



BEST-PRACTICE GAME SUBTITLES

Where a recommendation has been based on existing research, I've noted it in grey text.

"Extras to consider" aren't required by any official documentation but many people asked for these features over the course of developing and testing Yellow Subs Machine. I highly recommend implementing them. Links to the relevant guidelines are at the end of the document.

PLACEMENT

Left: 12.5% (BBC)

Right: 12.5% (BBC)

Bottom: 10% (Netflix)

The width of the "background" is calculated per line.

The width of the "window" is calculated by the largest rectangle that can fit all lines plus 1% screen-height vertical padding and 3% screen-height horizontal padding.

When on-screen text occurs in the lower third of the screen that could be covered by the title, it should be displayed 10% from the top of the screen.

Lines are always bottom-aligned, except when they're displayed at the top of the screen, in which case they're top-aligned. (Netflix)

DISPLAY

Duration: min 0.85s, max 7s (Netflix)

Gap between titles: 0.16s (4f at 25fps) (Channel 4)

Maximum characters per line: 42 (Netflix and Channel 4)

Font size: should be set to fit within a line height of 6% of the active video height. Note: The requirement for TV is 8%, but this is too large for video games. (BBC)

Fonts must support italics (used where a voice is heard on a telephone, radio or TV) (Channel 4)

Text should be center-aligned, except when there are two speakers, in which case text is left-aligned and each line starts with a hyphen (Netflix and BBC)

Secondary colour options: may exist if multiple speakers are able to be placed on one line. The BBC uses the colors White, yellow, cyan, green in order to show different speakers. (BBC)

EXTRAS TO CONSIDER

Show who is speaking: More often than TV and film, games often do not give enough visual context for who is speaking for the player to discern on their own. A third line of text above the standard two can be used to display the speaker's name, or when there are two speakers, show them inline with their dialogue, separated by a colon (e.g. "Speaker: The thing they said").

Extra contextual colours: Games (especially traditional adventure games) often use colour to indicate different characters or factions within the game. This is a great accessibility consideration but may need to be turned off in order to be compatible with the player's colour preferences.

Show even more information: Some players experience difficulty discerning tone of voice or discerning tone from text. A text cue to describe the emotional state of the speaker can help make sense of subtle hints without being intrusive.

REQUIRED PLAYER OPTIONS

Font: Several font options should be included (Recommended fonts are included at the end of the document):
(US Electronic Code of Federal Regulations)

- **Default (Your game's themed font)**
- **Monospaced Serif / Typewriter**
- **Serif**
- **Monospaced Sans-Serif**
- **Sans-Serif**
- **Casual / Handwriting / Marker**
- **Cursive**
- **Small Capitals**

Text Size: (TV Large is from BBC, others are relative based on that size)

- Game Small (4% screen height)
- Game Large(6% screen height)
- TV Large (8% screen height - this is not typically appropriate for games)

Shadow Styles: (Netflix)

- None
- Raised (0px,1px)
- Depressed (0px,-1px)
- Uniform (outline)
- Drop shadow (1px,1px)

Text, Shadow, Background and Window Colours: (Netflix, US Electronic Code of Federal Regulations)

- White
- Black
- Red
- Green
- Blue
- Yellow
- Magenta
- Cyan

Background: On/Off (Netflix)

Window: On/Off (Netflix)

Background is Semi-transparent: On/Off (Netflix)

Window is Semi-transparent: On/Off (Netflix)

EXTRAS TO CONSIDER

Gap between line backgrounds: On/Off

Show speaker name: On/Off

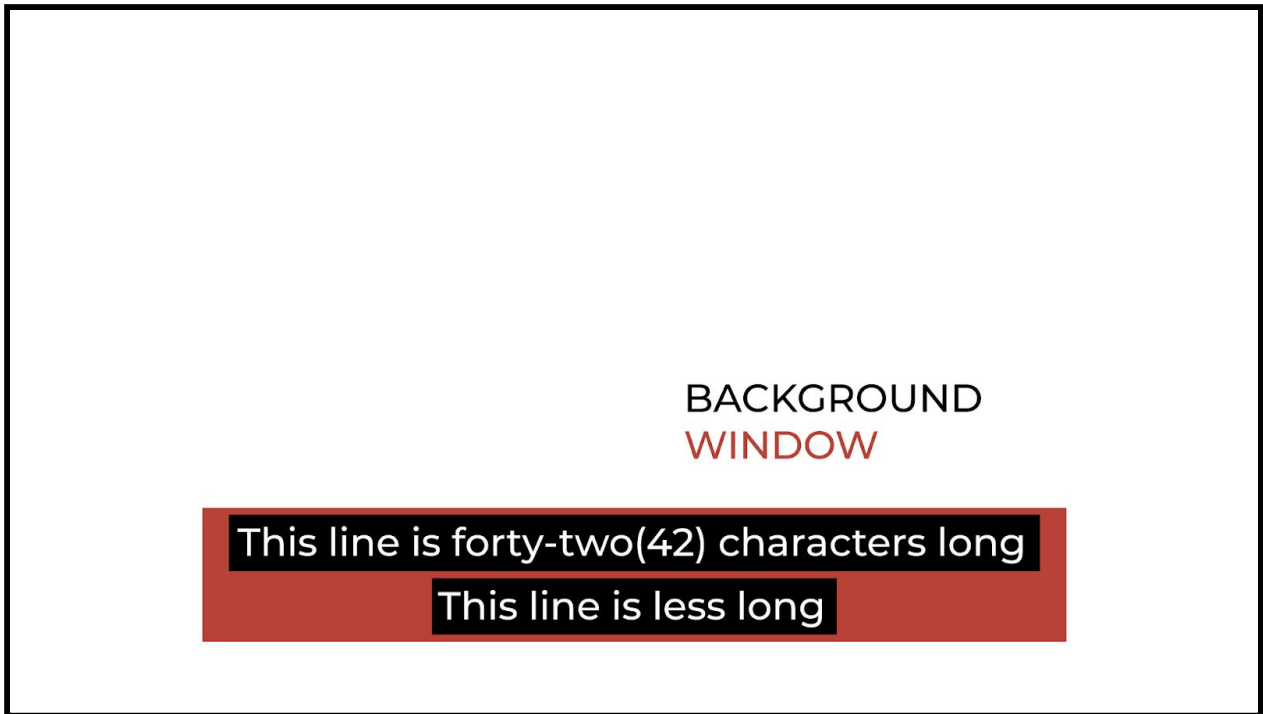
Extra contextual colours: On/Off

Show speaker tone: On/Off

All caps: On/Off

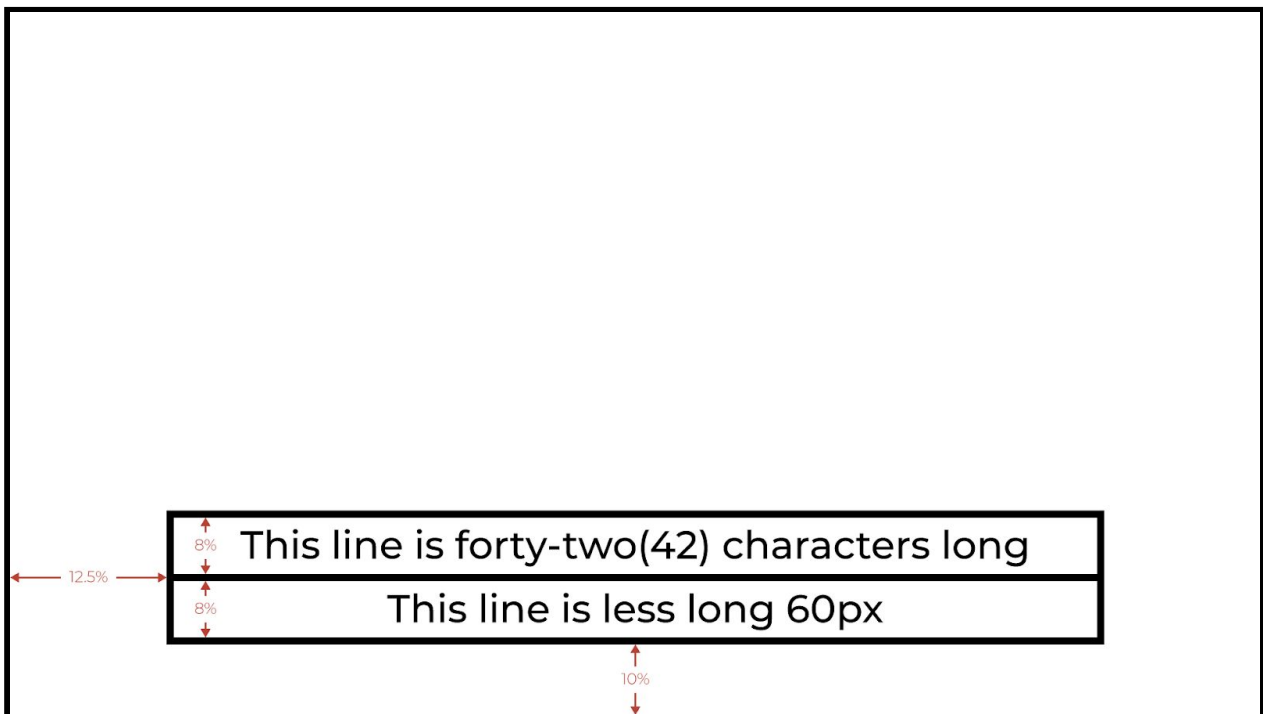
Add a dyslexic font option like OpenDyslexic (Especially if your text system doesn't allow custom line-height and letter spacing)

BACKGROUND vs. WINDOW

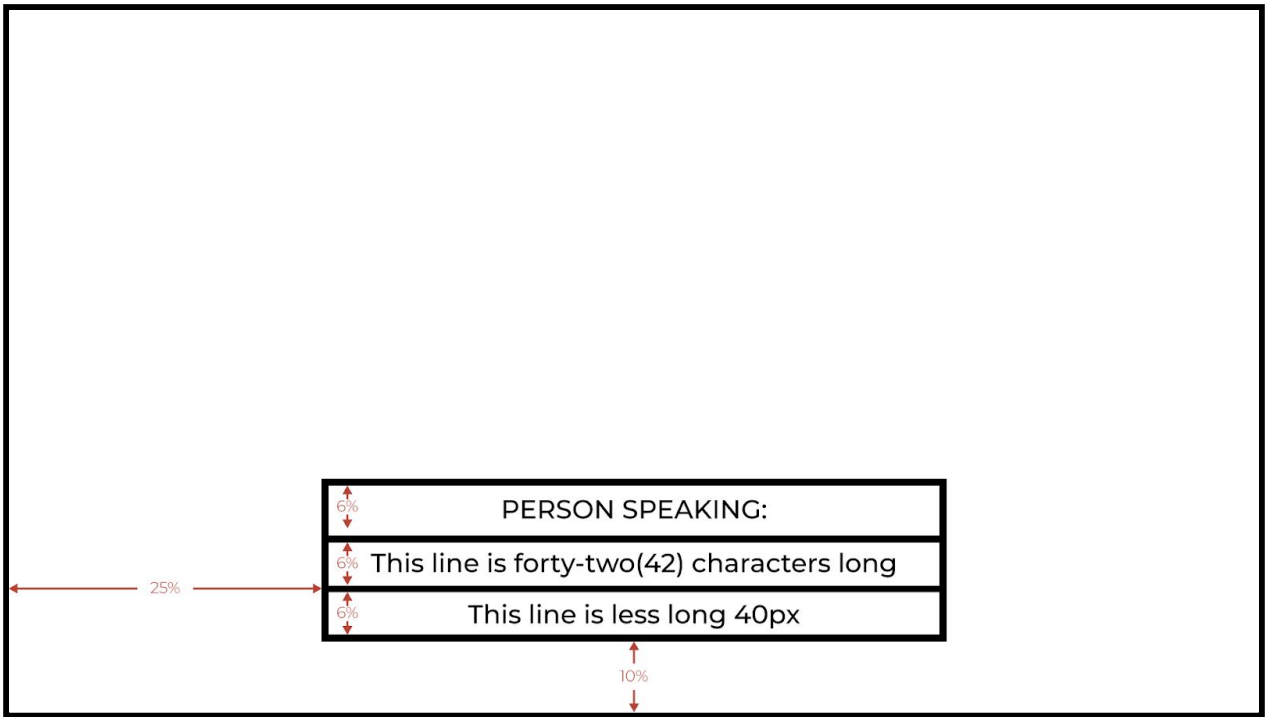


SIZE AND PLACEMENT

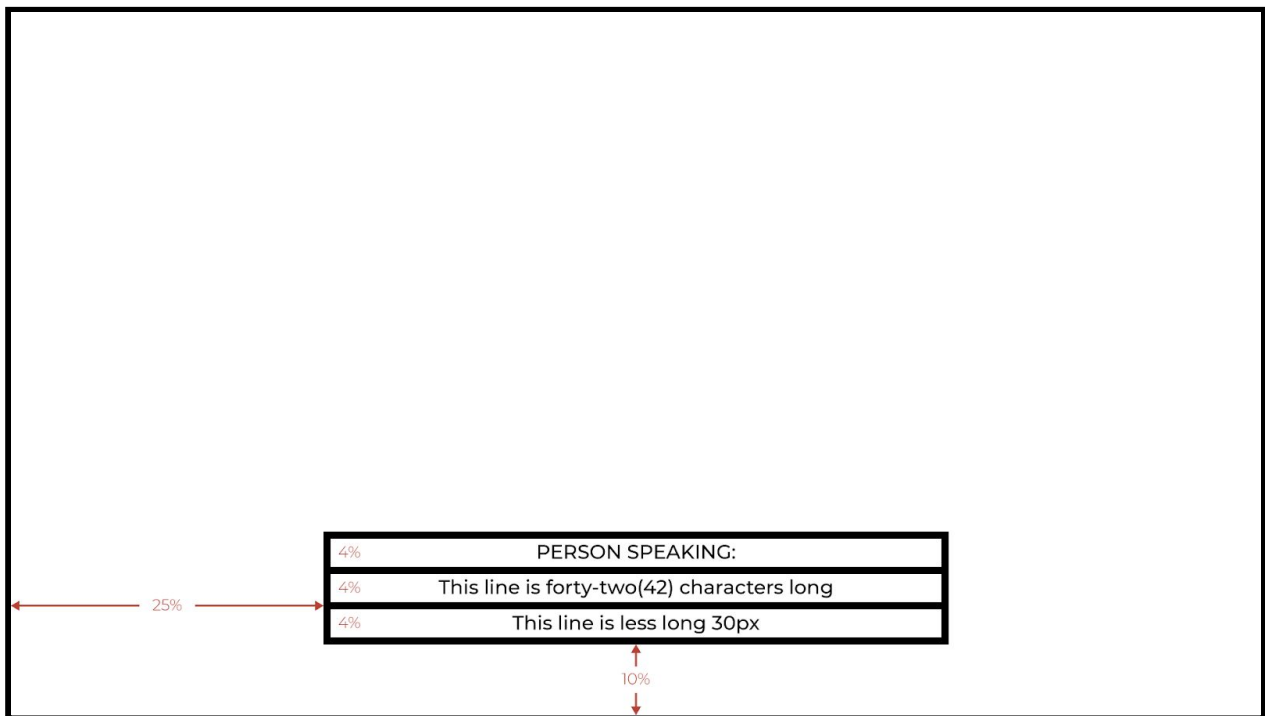
TV LARGE SIZE (Too big for most games)



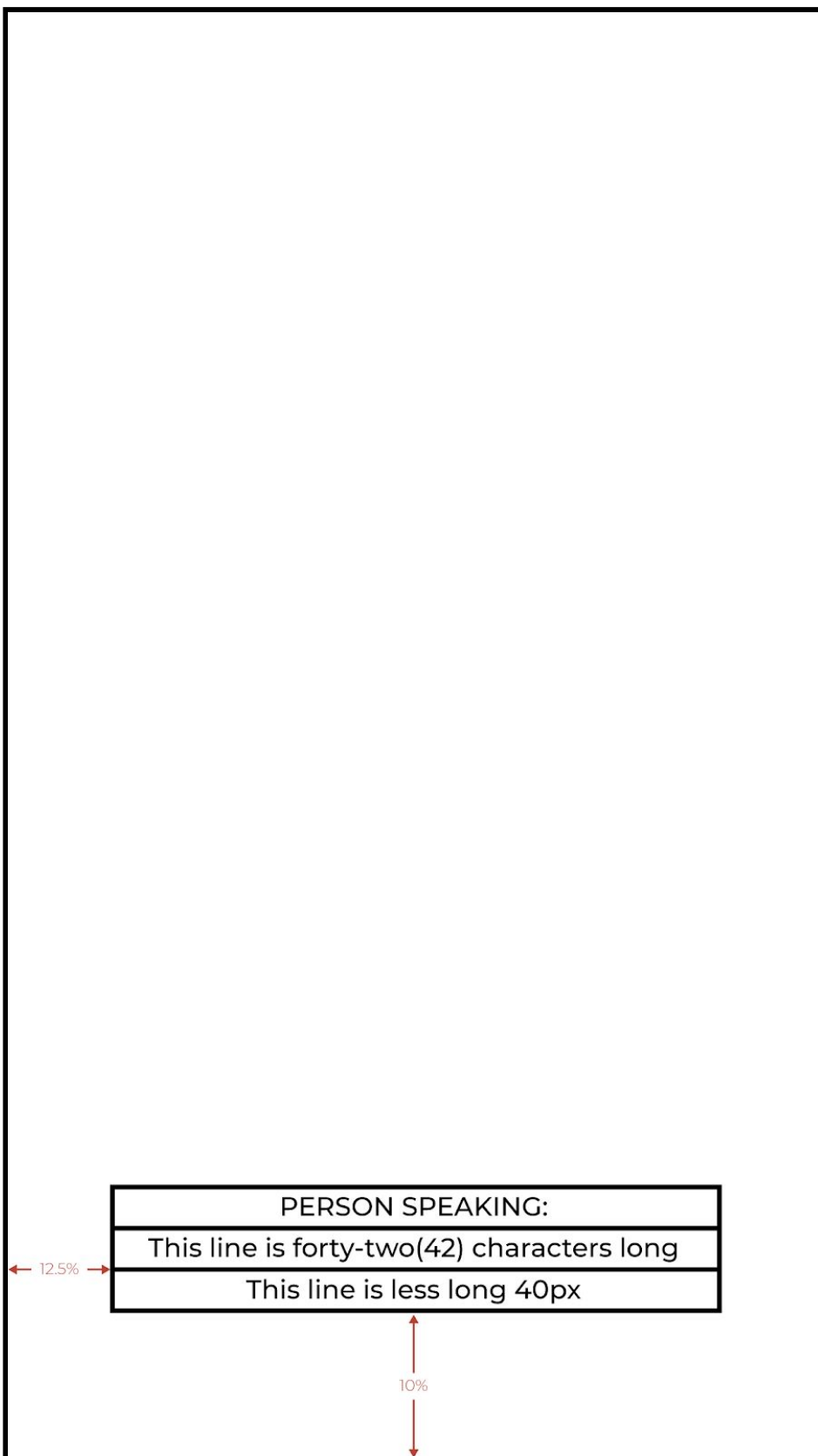
GAME DEFAULT (Fine for most games)



GAME SMALL (Don't go smaller than this)



MOBILE (PORTRAIT)



SOURCES

BBC Subtitle Guidelines:

<http://bbc.github.io/subtitle-guidelines/>

Channel 4 subtitling Guidelines For Foreign-language Programmes:

http://www.channel4.com/media/documents/corporate/foi-docs/SG_FLP.pdf

Netflix:

<https://partnerhelp.netflixstudios.com/hc/en-us/articles/215758617-Timed-Text-Style-Guide-General-Requirements>

<https://partnerhelp.netflixstudios.com/hc/en-us/articles/217350977-English-Timed-Text-Style-Guide>

<https://partnerhelp.netflixstudios.com/hc/en-us/articles/219375728-English-Template-Timed-Text-Style-Guide>

<https://www.netflix.com/subtitlepreferences>

United States Publishing Office - Electronic Code of Federal Regulations

https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/retrieveECFR?gp=&SID=9d2817fd6a79ea586556fba66f187ff2&mc=true&r=SECTION&n=se47.4.79_1102

RECOMMENDED FONTS

Depending on the legal requirements of your project, you may need to use either public domain or licensed fonts. Yellow Subs Machine comes with the Public Domain set of fonts.

Public Domain and CC-0 Licensed fonts

- Typewriter - [Warenhaus-Typenhebel](#) (Public Domain)
- Serif - [Seshat Regular](#) (CC-0)
- Monospaced - [ChicagoFLF](#) (Public Domain)
- Sans-Serif - [Aileron](#) (CC-0)
- Handwriting - [Marius1](#) (CC-0)
- Cursive - [Promocyja](#) (Public Domain)
- Small Caps - [Ferrum](#) (CC-0)

Unfortunately, no public domain fonts exist that are specifically designed for people with dyslexia.

OFL & Apache Licensed fonts

If used, you must include the license files for each font with your project

- Typewriter - [Roboto Slab](#) (Apache License, Version 2.0)
- Serif - [Noto Serif](#) (Apache License, Version 2.0)
- Monospaced - [Roboto Mono](#) (Apache License, Version 2.0)
- Sans-Serif - [Roboto](#) (Apache License, Version 2.0)
- Handwriting - [Kalam](#) (Open Font License)
- Cursive - [Satisfy](#) (Open Font License)
- Small Caps - [Alegreya Sans SC](#) (Open Font License)
- Dyslexic Friendly - [OpenDyslexic](#) (Open Font License)