

Captioner interview questions

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What to expect

Captioner interviews typically assess your accuracy, speed, software proficiency and understanding of accessibility standards. You may be asked to complete a short transcription or captioning test as part of the process.

- **Process and workflow:** Questions about how you approach a captioning task from start to finish, including transcription, synchronisation and quality checks.
- **Behavioural:** Questions that ask you to describe past experiences, especially around deadlines, accuracy and problem solving.
- **Scenario:** Hypothetical situations, such as live captioning glitches or difficult audio, to see how you think on your feet.
- **Technical:** Questions about specific software and tools you use, and how you learn new ones.
- **Compliance and standards:** Questions about accessibility regulations and how you ensure your captions meet them.

The interview usually begins with a brief phone or video screen with a recruiter or hiring manager, followed by a practical captioning test. If you pass that, you will meet the team, often including a senior captioner or editor. Some employers combine the test and interview into a single session.

1. Walk us through your process for captioning a pre-recorded video from start to finish.

Why they ask

This reveals your workflow, efficiency and attention to detail.

How to structure your answer

Use a chronological walk-through. Start with preparation, then transcription, synchronisation, editing and final quality check.

Example answer

"First, I review the video to understand the content, speakers and any technical issues. I then transcribe the audio using a tool like Otter.ai or Adobe Premiere Pro's transcription feature. Next, I synchronise the captions with the video timestamps, breaking text into readable segments that match the speech. I edit for grammar, clarity and reading speed, following the client's style guide. Finally, I run a quality check, watching the captions back to catch any timing or spelling errors before delivery."

2. Tell us about a time you had to meet a very tight deadline for a captioning project. How did you manage it?

Why they ask

Captioners often work to broadcast or live deadlines, so this tests your time management and composure under pressure.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR: describe the situation, your task, the action you took, and the result.

Example answer

"I was asked to caption a 20-minute interview for a streaming platform with only two hours' notice. The audio had some background noise, so I first ran a quick transcription pass, then focused on cleaning up the tricky sections. I prioritised synchronisation and readability, and used keyboard shortcuts to speed up my editing. I delivered the captions 15 minutes before the deadline, and the client said they

were accurate and well-timed.”

3. Imagine you are captioning a live event and the audio drops out for several seconds. What do you do?

Why they ask

Live captioning can be unpredictable, and this tests your ability to stay calm and keep the captions useful.

How to structure your answer

Use a judgement-under-pressure structure: assess the situation, take immediate action, communicate, and recover afterwards.

Example answer

“I would immediately insert a placeholder like [audio dropout] so the audience knows there is a gap, and keep the captions flowing as best I can. If I can, I would alert the technical team via a pre-arranged signal or chat. Once the audio returns, I would resume captioning and note the timestamp so I can review the transcript later. After the event, I would check the recording and fill in any missing text to ensure the final captions are complete.”

4. Which captioning software are you most comfortable with, and how do you handle a tool that is new to you?

Why they ask

Employers want to know you can adapt to their specific software stack without extensive training.

How to structure your answer

Give a direct answer naming the tools, then describe a specific example of learning a new tool, and finish with your general approach.

Example answer

“I am most comfortable with Adobe Premiere Pro for post-production captioning, Otter.ai for transcription, and CaptionMaker for broadcast-style captions. When I had to learn YouTube Studio's caption editor for a new client, I spent an hour exploring the interface, watched a tutorial, and practised on a short clip. I apply the same approach to any new tool: start with the basics, test on a small file, and build up speed. I am confident I can pick up your software quickly.”

5. How do you ensure your captions comply with accessibility standards such as those set by the ACMA?

Why they ask

Compliance is non-negotiable in broadcast and streaming, so this tests your knowledge of regulations and quality control.

How to structure your answer

Explain your understanding of the standards, then give a concrete example of how you apply them.

Example answer

“I follow the ACMA captioning standards and the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, which cover accuracy, timing, and readability. In practice, I check that captions are synced within a fraction of a second, that reading speed is comfortable, and that all sound effects and speaker identifications are included. For example, on a recent documentary, I adjusted the reading speed for a fast-talking presenter and added descriptions for non-speech audio. I also keep up to date with any changes to the standards through industry newsletters.”

6. Describe a time you had to edit captions for clarity or reading speed without losing the original meaning.

Why they ask

Captioning is not just transcription; it is editing for the screen, and this tests your judgement and language skills.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR: situation, task, action, result.

Example answer

"I captioned a panel discussion where one speaker used a lot of jargon and spoke very quickly. The initial transcript was accurate but too dense for the screen. I edited the captions by shortening sentences, replacing jargon with plain English where possible, and splitting long captions into two or three lines. I kept the speaker's meaning intact by focusing on the key points. The result was captions that were easier to read and received positive feedback from the client."