

Rev Transcription Style Guide v4.0.2

Welcome to the Transcription Style Guide! This guide explains customer expectations for transcript quality and the *metrics system*, our way of ensuring freelancer quality.

We trust you to deliver high-quality work. Customers—teachers, business owners, students, and everything in between—rely on your accurate and timely transcription as a crucial part of their daily work.

Updated September 13, 2019

*Important additions in v4.0.2 are labeled as **NEW**. Please review all pages to make sure you are using the most recent rules and best practices. Notable updates in this version:*

- Updated with references to the Line editor.
- Always attribute what is being said to the correct speaker. [Page 8](#)
- Clarification around omission exceptions. [Page 11](#)

Quality expectations fall into two main categories: Accuracy and Formatting.

Accuracy - Can you correctly hear and transcribe *what* words were said and *who* said them?

Formatting - Can you correctly communicate those words and notations in a way that is easily readable and digestible?

Both categories have **major errors** and **minor errors**, which are the most common reasons customers return files to be re-done.

Errors in your work may lead to lowered [metrics](#). Rev requires transcriptionists to maintain certain metrics to remain active on Rev. Take special care in proofing your work before submission.

A grade consists of scores on two categories: **Accuracy** and **Formatting**.

5 - Excellent	Near perfect – May contain a few minor errors that do not alter the meaning of the original audio.
4 - Good	Customer ready – Errors are more frequent or noticeable but do not change the meaning of the original audio.
3 - Fair	Not customer ready – Errors are present that would lead to customer confusion. This includes wrong words, additions or omissions that change the meaning of the original audio.
2 - Poor	Not customer ready – Transcript reflects severe carelessness or lack of understanding of the Style Guide.
1 - Very Poor	Unusable – Transcript is a poor representation of the original audio, verbatim was not used when requested, the transcript is incomplete/content is omitted, or Line draft that is left unedited.*

One or more major errors may result in a 1 - 4. One or more minor errors may result in a 2 - 5.

* If you submit [incomplete or unedited work](#) your pay for the job will be removed, the project will be graded 1/1 for accuracy and formatting, and your account may be closed after Support review.

Verbatim - See [page 12](#). This type of transcript requires the transcriptionist to include filler words, stutters and repetitions.

Non-verbatim (default) - See [page 12](#). This type of transcript is the most common. The transcriptionist should lightly edit for readability.

Inaudible - Indicates a word, phrase or short murmur within an audio recording that cannot be understood. Please use the notation indicated on [page 20](#) to notate.

Crosstalk - A situation where multiple people or sounds occur at the same time or overlapping with each other.

Speaker / Speaker Label - Indicates the person who is speaking in the audio being transcribed.

Unclaim - If you do not wish to complete an audio file, or cannot for any reason, you can “return it” for others to work on. See [page 6](#) for rules of when to unclaim.

Deadlines - [Read this article](#) to understand project deadlines.

Browser Compatibility - Rev recommends that you use the most up-to-date version of Google Chrome when working with the transcription editor.

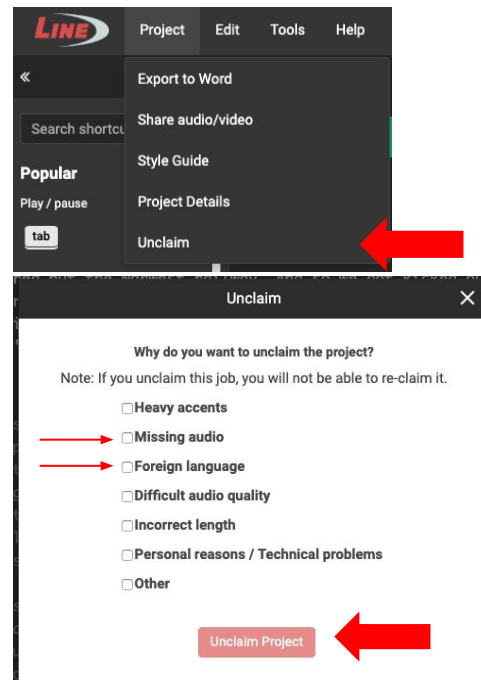
Homophones - Two words that sound alike but have different meanings and spellings. See [page 9](#).

	Major Errors	Minor Errors
Accuracy	<u>Precision</u>	<u>Inaudibles</u>
	<u>Wrong Words / Homophones</u>	
	<u>Spelling</u>	<u>Punctuation / Symbols</u>
	<u>Addition / Omission of Content</u>	
	<u>Verbatim vs Non-Verbatim</u>	
Formatting	<u>Dictation</u>	<u>Paragraphs</u>
	<u>Notation Tags</u> (Inaudible / Crosstalk)	<u>Non-Speech Sounds</u>
	<u>Provided Speaker Labels</u>	<u>Inferred Speaker Labels</u>
<u>Unworkable Projects</u>		
<u>Project-Specific Instructions</u>		

Certain types of projects are considered “unworkable”. Unclaim projects if they meet the criteria below.

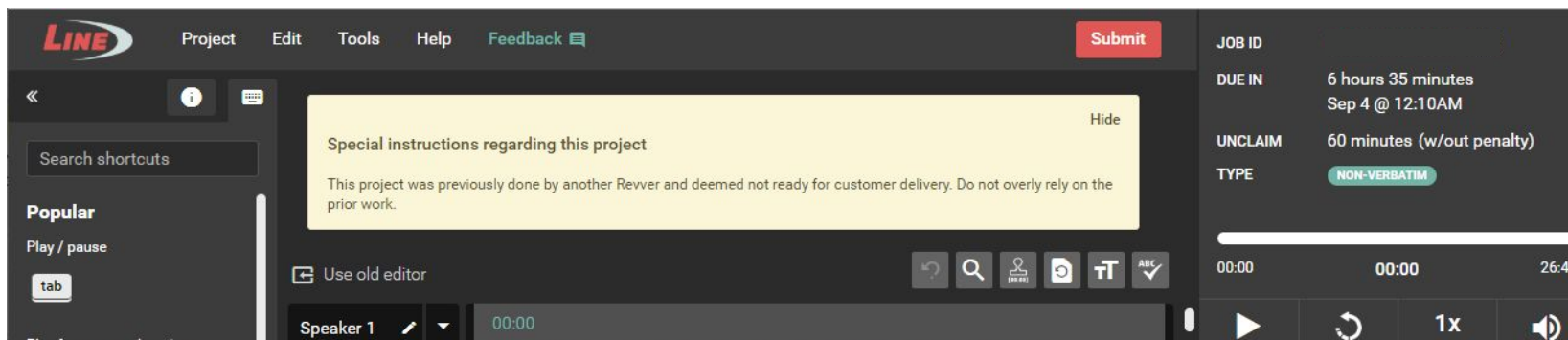
If you submit a project that has no meaningful English audio content captured you will not be paid for the job and you may receive a grade of 1/1 for accuracy and formatting.

If		Then
There is <u>no</u> English audio content	But there is foreign language content	<u>Unclaim</u> the project as “Foreign language”.
	But there are some noises or inaudible sounds	<u>Unclaim</u> the project as “Missing audio”.
	But there is singing	<u>Unclaim</u> the project as “Missing audio”.
There <u>is</u> English audio	But there are large periods of silence	Include a (silence) tag to indicate large portions of missing audio.



* Note: Sporadic English does not indicate a file should be worked on. [Example](#)

Occasionally a project may have special instructions that deviate from our normal guidelines. These instructions will appear in a yellow box in the Editor.



Only instructions in the yellow box are to be followed. Customers may include separate instructions that go against our Style Guide in the glossary. Any requests in these resources that go against our style guidelines should be ignored.

This error will be graded based on the instructions in the relevant category (accuracy or formatting).

Always transcribe exactly what is said. Although spoken word is not always grammatically correct, your transcript must preserve the integrity of the original speech. Do not write what you think the speaker meant to say.

NEW

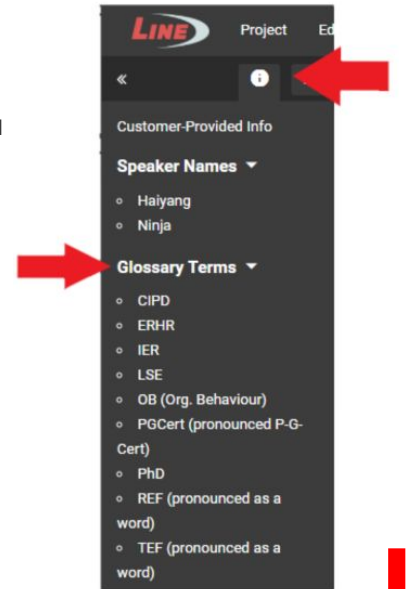
1. **Always attribute what is being said to the correct speaker.**
2. **Never omit words**
 - a. **EXCEPTIONS:** see [page 11](#).
3. **Never add content, paraphrase, or rearrange the order of speech.**
4. **Never censor or edit expletives.**
 - a. If the word is censored with a sound, use (beep) to indicate the noise. If the expletive has been silenced, type nothing as nothing is heard.
5. **Never correct or edit a speaker's grammar.**
 - a. Never change spoken contractions (e.g. do not → don't OR don't → do not)
 - b. Never change formal speech into informal contractions (e.g. going to → gonna, good day → g'day, you all → y'all)
 - c. **EXCEPTION:** Always change **informal contractions*** to formal speech for Non-Verbatim (default) projects. (gonna → going to, wanna → want to) [Examples](#).
6. **EXCEPTION: Correct egregious phonetic and pronunciation errors that inhibit readability or understanding.**
 - a. Example: if a speaker pronounces “refrigerator, washer and dryer” as “refrigurator, washar and dryear”, please use the correct word and spelling based on your context of the audio.

* **Informal contractions** are short forms of words that people use while speaking casually. You should change these to the formal form when applicable. (e.g. 'cause → because // 'em → them // doin' → doing // gonna → going to // gotta → got to // kinda → kind of // wanna → want to)

Always use *context clues* to write down the correct word or phrase. If you are unsure of a word or phrase, complete thorough research or ask for a second opinion on the [forum](#).

Examples	
“aerospace” vs “arrow space” “Botox” vs “boat ox”	Always use context clues to write down the appropriate word. This is especially important for proper nouns or industry terminology.
“looked” vs “loved” “kissed” vs “killed”	Take your time while transcribing—a changed word could result in a drastic change in the meaning of a sentence.
Homophones	“You're” is a contraction of “you are,” while “your” is possessive. “You're working on your project.” More examples here .

1. Use U.S. spelling at all times, even if the speaker has a non-American accent.
2. Always research words, phrases and proper nouns (names, companies, titles, etc.) you are unfamiliar with. [Click here for an article](#) on how to research effectively.
3. Always research the proper capitalization of terms, even if you are familiar with the spelling (e.g. iPhone, UCLA, SaaS).
4. Always use glossary terms when provided. If a customer has provided glossary terms, they will display in the left-hand menu of the Line editor.
5. **DO NOT** add letters to words, or use all caps as an attempt to emphasize.
6. Make sure to spell check for spelling and typographical errors.*



Tip: Use our built-in spelling and grammar check for underlined or highlighted words.



* The spellcheck in the Editor is a very helpful tool to help catch errors, but it is still ultimately up to you to proof your document for spelling errors/incorrect word swaps.

Never leave words or phrases out of a transcript, outside of the situations outlined on [page 12](#), [page 20](#), and below. Additional exceptions can exist; the goal of these exceptions is to avoid scenarios where you spend an excess amount of your time working on a portion of the file that may not produce valuable content.

We are unable to address all situations you may encounter. When in doubt, include the content. You **will be penalized** for missing **any** important content. Always listen to the entire audio. Clear dialogue could resume at some point after the challenging content.

[See the list of additional examples in this article.](#)

Verbatim:

In verbatim projects, transcribe **exactly** what you hear, including filler words, stutters, interjections (active listening) and repetitions. [Click here to see an example.](#)

EXCEPTION for customer: Comcast.

[Click here to review an article](#) about how to transcribe Comcast projects.

Note: If the project was requested Verbatim but was not completed in full verbatim, your pay for the job will be removed and the project graded 1/1 for accuracy/formatting.

CUSTOMER NAME	LENGTH	PAY / MIN	PAY TOTAL	AUDIO QUALITY	VERBATIM
cxteam research	01:20:08	\$0.75	\$60.10		V
Andrew Mason	01:03:16	\$0.75	\$47.45		V
Elliot Hastie	11:07	\$0.92	\$10.23	41-50	

DUE IN 00:00:55
THU @ 7:01AM

UNCLAIM 00:55
(to unclaim w/out penalty)

REQUIRED **VERBATIM**

playback

Default style (non-verbatim):

In default style (non-verbatim) projects you should lightly edit for readability. You should **not** change the structure or meaning of the speech.

JOB ID

DUE IN 5 hours 42 minutes
Sep 3 @ 11:40AM

UNCLAIM 60 minutes (w/out penalty)

TYPE **NON-VERBATIM**

00:00 00:00 24:12

Play Skip Back 1x Speed Volume

(continued on next page)

	Verbatim	Non-Verbatim
Non-speech sounds: Mm-hmm (affirmative) or Mm-mm (negative) Uh-huh (affirmative) or Uh-uh (negative) (beep)	✓	✓
Non-speech sounds: (laughs) or (laughing)	✓	
All OTHER non-speech sounds (e.g. coughs, sneezes, clapping, paper rustling, dog barks, car honks)	✗	✗
Interjections or signs of active listening (e.g. Okay, Yeah, Mm-hmm (affirmative)) interjections that interrupt a speaker. Exception for non-verbatim: A direct response to a question, or an acknowledgement when the speaker has finished.	✓	
Filler words (ums, uhs, and you know, like, etc.)	✓	
False starts / self-corrections that are quickly reworded, unless they provide additional context. A complete sentence is not a false start. (see Example 3 & 4 on the next page)	✓	
Stutters (e.g. I think we should go to the, the m- m- movies.)	✓	
Intentional words spoken (e.g. probably, just, that, really, I think, well) even if the sentence “sounds fine” without.	✓	✓
Explicit content or profanity	✓	✓
Changing informal contractions to formal speech (e.g. gonna → going to, wanna → want to)		✓

	Example 1	Example 2	Example 3	Example 4
			<i>Leave the false start in default style because it provides context as to who called.</i>	<i>Remove the false start in default style because “My mom” is introduced later.</i>
Default style (non-verbatim)	I think we should go to the movies tonight because of the discount.	I called her yesterday and she was sleeping. Probably, she was just really tired.	My mom was... I forgot to tell you, she called me yesterday.	I forgot to tell you, my mom called me yesterday.
Verbatim	And so, um, I guess... I think we should go to the, the m- m- movies tonight 'cause of the discount (laughs).	I like, you know, called her, like, yesterday and, um, like, she was, like, sleeping. Probably, she was just like, really tired.	My mom was (laughs)... I forgot to tell you, she called me yesterday.	My mom... I forgot to tell you, my mom called me yesterday.

An **[inaudible 00:00:00]** tag should be used when unintelligible or inaudible word(s) are spoken. This may happen due to difficult audio quality, a sound (such as a car horn) obscuring the main speaker, or recording issues.



- An inaudible should **never be used in place of research**.
- **How many inaudibles is too many?** If you are using an excessive number of inaudibles in a transcript (to the point where the transcript would be unusable to the client), unclaim and report the file so the Support team can reach out to the client to see how to proceed.
- **Using an [inaudible 00:00:00] tag when the word can be identified is an accuracy error.**
- **Incorrectly formatting the tag is a formatting error**, as explained under [Notation Tags](#).

Line: Draft transcripts may show **[inaudible]** notations without a timestamp. You are still responsible for listening and trying to clear the inaudible. If it is truly an inaudible, then make sure to add the appropriate timestamp at the audio location of the inaudible. i.e. **[inaudible 00:10:05]**



Tip: Inaudibles can be solved with help from [Lend an Ear](#). You can share your audio file and helpful Reversers will listen in and try to hear the missing word(s).

Guidelines		Example
Terminal Punctuation (. ? !)	<p>Statements of any length should always end in one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Terminal punctuation if the thought was completed. - Ellipses if the speaker trails off or significantly pauses. - A hyphen if the speaker is interrupted by another speaker. 	<p>Speaker 1: I went to the park. Speaker 2: I love parks that... Speaker 3: I love the outdoors too!</p>
Commas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In verbatim transcripts: Use to offset non-essential speech or filler words. - Do not use in excess to the point where it inhibits readability. - Use commas to separate parenthetical phrases. 	<p>I, uh, was going to, like, go to the store but decided, you know, not to.</p>
Ellipses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use to indicate a speaker has trailed off or paused significantly in the middle of a statement. - Use an ellipsis if the same speaker cuts herself off and changes direction. Do not use a hyphen if a speaker cuts herself off. - Always add a space between an ellipsis and the word that follows it. Always be consistent. (e.g. "I don't ... well" or "this is... no") - Capitalize the word after an ellipsis if it starts a new sentence. 	<p>Speaker 1: She called- Speaker 2: Really? Speaker 1:... to tell me that... Well, she was worried I had not heard about the coming storm. I had been in the... Hang on a minute, I have to let the dog out.</p>

(continued on next page)

	Guidelines	Example
Hyphens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use to indicate abrupt interruptions and cutoffs of one speaker by another speaker. - If a speaker spells out a word, use the format: W-O-R-D. - In verbatim transcripts: Use to indicate a partial word stutter without a comma after the hyphen. For full word stutters, a hyphen <i>or</i> comma is acceptable. 	<p>Speaker 1: I couldn't wait- Speaker 2: W- wait for what? Speaker 1:... for her to call- call me.* Speaker 2: L-A-M-E.</p> <p><i>*A comma is also acceptable:</i> Speaker 1:... for her to call, call me.</p>
Parentheses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In verbatim transcripts only: use for audible non-speech speaker sounds. (e.g. (laughing)) - In non-verbatim and verbatim jobs: never transcribe song lyrics. Label them as (singing). 	<p>Speaker 1: If we could get it done (laughs) we'd be home by now! What do you think? Speaker 2: Mm-hmm (affirmative).</p>
Quotation Marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use when a quote is directly stated or implied. Examples - Do not edit or paraphrase the quote, even if it is quoted incorrectly (e.g. a famous quote or religious passage). - In a non-verbatim transcript the quote should be transcribed in the non-verbatim style. - Do not use for titles of films, books, songs or speeches. 	<p>Then I told him, "I don't think I can," and he said, "Okay then."</p>

***Please note:** We are unable to cover and address all common conventions regarding punctuation and grammar. We expect you to have some prior knowledge of, or be able to research, proper American English grammar and punctuation.

	Guidelines	Example
Time	<p>Use your best judgment to use conventions that improve the readability and consistency of the transcript. Below is an <u>incomplete</u> list of suggestions - not hard and fast rules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If the speaker says “nine” and it is implied that it is a time of day, write as 9:00 - If the speaker says “nine o’clock”, write as nine o’clock or 9:00 - If the speaker says “nine thirty”, write 9:30 - If the speaker says “nine thirty AM”, write 9:30 a.m. or 9:30 A.M. or 9:30 AM - Write out phrases as spoken - do not convert into a numerical time (e.g. do not convert “half past one” into 1:30 PM) 	<p>Should I come at 9:00 or 9:05 p.m.?</p> <p>He’ll stop by at half past one instead of noon.</p>
Numbers	<p>For numbers under 10, write the number (e.g. “eight”). For numbers 10 and above, use numerals (e.g. “20”).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is OK to break this rule if it improves readability or consistency (e.g. in a list of items) <p>Use your best judgement to use common numerical conventions. Deviate only if it improves readability and consistency of the transcript. Below is an <u>incomplete</u> list of suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Days/Time: A.D. 1066, the 1980s, the ‘90s, February 1st - Percentages: 4%, 15.93% - Proper nouns: Article III of the Constitution, Genesis 1:1 - Money: 10 cents, \$84, \$100.65, \$1,100.42, \$10,567.45, \$100,000 - Large denominations: fifty million dollars, \$50 million, fifty billion dollars, \$50 billion - Measurement: eight inches, 10’ x 4’, 223 pounds, 6’4” 	<p>Our company turns 25 today, and we can’t wait to see what the next five years bring!</p> <p>I brought 3 baskets, 12 lawn chairs, and 4 board games for the picnic.</p> <p>Sarah bought two pies and four dozen cookies.</p> <p>We had over 100,000 views on our website.</p>

Occasionally, customers dictate instructions to format the transcription while they are speaking. These instructions should be followed when possible but never transcribed.

1. Follow customer requests for spoken directions such as “new paragraph”, “comma”, “period” or “bullet point” (use a dash). Do not type out the instruction.*
2. As Rev does not support text formatting in the editor, ignore requests such as “bold”, “italics”, “underline” or “strikethrough”.

Read complete guidelines and instructions in our [help center article](#).

NEW

**Dictation projects that are not properly formatted will be scored a 1 for formatting.*

If you encounter difficult audio, use one of the four **notation tags** below, including a timestamp of the audio location. Do not create a notation tag not listed below.

[inaudible hh:mm:ss]	Use when unintelligible or inaudible words are stated. Equivalent to a “blank” in medical transcription.
[crosstalk hh:mm:ss]	Use when multiple people speaking over each other causes any one of the speakers to become unintelligible. Continue to transcribe what is discernible. Example
[foreign language hh:mm:ss]	<p>For any non-English portions of audio, indicate where they begin with a timestamp and either the name of the language (if known) or simply “foreign language”. DO NOT transcribe non-English audio.</p> <p>If a translator is speaking on a respondent's behalf, there is no need to denote [foreign language hh:mm:ss] every time that the respondent speaks. Example</p>
[phonetic hh:mm:ss]	<p>When you are unable to research a definitive spelling of a proper noun or industry terminology, include your attempted spelling in brackets with a timestamp. This allows a customer to easily double check the audio during review. Only use the phonetic tag for the first instance of the word and be consistent with your attempted spelling in later usages.</p> <p>Do not use this tag when you are unsure of what was spoken.</p>

[inaudible 00:01:23] is an inaudible tag.

▶ [crosstalk 00:01:23] is a crosstalk tag.

[foreign language 00:00:00] is a foreign language tag.

[Spanish 00:01:23] is also an acceptable foreign language tag if you are sure about the language.

Professor [Ching Liao Su 00:01:23] is a correct use of the phonetic tag, where the name cannot be definitively researched.

[Max Plank 00:01:23] is an incorrect use of the phonetic tag. This name should be researched.

[people 00:01:23] is an incorrect use of the phonetic tag. It should not be used to guess at a word.

****inaudible**** is an incorrect tag. Do not use your own notation.

(inaudible 00:04:56) is an incorrect tag. Do not use your own notation.

[unintelligible 00:04:56] is an incorrect notation tag. It is not one of the four Rev approved tags.

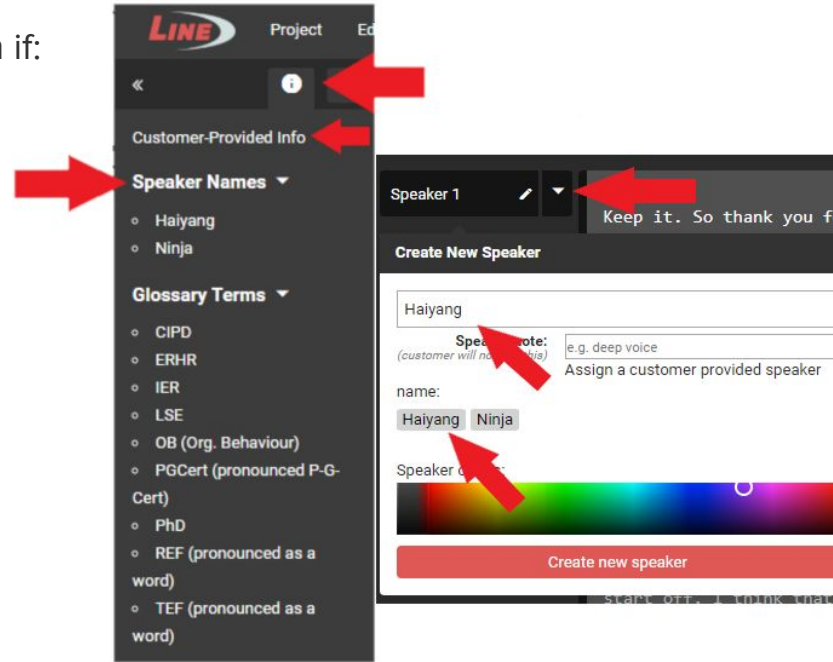
[inaudible] is an incorrect tag. All notation tags must include a timestamp.

[inaudible 0:4:56] is an incorrect tag. All notation tags must follow the hh:mm:ss format.

If a customer has provided speaker labels, you must use them if:

1. The speaker is **self-identified in the audio or video**.
e.g. “My name is Arnold”
2. You can **reasonably infer** who is speaking if another speaker introduces the name.
e.g. “What do you think, Gustav?”
3. There is **only one speaker and one name** is provided.
4. You can use the process of elimination to assign the correct speaker names (e.g. one male name and one female name match up with one male speaker and one female speaker).

If you cannot assign the provided speaker labels, follow the rules outlined in [Inferred Speaker Labels](#).



Tip: If speaker labels are provided by the customer, you will see them in the left-hand menu or when you edit a speaker.

A reasonable effort must be made to distinguish speakers using the rules below:

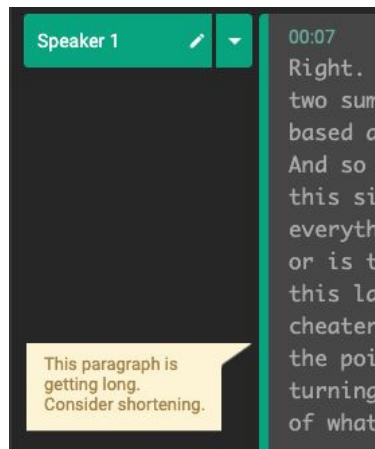
- **Never create your own descriptive speaker labels** (e.g. “Old man” or “Blue shirt guy”). This is extremely unprofessional and *will result in a 1 in Formatting*.

Speaker label type	Examples	When to use
Speaker’s name	John Smith, Professor Lee	If the speaker’s name can be reasonably inferred from the audio or video <i>If the name is too long to fit, abbreviate the last initial (e.g. Benedict C.)</i>
Speaker + number (sequentially)	Speaker 1, Speaker 2	Default and most common way of labeling speakers when the speaker’s name cannot be reasonably inferred from the audio or video
Professional Role or Title	Interviewer, Doctor, Translator (example)	(Optional) If the speaker’s name cannot be reasonably inferred from the transcript. Using Speaker + Number is also acceptable
Group label	Students, Audience, Camera Crew, Male, Female	Only when there are too many speakers to consistently track who says what (e.g. classroom discussion, focus group). Do not use as a substitute for reasonable speaker identification. Do not include a number.

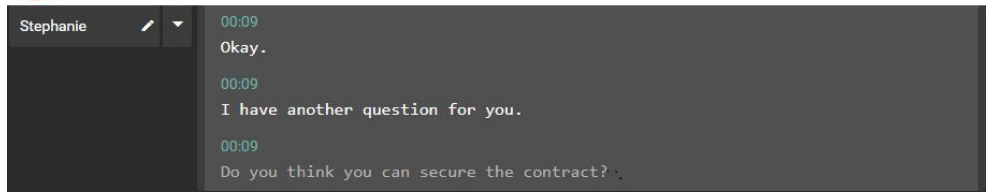
Customer provided speaker labels must be used whenever possible according to the rules on the [previous page](#).

Avoid writing excessively long paragraphs. Look for natural points in the speech, such as a shift in topic, emphasis, or reference, to start a new paragraph. [Click here for guidance](#) on handling run-on sentences.

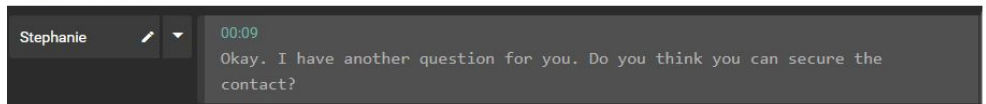
The editor will show a **warning** when a paragraph is becoming too long.



 **Incorrect:**



 **Correct**



NEW

Avoid one line paragraphs in cases where the context does not justify single line format.

There are only a few notation tags that should be used. They should **always** be formatted by using **parens**. **DO NOT** use your own notation.

List of **ALL** acceptable paren notation tags:

Indicate a positive or negative response	Mm-hmm (affirmative) Mm-mm (negative)
Indicate a positive or negative response	Uh-huh (affirmative) Uh-uh (negative)
Indicate laughing <i>(verbatim only)</i>	(laughs) (laughing)
Indicate the sound made for a censored word	(beep)
Indicate a lengthy silence <i>Details on page 6</i>	(silence)
Singing <i>Details on page 17</i>	(singing)