

TRANSCRIPTION STYLE GUIDE



FOR EMPLOYEES OF TRANSCRIBEME!

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Contents

- Introduction**.....1
- Full verbatim or clean verbatim**.....2
 - Why do clients want recordings transcribed using clean verbatim?.....2
 - Crutch words, fillers and stutters.....2
 - Feedback words.....3
- How to build sentences**.....3
 - Clauses.....3
 - Conjunctions.....4
- Punctuation**.....5
 - Commas.....5
 - Hyphens.....6
 - Apostrophes.....6
 - Colons and semicolons.....7
 - Quotation marks.....8
 - Dashes and ellipsis.....9
- Transcription style guide**.....11
 - False starts and interruptions.....11
 - Tagging non-verbal sounds and inaudible speech.....12
 - Numbers.....14
 - Common spelling and grammar errors.....14
 - General guidelines.....15
 - Useful resources.....15

Introduction

This style guide is an attempt to provide guidelines for transcribers and QAs so that they may more easily produce professional transcription documents which meet the needs of TranscribeMe's clients. Not all the points of style and grammar outlined in this document should be taken as absolute, unbending dictums; it is often personal taste that decides which rules are adopted and which are not.

It should also be noted that this style guide is not intended to be an exhaustive or in any way complete guide to English grammar and syntax as the rules outlined here have been implemented to meet the particular demands of transcription. Others have been included in response to the questions and concerns of TranscribeMe's employees. Additionally, some clients may have specific requirements that are not in the style guide, and may even contradict the style guide. Please check the guide on the workhub for client-specific requirements.

This style guide may use grammatical terms that you are unfamiliar with, such as *independent clause*, *dependent clause*, *conjunction* etc. If you come across a term you are unfamiliar with, please refer to the glossary at the end of the style guide.

Finally, if you have any concerns about the style guide, or feel that something has been left out of the guide, please e-mail Greg at gregkantm@gmail.com.

Full verbatim or clean verbatim?

The default method for transcribing and reviewing documents in TranscribeMe is clean verbatim. Transcribing clean verbatim will often require the transcriber or QA to use their best judgement to decide whether certain words or phrases should be omitted under clean verbatim rules. Transcribing clean verbatim should not be a daunting task, however! This section will provide a clear explanation of why clean verbatim is used, and will include examples of the difference between full verbatim and clean verbatim.

Why do clients want recordings transcribed using clean verbatim?

Clean verbatim is an approach to transcribing which ensures that the transcription is clear, succinct and easy to read, while at the same time preserves essential information and meaning. Clean verbatim means that erroneous speech – such as crutch words and fillers – is omitted from the final document. Typically, clean verbatim also means that non-formal truncations of single words (e.g. ‘cause instead of because) are corrected to the proper spelling. All possible exceptions to this rule will be specified in the style guide.

Crutch words, fillers and stutters

The most common features of speech altered by clean verbatim are stutters, filler words and crutch words. Crutch words and filler words are erroneous additions to a sentence that do not add meaning or coherency to a sentence. They are usually used when a speaker is searching for a thought or deciding how to properly express what he or she is trying to say. They may also be used to elicit feedback from another speaker or audience.

Examples of crutch words and fillers can include the common *um* and *uh*, as well as phrases like *you know*, *like*, *I mean*, *I guess* and *maybe*. It is important that words like these are properly identified as crutches or fillers, because these terms can obviously be used in a way that is important to the meaning of a sentence. You can usually tell crutch words and fillers based on the context of their use and the way they are spoken. Consider the following example:

Incorrect:

And, I guess just maybe thinking of your other ideas and some of the, like, um, suggestions you made earlier...

Correct:

And thinking of your other ideas and some of the suggestions you made earlier...

Important: The word *like* can be deceptive. At times it may sound like it is being used as a crutch word when it is really being used to signify an approximation. For instance, ‘I was in bed for, like, two weeks’ is a sentence where *like* is being used as an approximation of time and should not be omitted.

Stutters should be easier to identify. A stutter is the unnecessary repetition of a word or sound and should always be omitted. However, please include words that are repeated deliberately for emphasis. An example of this might be ‘The pizza was really, really good.’ However, the sentence ‘The the the p-p-pizza was really, really good’ obviously contains stutters and stammers, and should be corrected.

Feedback words

While working for TranscribeMe, you will frequently be required to transcribe interviews, meetings, and other audio files involving two or more speakers. In these audio files, you will usually hear people respond to the speaker using feedback words, such as *yeah*, *right*, *okay* etc. Please omit these feedback words and any feedback words like them if they are stand-alone interjections, or are *not* responses to a specific question that requires a response. Consider the following examples [please note that you DO NOT have to indicate different speakers as “S1”, “S2” etc. in your actual transcriptions; they are indicated this way for purposes of the example, only]:

Incorrect:

S1: So I thought about it a lot and decided that I wanted to be a vegetarian.

S2: Right.

S1: But then I realised that would mean having to give up bacon. I’d forgotten that it was a meat.

Correct:

S1: So I thought about it a lot and decided that I wanted to be a vegetarian. But then I realised that would mean having to give up bacon. I’d forgotten that it was a meat.

How to Build Sentences

When transcribing speech, it can be difficult to know when to end a sentence or begin a new one. Unlike formal writing – be it literary, academic or journalistic – people do not always speak in a way that conforms to formal sentence structure. In transcription, it is important to ensure that the document is easily readable. Long run-on sentences and sentence fragments should be avoided where possible. At times it may even be necessary to insert full stops and begin new sentences, even if the speaker hasn’t paused.

Clauses

There are a great many of rules surrounding sentence structure, though few of them should be taken as the final word on sentence structure. In other words, the rules can be flexible. However, there are some very basic rules for forming sentences in such a way that transcriptions are clear and easy to read.

A common error among transcribers is to separate independent and dependent clauses with a full stop. A clause is a group of words containing a subject and predicate. An independent clause is a clause that can stand by itself as a complete sentence. It is the most basic sentence that can be written. An example of an independent clause is, 'I am the Walrus.'

A dependent clause is a sentence that cannot stand by itself because it implies that more is yet to come, or because it relies on a previous clause for its meaning. Often, dependent clauses begin with conjunctions like *but* and *because*. Here are examples of sentences with dependent clauses, with the dependent clause itself **in italics**. In each of these examples, it would be wrong to separate each of the clauses with a full stop.

Whenever I get the urge to exercise, I lie down until the urge passes

- Robert M. Hutchins

If you tell the truth you don't have to remember anything.

- Mark Twain

In short, not only are things not what they seem, they are not even what they are called!

- Francisco Balagtas

Conjunctions

The other grammatical feature that can cause transcribers problems is the conjunction. A conjunction is the part of speech which connects clauses and sentences. The common conjunctions are *and*, *but*, *for*, *or*, *nor*, *yet*, and *so*.

Typically, it is better not to begin sentences with conjunctions because they usually link clauses that complete a thought or idea. Please note, however, that this is not a universal rule (even in academic writing) and many grammatically correct sentences begin with conjunctions like *and* or *but*.

Speakers will sometimes use conjunctions to begin sentences, and on some occasions it might even seem as if the speaker is using conjunctions as crutch words or fillers! Because of this, it may sometimes be necessary to begin a sentence with a conjunction. It is suggested you only do this to break up long, clumsy sentences that combine different ideas or trains of thought. Furthermore, it is suggested that you only begin a new sentence with a conjunction when the removal of that conjunction would not significantly affect the clarity of the sentence.

Finally, be wary of words like *because* which can be used as conjunctions but do not always count as conjunctions. Consider the following example of a correctly punctuated sentence:

It was a cold day. Because it was so cold, I took a coat.

It would be **incorrect** to write,

It was a cold day because it was so cold. I took a coat.

Other examples may not be so obvious, so try to be careful when terminating or beginning sentences. Listen to the tone of the speaker in addition to paying attention to the use of words as tone can often suggest when it is appropriate to begin a new sentence.

Punctuation

The principal role of punctuation in a transcription is to mark the structure and intonation of a sentence as it is spoken. It should also be used to add clarity to a sentence where faithfully representing the structure and intonation of a sentence would make it difficult to read. A long sentence containing a lot of different subjects, objects and ideas may need to be broken up with commas for the sake of clarity, even if the speaker does not actually pause.

Commas

The correct use of the comma is usually determined by whether or not the comma adds clarity to the idea the speaker is trying to convey. As such, usage often comes down to individual judgement. Nonetheless, there are a few general rules that can be followed.

One of the most frequent instances where a comma should be used is when two independent clauses are connected by a coordinating conjunction.

Kindness is a mark of faith, and whoever has not kindness has not faith.

- Mohammed

Commas are also used to connect dependent and independent clauses, although in these cases it is not always mandatory to use them.

When Pandora opened the jar, all the evil flooded out into the world.

- Pandora's Box

All things are ready, if our minds be so.

- William Shakespeare (Henry V)

However, if the clauses are very short and closely related, it is permissible to omit the comma. For instance, a comma would not be necessary in the following sentence:

Nina played the dabakan and Paolo danced.

A common error is to use a comma to separate two independent clauses that should be separated by a period. For instance Mark Twain famously observed,

Clothes make the man. Naked people have little or no influence on society.

Although the sentence would still make sense if there was a comma and not a full stop between the clauses, it would still be an example of poor grammar. Jamming two

independent clauses together with a comma is called a *comma splice*. They should be avoided, as it breaks the flow for the reader, and can lead to unnecessarily long sentences.

Hyphens

The hyphen [-] is most commonly used to form compound words and to link prefixes to other words. Identifying compound words is important because failing to do so may alter the meaning of a sentence, so it is important to get compound words right. Richard Lederer offers the following example to this end:

Father to be stabbed to death in bar

Father-to-be stabbed to death in bar

The two previous sentences have two different meanings based on the omission or inclusion of hyphens. In compound words, the hyphen shows that the words, when linked together, have a combined meaning. The main type of compound word you will encounter in transcription that needs to be hyphenated is the **compound adjective**. The compound adjective is a word that is made up of a noun and an adjective, a noun and a participle, or an adjective and a participle. A participle is the form a verb takes to create tenses or adjectives using suffixes such as *-ing* or *-ed* (e.g. 'I **looked for the broken glass**', 'I **am waiting for the train**'). Consider the following examples of compound adjectives:

Noun + adjective

- Accident-prone
- Long-winded
- Carbon-neutral
- All-inclusive

Noun + participle

- Custom-built
- User-generated
- Family-owned

Adjective + participle

- Good-looking
- Quick-thinking
- Bad-tempered

Apostrophes

The apostrophe is a mark of punctuation used to indicate a missing letter (usually in a contraction) and also to identify a noun in the possessive case. Using the apostrophe in

contractions is straightforward – *I'm, you're, he's, she'd* etc. Using it to signal the possessive case is a little more complicated making the apostrophe one of the most commonly misused mark of punctuation in English writing.

Use an apostrophe with an –s for possessives of singular nouns. The apostrophe should still be used even if the singular noun ends with an s.

Shakespeare's plays
 William James's psychology
 Today's date
 The house's front door
 The empress's court

If the noun is plural, use an apostrophe only and do not add an –s.

The girls' shoes (the shoes belonging to the girls)
 The soldiers' uniforms (the uniforms belonging to the soldiers)
 The Chengs' holiday home (the holiday home belonging to the Chengs)

If the plural noun does not end in -s, add an apostrophe plus –s

The women's organisation (the organisation for women)
 The children's toys (the toys belonging to the children)
 The people's anger (the anger of the people)

It is normally wrong to use an apostrophe to form a plural. Please note: this includes **dates** and **acronyms**.

The years passed slowly
 The TVs were expensive
 The QAs eliminated the errors
 The 1990s were a strange time
 The 80s lasted far too long

Colons and semicolons

The colon and the semi-colon can be useful in formal writing. However, they should be used very sparingly in transcriptions. The semi-colon in particular is often misused, as the rules governing its usage can be unclear. As a rule, dashes, commas and even periods should be favoured over the colon and semi-colon. However, do not feel as though you should shy away from using them altogether. In general, semicolons should only be used to connect two closely related independent clauses that **aren't** separated by a coordinating conjunction, like *and, yes, but* or so.

When I was a boy, I was told that anybody could become president; I'm beginning to believe it
 - Clarence Darrow

The No Child Left Behind Act does not assert a national achievement standard; standards are set by each individual state

Both these examples benefit from semicolons even though both would still make sense without one being inserted. They may be particularly useful when a speaker talks at length without breaking. In these situations, the semicolon may add clarity to long, unwieldy sentences with lots of ideas. In short, use your best judgement, but if you are in doubt it is perhaps better to refrain from using it altogether.

The rules for colon usage are easier to follow. They should only be used after a main clause which introduces a list, an explanation or a quotation.

I'll keep it short and sweet: family, religion, friendship. These are the three demons you must slay if you wish to succeed in business.

- Mr. Burns (The Simpsons)

When Churchill became Prime Minister, he had an uncompromising message for the British public: 'I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat.'

Always remember that only a complete main clause may be followed by a colon. Sentence fragments and individual words should not be.

Quotation marks

Quotation marks should mainly be used for direct quotations. When a speaker quotes him or herself or another person directly, separate the quotation from the rest of the text with a comma and capitalise the first word of the quotation. Use *double* quotation marks unless otherwise specified.

He came up to me and said, "Sir, could you please leave the cinema. You are not allowed to yell advice to the actors in the film."

I said, "Could you please stop asking my horse to lend you money. Even if he had money he can't understand you."

However, there are different rules regulating the use of quotations marks in cases where the speaker is not quoting a *direct* expression, or where the expression is spoken by more than one person. For instance, if the speaker is quoting something that has been said by a group of people, do not use quotation marks. Note that in the following examples, the quote is still separated by a comma, and the first word of the quote is still capitalised.

When I asked the bank for a loan they said, Sure, but you'll be required to pay 700% interest.

They said, Why have you come here?

If the speaker is quoting something that they thought, you should again refrain from using quote marks. You should again separate the quoted thought with a comma and capitalize the first word.

As I was going in to the interview I thought, How hard could it be to become a lion tamer?

If the speaker rambles on and it is difficult to tell where the quotations end and the speakers own words begin, separate the quoted speech from the rest of the dialogue with a **dash**.

It is common when transcribing an audio file to come across a speaker who quotes *hypothetical* expressions. That is, an expression that someone *might* utter in a certain situation. For instance, someone responding to market research questions might talk about the things a customer could potentially ask. In these situations, it is asked that you mark these expressions with *single quotations marks* – that is, with [‘ ’] as opposed to [‘ ’].

In the food industry you often get customers who think they know everything, saying things like, ‘Our meals shouldn’t take this long,’ and, ‘Why is the kitchen on fire?’

When you sell your product door to door, do people say things like, ‘There is no reason for me to buy a dinner jacket for my dog?’

When punctuating quoted text, full stops and commas should fall within the quotation marks. Question marks should only fall within the quotation marks if the quoted speech is itself a question. Colons and semicolons should always fall outside the quotation marks. This is the standard for American English.

Dashes and ellipses

The dash is an item of punctuation that is a little stronger than a comma. They should generally be avoided in formal writing, but for informal writing they can be very useful. It is a good item of punctuation to use in transcriptions because it is well suited to capturing the prosody (that is, rhythm, stress, and intonation) of speech. Speakers will often break their flow to add emphasis, insert an afterthought, list things off or offer an explanation of something. A dash can also be used to offset words or phrases that come after an independent clause.

Consider the following example of a sentence where the dash is used to properly punctuate a sentence where the speaker adds emphasis:

It was a cold day – so cold the windscreen froze over – and it made driving hard

Afterthoughts will often break the grammatical structure of a sentence as well as the speaker’s flow. The dash is especially useful here.

It was a cold day – so cold the windscreen froze over – and it made driving hard

When a speaker interrupts his or her sentence to add relevant but non-essential information, a dash can also be used.

In the great empires of antiquity – Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, Persia – splendid though they were, freedom was unknown.

Finally, consider the following example of the dash being used to offset a word or a phrase that comes after an independent clause.

Things have changed a lot in the last year – mainly for the better.

Weaselling out of things is important to learn. It's what separates us from the animals – except the weasel.

- Homer Simpson

In all these cases, it is normal to use an *em dash*. However, TranscribeMe's workhub does not have a shortcut for inserting the *em dash* as Microsoft word does. Because of this you should use the hyphen in lieu of a dash [-].

The ellipsis is also a useful item of punctuation, but it should be used more sparingly than the dash. As the default mode for transcription is clean verbatim, most pauses should not be marked. Rather, if the speaker pauses for a few seconds and then continues his or her sentence, you should simply transcribe the sentence as though there were no pause.

However, some pauses may signal a change of thought, a change of tense, or some other grammatical alteration that would make the sentence ungrammatical if the pause wasn't noted. In these cases it is appropriate to use the ellipsis provided the pause is longer than 4 to 5 seconds. A shorter pause would count as a false start, and this is covered in the sectioned titled *False starts and interruptions*.

Consider the following example of a sentence where an ellipsis is essential for syntactical and grammatical coherency.

I had to pick up my children from school because... actually they can't have been at school, because I don't have any children.

The ellipsis in the previous sentence is essential for it to make sense. Consider what it would look like *without* the ellipsis.

I had to pick up my children from school because, actually they can't have been at school, because I don't have any children.

The ellipsis should also be used to mark where a speaker has trailed off.

Transcription style guide

Transcription work has a set of problems unique to the task of copying out the spoken word. Audio files can suffer from poor recording quality, speakers are often inaudible, and there are sometimes non-verbal sound that need to be noted down. TranscribeMe has a specific set of rules for dealing with all these problems and more. They will be outlined in the following section.

False starts and interruptions

Speakers will commonly make mistakes which prompt them to begin their sentence over. This is referred to as a false start. In addition to this, if the audio file you are transcribing is an interview, speakers may also interrupt each other. Both these things can make transcription difficult.

At TranscribeMe, false starts and interruptions are both marked with a **double dash**. You can insert a double dash by striking the hyphen key twice and should look like this [--]. The double dash should come **immediately** (without a gap) after the word where the speaker breaks away to start again, or the word at which the speaker is interrupted by another speaker.

Please note that not all false starts or mistakes should be marked this way. If the speaker corrects him or herself quickly after a false start it will usually not be necessary to transcribe the false start verbatim. Instead, omit the error, and transcribe the correct sentence without the false start. Only mark the false start if the speaker talks at length before correcting him or herself, or if omitting the error would make the transcription more confusing. Consider the following examples.

Once when I was young I went to the store to sell-- I was going to the store to buy a present for my parents.

My dad used to always say that he thought that-- he always cooked because he thought that it was wrong to let my mom cook for him all the time.

Both these are examples of cases where a speaker has begun a thought and then changed it. The first one is changed because the speaker has made a mistake. The second one is changed because the speaker's train of thought changes half-way through the sentence. Both are examples of false starts. In the second example in particular it would be wrong to omit the false start because it introduces the subject of the sentence (the dad). However, if the false start is brief enough for it to be cut without sacrificing coherency or a significant chunk of speech then it can be omitted. For example:

I went to the vet-- to the store to buy coffee.

Should read,

I went to the store to buy coffee.

In this case, the speaker has merely uttered the wrong word (*vet* instead of *store*) and changed it instantly. A file transcribed in clean verbatim should usually omit such insignificant errors.

The rules for marking **interruptions** are simpler. At the point where the speaker is interrupted, insert a double dash. [Please note that you DO NOT have to indicate different speakers as “S1”, “S2” etc. in your actual transcriptions; they are indicated this way for purposes of the example, only].

S1 When I was working at my last company I would--

S2 What company did you work at?

If the speaker is interrupted while asking a question, insert a question mark immediately after the double dash.

S1 How long have you been working at your current--?

S2 About two years.

Tagging non-verbal sounds and inaudible speech

When transcribing you will often encounter **non-verbal sounds** such as laughter and applause. Often, non-verbal sounds will have no effect on the flow of speech or on the meaning of conversation and should therefore be ignored in the transcription. However, applause and laughter can be important parts of a transcription. Applause should be tagged in the transcript because it signals the presence of a receptive audience. Laughter and chuckling should be included because it lets the reader know, for instance, that something was meant as a joke.

As well as non-verbal sounds, **inaudible speech** also presents a problem for the transcriber. There are a number of causes of inaudible speech: the speaker may have a thick accent; the speaker may slur his or her words; the recording quality may be poor, or two or more speakers might talk over one another. Each such instance should be appropriately tagged.

- Tag applause in a recording with [applause]
- Tag laughter with [laughter]
- Tag music with [music]. Please note that you should tag music when it is **meant to be in the recording**. For instance, it may be an ad, or it may be a talk where music is used to introduce a speaker. If it is background music, do not tag it. If background music makes it impossible to hear the speaker, use the [inaudible] tag.
- If the speaker audibly chuckles after saying something, tag with [chuckles]

- If the recording quality is too poor to be able to hear a word or phrase, or if background noise obscures the speaker, tag that part of the recording with [inaudible]
- If speakers talk across each other and you cannot make out what is being said, tag with [crosstalk]
- If a word or phrase is spoken with an indecipherable accent, or if it is just too difficult to make out for reasons that are not due to poor audio quality, tag the word or phrase with [?]
- If nothing is spoken for more than 10 seconds, please tag the silence with [silence]. The tag should have its own line. [Please note that you DO NOT have to indicate different speakers as “S1”, “S2” etc. in your actual transcriptions; they are indicated this way for purposes of the example, only]. E.g.,

S1 I'll have to think about that

[silence]

S2 Would you like a little longer to think this through?

If you have difficulty deciphering a word or phrase, but think you can make an educated guess as to what is being spoken, put the word or phrase in square brackets with a question mark.

S1 When I was young I studied at a [Harbour?] school on [Governor's Island?] in New York.

All tags should be written in lower case. When inserting the [laughter] or [chuckle] tag, please keep it inside the punctuation, not after it. For instance, if someone chuckled at something he or she said, the tag should come after whatever it was said that provoked the chuckle.

S1 Well, I was young then. You do stupid things when you're young [chuckle].

S2 I do understand. When I was 15 I drove from Baltimore to San Diego just to buy a burrito [laughter].

Important: Some audio files may contain technical language, or make references to products, objects or places that are unfamiliar to you. It is expected that QAs and transcribers make an effort to get unfamiliar words or phrases correct by googling them. If you still cannot be sure of the correct word after searching online, either guess the word and place it in square brackets, or insert the [?] tag, as outlined above.

Before tagging anything as inaudible or indecipherable please also make an effort to listen to the word or phrase before giving up. It also helps to take into account what is being said. If a word or phrase makes no sense in context, it is probably wrong. Here is an example of a transcription that is clearly wrong:

S1 Do you and your fence watch a lot of TV together?

S2 I watch a lot with him because he is usually punctured into the TV.

It should be obvious to all transcribers that the previous exchange has been misheard. Instead of submitting a transcription with obvious errors like these, please try to listen for words that would make sense in context, and if you still have trouble, resort to the tags outlined above.

Numbers

- Numbers between 1 and 10 should be spelled out (one, two, three... ten). All numbers higher than these should be typed as numerals (11, 12, 13 etc).
- When you are writing phone numbers, type out the numerals, e.g. 437-8242-376.
- When writing percentages use the % symbol, e.g. 50%. Do not type out *percent*.
- When writing fractions, don't use numerals, e.g. *three-fifths* instead of $3/5$, or *a quarter* instead of $1/4$.

Common spelling and grammar errors

- *Your/You're*

You're is a contraction of 'you are' while *your* is a possessive. For example: **You're crazy if you think your sandals are appropriate for climbing in the Himalayas.**

- *It's/Its*

Similar to *you're* and *your*, *it's* is a contraction of 'it is' or 'it has' while *its* is a possessive pronoun. For example: **It's going to be cold tonight so please put the dog in its kennel.**

- *They're/Their/There*

They're is a contraction of 'they are', *their* is a possessive pronoun, while *there* is usually used to refer to a place. For example: **They're getting impatient, so we should bring them their meals. The plates are over there.**

- *A lot/Alot*

Never use *alot* when referring to quantity as it is not an English word. The proper spelling is *a lot*. For example: **I went to visit an old lot for abandoned vehicles. There were a lot of broken down cars.**

- *All right/ Alright*

Like *a lot*, *alright* is not an English word. The correct spelling is *all right*.

- *Okay/OK*

Please do not abbreviate the word *okay*. Any instances of *OK* will be deleted and a notification will be sent to the offending transcriber.

- TV/T.V.

When a speaker abbreviates ‘television’ to TV, do not insert full stops. TV is not an acronym.

General guidelines

Transcribers and QAs are expected to maintain a basic standard of quality. We understand that it is hard to ensure that a transcription is perfect – especially when the quality of the recording is not good – but there are a few simple things you can do to avoid making obvious mistakes.

- Please be careful to spell-check your work. It is unprofessional to return an error-ridden document to the client.
- Please listen to the audio you are transcribing to make sure the transcription makes sense. Sometimes, what is being said can provide sufficient context to correctly identify a word you are having trouble with.
- Be careful with punctuation. Make sure sentences are coherent and words are capitalized correctly.
- Make sure names are spelt correctly. When in doubt you should google – this is especially important for files with lots of references to names of products or places.
- Finally, and most importantly, **make sure your transcription is accurate**. Do not rush through passages you are having trouble with. If you have tried to make out passages of speech but are still stuck, use the tags provided in this style guide.

Useful resources

If you are struggling with grammar or syntax issues that are not covered in this guide, or want further clarification, feel free to e-mail Greg at gregkantm@gmail.com. However, there are a lot of useful and comprehensive websites that cover grammar and syntax issues in great detail. However, if anything in this style guide contradicts grammatical rules you have read elsewhere, follow *this* style guide unless otherwise instructed.

<http://grammar.about.com/>

A comprehensive guide to composition and grammar written by Richard Nordquist, who is professor emeritus of rhetoric and English at Armstrong Atlantic State University.

<http://oxforddictionaries.com/>

The online component of the Oxford Dictionary.

<http://grammar.quickanddirtytips.com/>

Mignon Fogarty's guide to common spelling, grammar and syntax questions.

<http://www.merriam-webster.com/>

A very useful online dictionary that includes small articles on various issues in grammar and spelling.