

Speech transcription guidelines for speeches of people who stutter

1. Introduction

- **Verbatim first.** Capture every word the participant utters, including false starts, filler words, and normal repetitions.
 - **Exception:** disfluency and stuttering-repetitions are rendered with *intelligent verbatim* (see §6).
 - Use **standard American spelling, capitalization, and punctuation** throughout.
 - **Do *not* segment** long turns into smaller sentences unless the speaker's intonation clearly marks a new utterance.
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2. Capitalization and spoken letter acronyms

Element	Rule	Example
Sentence starts & proper names	Capitalize first letter	<i>I've been reading a book about Sidney Poitier.</i>
Spoken letters & letter-style acronyms	Capitalize <i>each</i> letter and prefix with a tilde ~	<i>We spelled it ~J ~E ~S ~S ~Y ~E.</i>
	Well-known named entities or trademarks can be written in their Wikipedia standard spelling without '~'.	<i>My favorite sandwich is a ~BLT</i>
Word-style acronyms, i.e. acronyms that are pronounced as words	Write in conventional form, <i>no tilde</i>	<i>NASA, ASAP, HIPAA</i>

3. Numbers

1. Write numbers as *words* exactly as spoken.
 2. Hyphenate numbers between twenty-one and ninety-nine.
Example – “Put all of his money on red twenty-three”
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4. Contractions & Colloquialisms

Transcribe contractions such as ‘I’m’, ‘You’re’, and ‘gonna’ according to standard spelling. o
Examples

- *I'm staying up later at night.*
 - *It's actually changing*
 - *You're in a safe place*
 - *This is gonna be difficult.*
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5. Abbreviations in Personal Titles

Abbreviations are *only* allowed in titles (Dr., Mr., Mrs., Prof.). Everything else must be written out.

6. Disfluency Annotation

All disfluencies should live **inside parentheses (...)** and start with a tag of what disfluency it is in [].

The following disfluencies should be annotated along with these tags.

Disfluency	Tag	Description	Example
False Start	FS	Sentences and words that are cut short before completion. They should be transcribed as spoken. They should not be omitted. Mark them using parentheses	<i>([FS] It's in the) It takes place in the future</i> <i>([FS] I mean there's) Ask him some questions about that.</i> <i>but ([FS] um I just get) the time gets away from me</i>
Block	B	When a speaker halts or blocks before speaking the next word Also add its intensity number next to tag with a space 0 - None (less than 500 ms) 1 - Mild (500 - 1000 ms) 2 - Moderate (1 - 2 sec) 3 - Severe (>2 sec)	<i>Can you ([B 3]) pass the salt?</i>
Prolongation	P	When a speaker breaks off in the start of the word and prolongs the syllable Also add its intensity number next to tag with a space 0 - None (less than 500 ms) 1 - Mild (500 - 1000 ms) 2 - Moderate (1 - 2 sec) 3 - Severe (>2 sec)	<i>I think the ([P 2] sssssss) soup is too hot.</i> <i>Let's ([P 1] mmm) move the meeting</i>
Syllable Repetition	SR	When a speaker breaks off in the middle of the word and repeats the syllable. Separate each syllable with hyphen (-)	<i>My favorite ([SR 0] s-) sandwich is made by toasting bread</i> <i>I like ([SR 1] sh- sh-) Chicago</i>

		<p>Also add its intensity number next to tag with a space</p> <p>0 - None (once) 1 - Mild (repeat 2-3 times) 2 - Moderate (repeat 4 - 5 times) 3 - Severe (repeat > 5 times)</p>	<p><i>I'll choose the best of the ([SR 2] a- a-) available choices</i></p>
Multisyllable Repetition	MSR	<p>A word or phrase is repeated again. Separate each word or phrase with hyphen (-)</p> <p>Also add its intensity number next to tag with a space</p> <p>0 - None (once) 1 - Mild (repeat 2-3 times) 2 - Moderate (repeat 4 - 5 times) 3 - Severe (repeat > 5 times)</p>	<p><i>([MSR 0] And) And we would go on lots of trips</i></p> <p><i>what Boston looked like ([MSR 1] back) back then</i></p> <p><i>([MSR 2] what's the - what's the) What's the weather like today?</i></p>
Filler Words	FW	<p>Transcribe standardized spellings (uh, um, ah) inside parentheses.</p>	<p><i>And ([FW] uh) it's a dry humor</i></p>

7. Hard-to-Understand Speech

Use curly braces { } with one of three tags:

1. **{g: word}** – guess when you are fairly confident.
Example – She was my {g: idol}.
2. **{w: n}** – word-count when you can hear the number of words but not their content.
Example – Everything was {w: 3} yesterday.
3. **{u: }** – unintelligible when even the word count is unclear.
Example – Replace {u: } very tightly.

8. Punctuation Principles

- Use periods, question marks, or exclamation points to close utterances.
 - Commas aid intelligibility, especially in lists.
 - Standard U.S. quotation-mark conventions apply. *Example – He asked, “Are you working, or are you fishing?”*
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9. Errors & Non-Standard Usage

Never paraphrase or correct grammar. Transcribe exactly as spoken, even if ungrammatical.

10. What *Not* to Mark

Category	Guideline
Pauses	Ignore – do not insert ellipses or timestamps.
Background/environmental noise	Omit; note only in the <i>Comment</i> metadata field if remarkable.
Non-speech speaker noises (laughter, coughs, throat-clearing)	Phase 1: omit. (<i>Phase 2 will add [cough] & [throat clearing].</i>)
