

CLEAR Framework[®]



Caption Everything

Video and audio captioning ensures accessibility to those who are deaf or hard of hearing, non-native speakers, students in noisy environments, or anyone who prefers to read along for comprehension.

Logical Layout

Consistent headings, straightforward navigation, and logical sequences help students engage with the content more effectively, allowing everyone to access and absorb information with greater ease.



Easy to Read

High-contrast colors, easy-to-read fonts, and clear, simple language make content more accessible and engaging for everyone.

Alt Text for Images

Descriptive alt text ensures that all important information from images, charts, and graphs is accessible, making the content more inclusive for everyone.



Responsive Design

With students accessing materials on various devices, adapting content for different screen sizes allows all students to engage fully, no matter what technology they are using.

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CAPTION EVERYTHING

WHAT ARE CAPTIONS?

Captions are much more than simple text overlays—they are the lifeline that connects multimedia content to a broader audience, ensuring inclusivity and accessibility. They serve as a bridge between spoken words, music, sound effects, and visuals, translating the auditory experience into a written format. In essence, captions are a form of storytelling, where every sound and silence is transcribed to create a richer experience for viewers.

Captions typically come in two formats: **closed captions (CC)** and **open captions**. Closed captions can be turned on or off by the user, while open captions are always visible because they are "burned" into the video. Both types of captions include not only the dialogue but also critical audio cues such as laughter, applause, or environmental sounds like thunder or a ringing phone, all of which are crucial to understanding the full context of the video.

Historically, captions were seen primarily as a tool for individuals with hearing impairments, but their utility has grown significantly in the digital age. Today, captions are widely used by anyone who wants or needs to engage with video content in a more flexible way—whether they're watching in a noisy coffee shop, learning a new language, or simply digesting information in a preferred format.

WHY ARE CAPTIONS IMPORTANT?

Captions are not just a "nice-to-have" feature—they're a critical component of accessibility and communication in our increasingly multimedia-dependent world. Their importance spans several dimensions:

1. **Accessibility:** For the millions of people who are deaf or hard of hearing, captions are an absolute necessity. They make video content not only watchable but comprehensible. However, accessibility isn't limited to hearing impairments. Captions also benefit individuals with auditory processing disorders, cognitive disabilities, or even temporary hearing loss due to illness or injury. In these scenarios, captions ensure that no one is excluded from accessing important information or entertainment.
2. **Comprehension:** Captions are invaluable for people learning a new language or those who may struggle to understand different accents or fast-paced dialogue. For students, captions can reinforce learning by providing a textual accompaniment to spoken information, allowing them to process and retain material more effectively. This can also be crucial for younger audiences or individuals engaging with technical or unfamiliar topics.
3. **Legal Compliance:** Laws like the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, and similar international mandates require accessible video content, especially for public organizations, educational institutions, and employers. Non-compliance can result in lawsuits, fines, or reputational damage. Beyond legal ramifications, adhering to accessibility standards demonstrates an organization's commitment to inclusivity and equity.
4. **Wider Reach:** With captions, content creators can reach a global audience. Viewers in sound-restricted environments, such as public transportation or quiet workplaces, rely on captions to engage with content. Additionally, social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook autoplay videos without sound by default, making captions a vital tool for grabbing viewers' attention.

WHO BENEFITS FROM CAPTIONS?

While captions are often associated with aiding individuals with hearing impairments, they benefit an incredibly diverse range of people:

- **Students and Educators:** Captions enhance the learning experience by catering to different learning styles. Visual learners, for example, benefit from reading along with spoken content. Educators can use captions to support inclusive classrooms and foster a sense of belonging among students with varying needs.
- **Employees and Professionals:** In workplace training scenarios, captions ensure that all employees can access instructional materials. Whether it's compliance training or professional development, captions create an inclusive environment where no one is left behind.
- **Global Audience:** In our connected world, captions make content more accessible for language learners. They also support audiences with diverse linguistic backgrounds who may struggle with accents, slang, or complex terminology.

- **General Public:** Captions provide practical benefits for anyone, from commuters watching videos in silence to parents juggling household noise while keeping up with the latest online content.

Captions are a universal tool, providing not only a richer experience but also the opportunity to learn, connect, and engage across barriers.

HOW TO ADD CAPTIONS TO YOUTUBE VIDEOS

Adding captions to YouTube videos is a straightforward process, but it requires careful attention to detail to ensure accuracy and usability. Here's a step-by-step guide:

- **Upload Your Video:** Before captions can be added, your video must be uploaded to YouTube. Log into **YouTube** account, click on the **Create** button, and select your video file. **Add title and description.** If preferred, add the video to a playlist to organize your content. Select an audience. Press Next.
- Click the Add button next to **Add Subtitles.** Three options are shown:
 1. Upload file - If you already have a caption file in formats like .SRT or .VTT, you can simply upload it. YouTube will sync the file with the video.
 2. Auto-sync – If you don't have a transcript or want to type manually, select Auto- sync to automatically generate captions.
 3. Type manually - This option allows you to listen to your video and manually type each line of dialogue or audio description.
- Proceed to click Done>Next.
- Select an option to make your video public, unlisted, or private. Save>Close

NOTE: Wait for captions to be generated. It could take a few minutes or up to 48 hours for longer videos.

ARE AUTO-GENERATED CAPTIONS ACCEPTABLE?

YouTube's auto-generated captions have come a long way, but they are far from perfect. While they can serve as a starting point, they should never be relied upon for finalized content. Here's why:

1. **Accuracy Issues:** Auto-generated captions often misinterpret words, especially technical jargon, names, or accents. These errors can distort the meaning of the video, leading to confusion or misinformation.
2. **Inaccessibility Risks:** Incorrect captions can be just as harmful as no captions at all. For example, if a deaf viewer relies on captions for understanding and the captions are inaccurate, the content becomes inaccessible.

3. **Legal Consequences:** Using unedited auto-captions for public-facing content may fail to meet accessibility compliance standards. This could expose creators or organizations to lawsuits and fines.

The bottom line: Auto-captions can save time, but they must be reviewed and corrected to meet accessibility standards and ensure inclusivity.

HOW TO EDIT YOUTUBE CAPTIONS

Editing captions on YouTube is an essential step in creating an accessible and professional video. Here's how you can refine your captions:

1. **Login** to your YouTube account
2. **Find YouTube Studio** by clicking on your Profile icon located at the top right corner of your screen. Select YouTube Studio
3. **Click on Subtitles** from the menu on the left.
4. **Select the Video** requiring caption edits.
5. **Edit Subtitles:** From the **Subtitles** column, locate the published (automatic captions) video and hover to find and click the pencil icon that appears to **Duplicate and Edit**. This creates a copy of the captions that you can modify.
6. **Make Edits:** Use YouTube's intuitive editor to:
 - Click Edit timings to correct transcription errors, punctuation, and capitalization.
 - Add missing text, such as descriptions of sound effects or background music.
 - Adjust the timing of captions to match the video's dialogue.
 - Click the Publish button at the top right corner of the screen to save changes once editing is complete.

TIPS FOR HIGH-QUALITY CAPTIONS

1. **Focus on Readability:** Use punctuation, proper capitalization, and spacing to make captions easy to follow. Break long sentences into shorter chunks for clarity.
2. **Describe Non-Verbal Audio:** Include descriptions of meaningful sounds, like [laughter], [applause], or [music], to provide context for viewers.
3. **Match Timing Precisely:** Ensure captions appear on-screen at the exact moment words are spoken. Misaligned captions can confuse viewers and detract from the content.
4. **Test Before Publishing:** Watch your video with captions turned on to ensure they are accurate, clear, and properly synchronized.

By investing the time to add and refine captions, you can create content that is not only legally compliant but also welcoming, engaging, and inclusive for all viewers.

TURNING ON AUTO CAPTIONS IN TEAMS OR ZOOM FOR LIVE PRESENTATIONS

Live captions are a powerful tool to make virtual meetings, presentations, and online classes more accessible. They help participants follow along with the content in real time, especially those who are deaf, hard of hearing, or language learners. Here's how to enable and use auto captions in **Microsoft Teams** and **Zoom** during live sessions.

WHY USE LIVE CAPTIONS?

1. **Accessibility:** Live captions ensure that all participants, regardless of their hearing ability, can fully engage in real-time discussions.
2. **Inclusivity:** They create an environment where language barriers are reduced, benefiting participants who are language learners.
3. **Engagement:** Captions help everyone stay focused, especially in noisy environments or when audio quality is less than perfect.
4. **Compliance:** For organizations and institutions, using live captions aligns with accessibility standards and demonstrates a commitment to equity.

HOW TO TURN ON AUTO CAPTIONS IN MICROSOFT TEAMS

Microsoft Teams provides built-in live captioning for meetings, webinars, and live events. Here's how to enable it:

1. **Start or Join a Meeting:** Open Microsoft Teams and either start a meeting or join an existing one.
2. **Enable Live Captions:**
 - During the meeting, click (...) **More** actions menu in the meeting toolbar.
 - Select **Language and speech>Show live captions**
 - Captions will start appearing at the bottom of the screen, showing the speaker's words in real time.
3. **Language Options:** Teams allows users to change the spoken language of captions for multilingual meetings. To do this, go back to **More Actions>Language and speech>Show live captions**. From the captions panel, click the **Caption settings** wheel and choose the desired spoken language.
4. **Participant Tip:** Meeting attendees can turn captions on or off for their own view without affecting others. Encourage participants to use this feature if they find it helpful.

HOW TO TURN ON AUTO CAPTIONS IN ZOOM

Zoom also offers automatic live captions to enhance accessibility for virtual events. Here's how to enable them:

1. **Enable Captions in Account Settings:**

- Before your session, log in to your Zoom account via a web browser.
 - Go to **Settings**, and under the **Meeting** tab, scroll to the **In Meeting (Advanced)** section.
 - Toggle on **Automated Captions**
 - Toggle **Full transcript** to allow viewing of full transcript in the in-meeting side panel
2. **Start or Join a Meeting:**
 - Once in the meeting, click the **(...) More** menu to select **Transcript** from the drop-down list of the floating toolbar.
 3. **Participant Options:**
 - Attendees can adjust their caption settings, including font size, by clicking the caret (^) next to the **Show Captions** button and selecting **Caption Settings**.
 4. **Save Transcripts (Optional):**
 - Hosts and participants can enable the option to save live transcripts to review the discussion later. Ensure that when participants save a transcript, ensure that it aligns with MC's privacy policies before using this feature.

BEST PRACTICES FOR USING LIVE CAPTIONS

1. **Inform Participants in Advance:**
 - Let attendees know that captions are available and explain how they can enable or adjust them for their view.
2. **Speak Clearly and Slowly:**
 - Automated captions rely on speech recognition technology, so speaking at a moderate pace with clear enunciation improves accuracy.
3. **Use a Quality Microphone:**
 - Good audio quality helps the captioning tool accurately interpret and transcribe your words.
4. **Monitor Accuracy:**
 - While auto captions are helpful, they may not always be 100% accurate, especially with technical jargon, accents, or rapid speech. Supplement with additional resources, like a transcript, when possible.
5. **Follow Up with Notes:**
 - For critical meetings or classes, share written notes or edited transcripts after the session to ensure that all participants have access to accurate information.

By enabling live captions in Microsoft Teams or Zoom, you create a more inclusive and supportive virtual environment that allows every participant to engage fully and equitably. These tools are quick to activate and have a significant impact, making them an essential feature for any online presenter or educator.

Yes/No	Mechanical Level	Routine Level	Refined Level
CLEAR Framework Component: Caption Everything			
	Minimum Requirement: Auto-generated captions; some audio content lacks transcripts.	Consistent Captioning All videos and audio have accurate captions and transcripts.	Enhanced Accessibility: Captions include speaker names, sound effects; customizable captions available.
	WCAG 2.2 Alignment: 1.2.1 (Audio-only and Video-only) 1.2.2 (Captions) 1.2.4 (Live Captions)	WCAG 2.2 Alignment: 1.2.3 (Audio Descriptions) 1.2.5 (Audio Description for video).	WCAG 2.2 Alignment: 1.2.5, 1.2.6 (Sign Language interpretation).
	Instructor Tip: Use captions for all videos and transcripts for audio.	Instructor Tip: Review captions for accuracy; ensure live content has captions.	Instructor Tip: Provide full captions and transcripts.
	Checklist: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ All videos have accurate captions. ✓ Audio files have accompanying transcripts. ✓ Non-speech audio (like sound effects) is described in captions. 	Checklist: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ - Captions are accurate and edited. ✓ Live video includes synchronized captions. 	Checklist: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Captions include speaker identification and sound effects. ✓ Customizable caption options (size, color) for users.