

10 Golden Rules

Congratulations on making it through to the final stage of your application!

Before you get started on the typing test, please have a read through our **10 Golden Rules**, listed below. These are the most important things for you to remember while you're typing, to ensure that every file you're producing is accurate and consistent.

1. Word for word

You must capture **everything** that is being said in intelligible sentences that flow and are sufficiently punctuated. But no need to transcribe the ums and errs!

Don't let sentences run on for too long, and leave out false starts and repeated words that don't add anything of meaning. For example:

Would you-, am I right in understanding that you would go there?

Can become:

Am I right in understanding that you would go there?

2. Sort of, you know, like

You should leave some of these filler words in the transcript, because they're important for reflecting the flow of the person's speech. Omit some here and there if they are too liberally used by the speaker (e.g. more than once in the same sentence) and are making sentences difficult to read. They should be in between commas, for example:

I like, you know, the way he says his name.

Do you think, sort of, you'd like that car yourself, or do you, you know, think you'd prefer the more expensive one?

3. Brand names, place names and specialist terminology

It's really important to research brand names, place names and any terminology used - a quick Google search can often find the right term, even if your guess at spelling it is really far off. If the name is listed by the company as having all capitals and it is not an acronym, it should be changed to Title Case. Any special punctuation or formatting should also be amended or removed to fit proper grammatical styles, e.g. Lego, Lovefilm, BBC.

4. Inaudible speech and silence

Sometimes it might not be possible to decipher what the speaker is saying and you will need to make a note of this to the client with an inaudible marker and a timecode that refers to that section of the audio. In the vast majority of audio files, these should be few and far between. The timecodes we use are:

Inaudible phrase: (inaudible 00.04)
Inaudible sentence: (inaudible 00.05-00.10)
Missed word: (? 00.03)
Crosstalk: (Talking over each other 00.30)

If there are any other events which are meaningful to the transcript, you should timecode them like this:

(Silence 01.22-01.47)
(Moderator leaves room 55.06-59.15)

5. Punctuation

There should be no need to use colons, semi-colons, dashes, ellipses, brackets or exclamation marks in your transcripts. Quotes should be in single quotation marks.

6. Ten minute timecodes

Throughout the transcript you'll need to include markers every ten minutes, so that the client can easily see which part of the audio they're reading. These should be as near to every ten minute mark as possible. For example:

What did (TC: 00:10:00) you think of the way this was portrayed?

7. Grammar errors and word changes

It's up to you to ensure files are grammatically correct - even if the speakers aren't! There are a few minor amendments you can make:

yeah/yep --> yes
nope/nah --> no
gonna --> going to
gotta --> got to
wanna --> want to
should of --> should have
'cause --> because

8. Identifying moderators and respondents

If there's a clear person who is asking the questions then we refer to them as the Moderator and their speech is written in **bold**. The person or people answering the questions are referred to as the respondents and are typed in non-bold.

If a respondent is identified by name in a file consisting of only one or two people, then they must be identified by this name, like so:

Could you start by telling me your name and occupation?

Thomas: Sure. My name's Thomas and I work in finance.

9. Numbers

Numbers from one to twenty should be typed as words and then digits used from 21 upwards. If the number is below 21 but a date, time or part of a brand name, then a digit can be used, e.g. 16th December, 11:00, Channel 4.

10. UK spellings

Please use UK spellings (e.g. recognise, not recognize).

Last but not least: if in doubt, use your common sense!