

Captioning & Audio-Description Production Checklist

From transcription to one reusable caption file: produce captions, a transcript, and audio description for a course — and pass an accessibility audit. Target WCAG 2.1 AA.

A. Produce the caption file — the source of everything

- Transcribe the audio (an ASR draft is a starting point, not the finished track)
- Edit to a clean caption file: speaker labels + meaningful non-speech sound
- Author in WebVTT; keep SRT for interchange; convert to IMSC for adaptive streaming
- Set readable line breaks and tight timing to the audio

B. Caption quality — the 99% bar

- Accuracy ~99%: no more than ~15 errors per 1,500 words
- Synchronicity: captions stay in time with the audio
- Completeness: captions run start to finish, every speaker
- Placement: captions never cover the slide or key visuals

C. Closed vs open captions, and format

- Default to closed captions: toggle, multilingual, searchable, cheap edits
- Use open (burned-in) captions only where the player can't render a track
- One video carries multiple language tracks — the learner picks
- Never ship raw auto-captions as if they were compliant

D. Reuse: transcript and audio description

- Export the transcript from the caption file (near-free; Level A for audio-only)
- Make it a descriptive transcript: add the key on-screen visuals
- Audio description only where the picture shows what the audio doesn't (1.2.5 AA)
- Script narration to describe its own visuals — integrated, no extra cost