



# Accessible Content Core Skill 7: Audio and Video

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Audio and video media content need to be accessible in different and alternative formats. Most people are used to hearing and seeing videos, but we must also ensure that videos are also accessible in other ways. There are four alternative formats that should be used to make audio and video content more accessible:

- [Captions](#)
- [Transcripts](#)
- [Audio Descriptions](#)
- [Sign Language Interpretations](#)

The [W3C Web Accessibility Initiative](#) provides more information with examples and other resources on making audio and video media accessible.

## Captions

Captions display all audio content from a video in text on the screen, including speech, sound effects and music. There are two types of captions:

1. **Closed Captions (CC)** - can be turned on or off by the user; and
2. **Open Captions (OC)** - are always visible as part of the video and cannot be turned off.

Closed captions are a good and essential practice for making video content more accessible. When possible though, open captions should be included with video content as a best practice. The benefits of captions for those who need them outweighs the inconvenience to those who may find them distracting.

Captions benefit people with and without disabilities by providing:

- Essential access for people who are Deaf or hard of hearing;
- Support for people with learning disabilities related to difficulties

- processing speech or audio-video media;
- Support for English language learners;
- A preferred way of processing information for people with reading/writing learning styles;
- A way to watch video content in quiet or noisy environments; and
- A solution to poor audio quality or sound-related technical difficulties.

Automatic live captions are now widely available as accessibility features of online video platforms such as Google Meet, Microsoft Teams and YouTube. However, always be mindful of caption quality and the accuracy of automatic caption and/or transcription software.

**Did you know?** The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) [standard for caption quality](#) of pre-recorded content is 100% accuracy. For live programming, 98% accuracy is required for captions in English and 85% accuracy for captions in French.

## Transcripts

Transcripts are the text version of audio content. Transcripts offer many of the same benefits as captions, but are often provided separately from the audio or video content. There are two types of transcripts:

1. **Basic transcripts** - are the audio content in text format; and
2. **Descriptive transcripts** - include the text for the audio content as well as the visual information needed to understand the content and context.

Audio-only content, like podcasts, must include a basic transcript. Transcripts can be included in the description for the video, the comments section of the video, or in a link to the transcript.

Audio-video content should include a descriptive transcript as a best practice.