Instructions for editing an audio/video file

At Amberscript, our files fall under two categories for editing, **verbatim** and **clean read**. For a verbatim file, the audio is transcribed exactly as it sounds, including all stutters, false stops, and laughter. For a clean read file, the transcriber removes extra content that does not contribute to the understandability of the file (ex: stutters, false starts and laughter).

Transcribed Verbatim:

But it- I don't know. It's just, as a- There is something to be said about knowing what your family holiday is. You know what I mean? When you got kids and stuff, I think, just to be like, "We know, we know what we like, we know what we wanna d-, we know the drill." [laughter] You know, it's like.
[pause]
Yeah, yeah.

Transcribed Clean Read:

I don't know. There is something to be said about knowing what your family holiday is. When you have kids to be like, "We know what we like, we know the drill."

Yes.

Verbatim Files

For a verbatim file, the audio/video is transcribed exactly as it sounds.

This means that the transcript includes any stutters, interjections, repetitions, slang, speech errors and filler words.

- **Stutters**: Sh- She is coming
- **Interjections**: Woah! No way! Whoops! Huh? Ouch! Ew!
- **Repetitions**: We know- we know what we like.
- **Slang:** gunna, gotta, wanna, kinda, dunno
- **Speech errors:** She's coming tomorrow- no wait, she's coming today.
- **Filler words:** Um, you know, uh, sort of, kind of
- **False starts**- It's just as a - There is something to be said about

In the case where there is a word(s) that is difficult to hear due to a poor recording or the manner of speech, the inaudible portion will be indicated using [inaudible 00:00:00-00:00:00], specifying the beginning and end period where the file was inaudible.

Background noise that is relevant to the conversation will be included in the transcription.

Please see the next page for more examples of tags that should be included in a verbatim file.

Verbatim Files- Tags

The following tags are transcribed in a verbatim file when encountered:

Audio file is impossible to understand after listening again three times. List when it is inaudible in the transcript.	**[inaudible 00:00:00-00:00:00]**
If music is played loudly and clearly and is relevant for the transcription/context	**[music]**
If a video is played.	**[video]**
If there is continuous laughter for a couple of seconds.	**[laughter]**
If there is continuous coughing for a couple of seconds.	**[coughing]**
Long period of silence, more than 4 seconds. List when the silence is occuring in the transcript	**[silence 00:00:00-00:00:00]**
In case it is relevant for the transcription/context that people are crying.	**[crying]**
In case it is relevant for the transcription/context that people are yelling.	**[yelling]**
In case an audience applauds the speaker.	**[applause]**

Clean Read Files

Clean read files refer to transcripts that only reflect the relevant information in the audio file. The goal of a "clean" transcript is to make the text legible without changing the meaning or definition of the audio/video file.

In a clean read file, repetitions, stutters or interjections are **left out**. This also means that sounds like "uhm", "oh", "ah" are not transcribed. Background noise is also not included. If for instance a speaker coughs, we do not include it in the transcript.

A clean read file does however, aim to get rid of grammar mistakes. For example: "He go and" becomes "He goes and". Slang or popular expressions will be corrected as following:
- yeah or yup- Yes
- kinda- kind of
- gotta- have to
- gonna- going to
- wanna- want to
- dunno- don't know

The spoken language can sometimes come across as excessive when put into text. If a speaker uses the phrase "you know" after every sentence, this has no effect on the meaning of the sentence and can therefore be left out.

We change the sentence structure of a transcript **if** this helps to make the transcript more legible, and **only** as long as it does not change the meaning of the sentence. For example: "we are the only of our kind, companies I mean" becomes "we are one of the only companies of our kind". This is only allowed for clean read transcripts. **We do not paraphrase or summarize entire sections, we only fix minor issues as they arise.**

Because a lot of the transcripts we help create will be used in subtitling for the deaf or hard of hearing, it is vital that the transcript is as complete as possible. If the audio file is difficult to understand, we complete the sentence to the best of our abilities and make sure the sentence makes sense. If the audio file is truly impossible to understand, the inaudible portion will be indicated using [inaudible 00:00:00-00:00:00], indicating the beginning and end period where the file was inaudible.

General Rules of Transcription

Transcription Dos

- We generate legible, clear sentences
- We research proper spelling for a word or phrase we are unfamiliar with. If we hear the name of a town, person, organization or object and are unsure of how to spell it, we use a search engine to look it up. Otherwise we use our best judgement to spell it out phonetically.
- We make careful use of proper punctuation marks
- We split text that is too long. Dictations, monologues and long pieces of text should be split into paragraphs of about 100 words.
- We change the speaker's name in the editor to clearly keep track of who is speaking

Transcription Don'ts

- We do not edit or omit entire sentences or expletives. When in doubt, we leave it in. We don't want to change the story being told.
- We do not change spoken contractions (don't, can't, it's)

Punctuation Table

.	Full-stop/Period	Every sentence ends with a full-stop/period.
?	Question Mark	Every question ends with a question mark.
!	Exclamation Mark	Every demand, scream or shout is indicated with an exclamation mark.
,	Commas	Use commas to structure the sentence or make it clearer.
...	Ellipses	Use ellipses when the speaker pauses.
-	Dash	Use a dash in case a word is interrupted or should be hyphenated.
„	Quotation Marks	Use quotation marks to indicate a direct quote.

Numbers and Figures

- Time of the day:
  Use numerals when exact time is specified 9:30 in the morning
  When using o'clock, spell out the numbers: eleven o'clock.
  Spell out words or phrases that don't include the exact time: half past, quarter of, midnight, noon
- The number zero up to and including nine need to be written out, the number 10 and above can be written in digits
- If a number is at the start of a new sentence, it is to be written out fully: Twenty- two people...
- Use digits to indicate degrees or radial quantities: 270 degrees, angle of 45 degrees
- Use digits if the figure has 5 or more digits. Figures that exceed a million or billion are written as 45 million.
- Use the terms first, second, third, etc., but for higher numbers use 11th, 12th, etc.
- If a price is named and it is a round number, do not use decimals: $15
- Functions and their mathematical signs are written out fully: plus, minus, times, divided by, etc.
- The following words should be written out in full: infinity, faculty, percent, prime, degrees, phi, theta, etc.
- Hyphenate all written-out fractions: Five-eights
- Mixed fractions are written out in digits: 5 ½
- Times and dates are written as digits: June 30, 1934 or the 30th of June 1934
- Decades may be written as: the eighties, the 80's or the 1980's
- Use a comma for large figures: 1,003,298 dollars
- Use a decimal point for decimal numbers: 0.42 pounds
- Phone numbers are written as digits: 201-555-5555