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Accuracy

The accuracy of a transcript reflects how well the written transcript corresponds to the spoken audio.

- i. Transcripts should be verbatim with best judgment applied to grammar and punctuation. Transcripts should reflect what the speaker says, not how he or she says it. Accordingly, commas are not indicators of a speaker's pauses, nor is emphasis indicated with the use of italics.
- ii. Include expressions of speech, such as "you know" and "like." Do NOT include vocal tics like "uh" or "um."
- iii. Contractions should be written as spoken. Examples: "won't" vs. "will not," "I've" vs. "I have," "she's" vs. "she is."
- iv. When a speaker uses slang, such as "'cause", "gonna," "ain't," "kinda," or "wanna," they should be transcribed as "because," "going to," "isn't," "kind of," and "want to." Write out words such as "all right," "et cetera," and "okay" (not "alright," "etc.," and "ok/OK").
- v. The double dash (--) should be used when speakers are interrupted by another speaker, or if the speaker switches thought entirely. The double dash should also be used if the interrupted speaker continues their sentence.

JUDGE TO MR. SMITH
Please take a seat --

MR. SMITH TO JUDGE
Back here?

JUDGE TO MR. SMITH
-- in the back. Yes, right there.

MR. SMITH TO JUDGE
Okay, because last hearing you told me to sit -- well, actually that might have been Judge Johnson.

- a. If a speaker says only part of a word and then corrects himself or herself, do not transcribe the partial word. Instead continue the sentence as if there were no pause. If the speaker switches thought entirely, use double dashes to show the change in thought, but do not transcribe the partial word.

CORRECT:
JUDGE TO MR. SMITH
I think we're close to ending this hearing.



INCORRECT:
JUDGE TO MR. SMITH
I think we're close to fin -- ending this hearing.

- vi. All stutter phrases should be acknowledged, except for one-word stutters. Example: "I-I-I-thought" should be "I thought."

Style Guidelines

Transcripts should be produced in accordance with specific style and standards.

- i. When a speaker spells out a word or name, use all caps, separating each letter with a single dash. When two or more words are spelled out, separate with a comma.

JUDGE TO MS. CLINE
Please spell your name for the record.

MS. CLINE TO JUDGE
Patsy, P-A-T-S-Y, Cline, C-L-I-N-E. P-A-T-S-Y, C-L-I-N-E.

- ii. Add periods for acronyms of organizations and places only (excluding state abbreviations) of two letters. Examples: U.S., U.N., D.C., U.K. One exception to this rule is the gang MS-13. One-word abbreviations do not use periods. Examples: TV, ID. Acronyms of three or more letters do not use periods. Examples: DOJ, USA, NRC, EPA, NIH.

CORRECT:
The NTAs have all been admitted as evidence.
The EPA's mission is to protect the public from harm.
The V.A. is notoriously inefficient.
That's my favorite TV show.

INCORRECT:
I'm a citizen of the U.S.A.
I need to see your I.D. first.
I'm from Westview, N.J.



Grammar

Transcripts should make use of punctuation, conjunctions, and capitalization that is grammatically correct.

- i. Separate sentences with two spaces, not one.
- ii. End punctuation goes inside quotations, when applicable. Example: She said, "I don't want to do that."
 - a. Exceptions: Quoted statements used as a question. Example: Did she say, "I don't want to do that"?
- iii. If a sentence contains a colon, only use one space after the colon and do not capitalize the next word unless it is a proper noun.

I will now submit the following witnesses: the mother, Wanda, and the son, Tommy.

- iv. Use the Oxford comma or serial comma for lists including a conjunction. Example: Harry, Bob, Sally, and Joe went to the game.
- v. Use quotation marks to denote the direct speech of a speaker or writer when reported in a transcript:

He said something like "I have no intention of staying."
"I do not object," I said, "to the tenor of the report."
And then he said, "A penny saved is a penny earned."
And she was like, "this is too conservative for inflationary times."

- vi. Dates should be transcribed as spoken, and without superscript. Use slashes to express dates numerically:

May 5th, 2010
May the 5th 2010
It was on the 5th of last month.
On May 5, we will invade the beaches.
His birthday is 5/6/2010.

- vii. For numbers, spell out nine and below, including zero. Use numerals for 10 and up, unless beginning a sentence with the number.
 - a. For numbers in the millions and above, use the numeral and spell out millions, billions, and so on. Use numerals for millions when followed by thousands or hundreds.



To be more precise, there are 3,800,000 people living in the U.S.
We are looking at over 3 million in Los Angeles alone.

- b. Use numerals for numbers that contain decimal points, percentages, and ages (spell out “percent” instead of using “%”).

I believe the correct number is 3.14.
I have 30 percent of my paycheck left.
If I were a 2-year-old boy, I would be rich.

- c. When a non-specific number is referenced, spell out the number. Example: There are hundreds of thousands of babies born every day.
- d. For ratios use figures and hyphens. Example: The ratio was 2-to-1, a ratio of 2-to-1, a 2-to-1 ratio. For fractions, spell out the word. Example: Two thirds of a pie
- e. Spell out numbers at the beginning of a sentence.

Exceptions:

CALENDAR YEARS: 2003 had more applicants than any other year.

HEIGHT: 5'4" is my height, at least the last time I checked.

MONETARY VALUES: \$46,000 was our goal last month.

PHONE NUMBERS: 555-555-5555 is my phone number.

ADDRESSES: 412 Elm Street is where I lived last.

REGULATIONS: 24-49.78 states that your car is not up to specs.

A-NUMBERS: 205-123-456, please step forward.

- viii. Use the dollar sign (\$) or pound sign (£) when transcribing amounts in those currencies. Spell out the word ‘cents’ (lower case), using numerals for amounts less than \$1. Use the dollar sign and decimal system for larger amounts. Do not include cents in an exact dollar amount.

The cost was \$2.50 and I got 5 cents back.

The burrito was priced at \$8.

We are valued at over £3 billion today.

\$43 is too much to pay.

- ix. Times should always be transcribed with a colon to separate hours from minutes, even if a speaker only says the hour. Do not use “o'clock.” Example: 11:00 a.m. (if a.m. or p.m. is not mentioned, it would be transcribed simply as “11:00”)



- x. Technical terms should be written as they would appear on the page, not as spoken, i.e. email addresses, websites, webcasts, and World Wide Web. Use lower case "web" when someone refers to "the web." Examples: www.google.com; johnadams@yahoo.com.
- xi. Titles should be placed in quotes (e.g. books, computer games, movies, poems, songs, radio and television programs, articles, lectures, and works of art).
 - a. Titles of newspapers and magazines should only be capitalized. They do not take quotes or italics. Capitalize "the" in a newspaper or magazine's name if that is the way the publication is known. Example: The New York Times
 - b. Exceptions: Do not use quotes for the Bible, almanacs, directories, dictionaries, encyclopedias, gazetteers, handbooks, and similar reference publications.