyrics

Alignment

- Syncing of the caption groups

If you submit an incomplete project, an unedited project, or a project where there has not been a good-faith effort to properly sync the captions, your **pay for the project will be removed** and the project will be **graded 1/1/1** for accuracy, formatting, and alignment. Your **account may be closed** after Support review.