

Why do so many groups fail at styling?

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One of the most basic things in fansubbing is subtitle styling. Softsubs are great because they can use a very wide range of colors and are easy to style in order to make them look good. In contrast, DVD subtitles, VobSubs, are fucking terrible - aliased piss-yellow subtitles are painful to look at. But they do one thing better than most fansub groups out there - font size and padding. With fansubs, this isn't the only problem - atrocious font choice and styling choices in general also plague many releases. One of the worst offenders in this category is [THORA](#) - While the fact that they do nice Blu-ray rips is awesome, their styling is more often than not absolute awful. Some sample pictures from THORA and others (click to view the original):



Seriously, THORA? Slightly yellow subtitles with blue borders and bright grey shadow? In a tiny font near the bottom of the screen? At least the font itself is good.



This one's from BiG-GuY's TokiKake BDrip, featuring a horrible font at a horribly small size at the very bottom of the screen. Try watching this a few meters away from the screen and you won't be able to read shit.



Another one from THORA. This time they've learned the art of padding, but the font size is still damn small. And seriously, grey subtitles with brown borders? Just throwing the main characters' hair colors as the default subtitle colors isn't a good idea, you know.



This one comes from Ayako. Not only is the font horribly unfitting, the strokes itself are thinner than the border widths combined, for Christ's sake. And once again it's hugging the very bottom of the screen and has a very tiny size.



Third one from THORA. Sure, the padding is fine, but DEAR FUCKING GOD WHAT THE HELL IS UP WITH THOSE COLORS? Light blue main color, brown border color and bright yellow shadow? What the flying fuck? That looks like something that came out from my ass after a night of heavy drinking. The font size is pretty small as well.



Final example, from the Death Note DVDrips by TSR (unfortunately, these are the only rips floating around). The font is fucking ridiculous for the show, it's fucking tiny and it's at the very bottom of the screen. Horrible.

Since so many people seem to fail at this, I decided to write this short guide for all you aspiring fansubbers:

Subtitle Styling 101

1. The very first thing you should do is make sure that the script resolution matches the video resolution. Use the Resample resolution function in Aegisub to do this.
2. [Use the overscan mask in Aegisub to help with padding.](#) Note that while overscan itself doesn't really matter for fansubs, the overscan mask is a great tool for padding since subtitles padded to be overscan-safe are simply easier to read. Personally I don't mind that much if the subtitles overlap the inner blue section horizontally, but you should stay out of the outer blue rectangle in all cases.
3. Choose a very light color, preferably pure white, for your main color.
4. Choose a notably darker color for the outline.
5. If you want to use a shadow, make it small and very dark - maybe even highly transparent. A shadow is **not** supposed to be a very light and bright color, nor should the shadow be huge.
6. Use a large enough font size. For 480p material, this is usually around 30-40pt, for 720p material, it's around 50-60, depending on the font and your preferences.
7. Make sure that your font has thick enough strokes. A good font choice is a sans serif or a slabserif font, probably bolded as well. The borders shouldn't be thicker than the strokes. What fonts **not** to use include Comic Sans, Kristen ITC, [whatever Chihiro used for Rosario+Vampire](#), all kinds of "decorative" fonts, etc.
8. Have some sense of style.

(Note: This guide is directly linkable. Just click the name.)

For example, the subtitles in the Underwater-Mahjong releases do not overlap the overscan areas, use white bolded sans serif fonts with black borders and no shadow at font size 37.



With properly styled subtitles, you don't need to move your eyes much in order to read them, they're easy to read allowing you to get through them as fast as possible. This in turn allows you to focus more on the onscreen action. The subtitles shouldn't also look distracting so that they're constantly bothering the viewer even after he/she has