

The reading speed of the “average” viewers (aged between 14–65, from an upper–middle socio–educational class) for a text of average complexity (a combination of formal and informal language) has been proven to range between 150–180 words per minute, i.e. between 2 1/2–3 words per second. This means that a full two line subtitle containing 14–16 words should remain on the screen for a maximum time of something less than 5 1/2 seconds. However, we would actually have to expand the estimate to around 6 seconds because one should also add about 1/4– 1/2 of a second that the brain needs to start processing the subtitle it has traced. It should be noted that equal to the importance of retaining a full two–line subtitle for at least 6 seconds to secure ample reading time, is the importance of keeping the same subtitle not more than 6 seconds because this would cause automatic re–reading of the subtitle, .especially by fast readers