

TC Sound – Transcribing Audio Collections Instructions Cheat Sheet

KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS

Start/Stop/Go Back	Timestamps/Silences	Playback Speed	Speakers Tags (specific names will be listed if applicable on project page)
Ctrl + Spacebar – Start/stop Playback	Ctrl + i --- insert timestamp	Ctrl + d – decrease playback speed	Ctrl + 1 – insert speaker 1
Ctrl + b – go back 10 seconds	Ctrl + s – insert silence (only for very long pauses)	Ctrl + u – increase playback speed	Ctrl + 2 – insert speaker 2
Ctrl + f – go forward 10 seconds		Ctrl + r – reset playback speed	Ctrl + 3 – insert speaker 3

***When in doubt—check back on TC sound segments that have already been completed or are in the “review” stage. Reviewing previously completed projects can help guide correct transcription practices. And reach out with questions anytime to transcribe@si.edu.**

Check out transcription.si.edu/audioinstructions for more info, including tutorial videos for transcribing sound projects.

Common Tags and Issues/Tips:

- **Filler sounds and reflexive speech (ums, uh, ughs):** only transcribe if used for stalling or for a significant pause in the conversation, it is not necessary to transcribe all instances, especially if there are many (try to limit this to 2-4 instances per segment)
- **Feedback words, agreement/disagreement in conversation:** If an affirmation such as “mm-hmm, uh-huh,” is spoken as a clear response/answer to a question please transcribe this, but if the speaker is simply saying this over and over again along with the conversation, it is not needed to mark this each time. You may also note/tag whether the feedback word is affirmative or negative. Ex: uh-huh [[affirmative]] or Mm-mm [[negative]]
- **Incomplete sentence, hanging phrase, parenthetical statement, or interruption:** end the phrase or statement with an em dash (--) . Please do not use ellipses (...) as this may indicate to a reader that something was left out of the transcription
- **Sounds (other than speaker words):** please indicate significant noises and sounds with brackets. Examples: [[laughter]], [[eerie music playing]], [[clapping]]. Coughing, sneezing, etc. does not have to be included in the transcription, nor does continuous background



noise (if desired, continuous background noise could be noted at the beginning of the segment, such as [[background talking, in crowded area throughout interview]] etc.)

- **Unintelligible words:** please indicate these with [[??]] so that other transcribers can easily locate missing areas of text; if it is impossible to hear what is being spoken please indicate this with [[inaudible]]
- **Cross talk/speaking over each other:** If speakers are consistently speaking over one another, please transcribe their speech as best you can on separate lines with their speaker tags and indicate that they are speaking over each other with [[Cross Talk]] or if applicable [[side conversation]]
- **Insert spaces and lines between each speaker/phrase as you transcribe – make it readable**
- **Timestamps = Ctrl + i** Good rule of thumb is to insert a timestamp every 3-5 seconds (or every 1-2 phrases spoken). Easiest way to do this is to transcribe text, then go back and play from beginning, inserting timestamps in the text where needed as you listen – check the preview after you save. Is text running too long and covering too much of the player == too few time stamps, so go back and insert more as you listen!
- **Unsure who's speaking?** You can always use curly brackets { } and Speaker 1, Speaker 2, or Unknown Speaker 1, etc. if it's unclear who is speaking, or if there are no specific speaker names listed for the project. Ex: {Speaker 1} {Unknown Speaker}. If you are able to identify a speaker that is not specifically named/listed for a project, let us know! We'll then be able to update the project information and create a speaker tag.
- **Numbers, dates, ordinals:** Please do not spell out numbers and dates unless the speaker does so. For example, normally transcribe "1941" or "22 years ago," unless the speaker says "in nineteen-hundred and forty-one." In that case, it's fine to spell out the date to indicate that is how it is being spoken. For instances of "first in line" or "1st in line" you can transcribe either way you'd like. The same goes for the "third of December" or "3rd of December." As long as it is clear to the reader what is being said, the spelling out of these words is up to you.

