

# GUIDELINES - Test 1

## USLS FDI GUIDELINES

1. Stutters: When someone repeats the same full word multiple times
  1. Ex: **I -- I -- I** don't know. (one-word stutter)
  2. Ex: **Do you -- do you** know why? (two-word stutter)
2. Partial words: When someone says an incomplete word. This word can add meaningful information or not.
  1. Ex: I went to the **con** -- conference. (not meaningful)
  2. Ex: His jacket was **purp** -- blue. (meaningful)
3. False starts: When someone begins a sentence and then quickly changes their train of thought.
  1. Ex: **Do you** -- when did you go there?
  2. Ex: **So how did** -- well, why did you go?
4. Filler words: Words that are said but add no substantive meaning to the sentence.
  1. Ex: I think, **like**, that, **like**, he is super, **like**, cool and smart so, **you know**, I was, you know really interested

### For witnesses:

Stutters	Include all
Partial Words	Include all (should have single hyphen attached; see below)
False Starts	Include all
Filler Words	Include all
Uh, um	Never include

### For lawyers / court personnel:

Stutters	Include all
Partial Words	Include all (Should have single hyphen attached; see below)
False Starts	Include all
Filler Words	Include all
Uh, um	Never include

\*\*\*How to handle a partial word\*\*\*

Attach a single hyphen to the partial word, then a space, then a double dash, then a space, then continue on with sentence.

Ex. - My com- -- Security.

Re- -- what county was that again?

One-letter sounds will not be included as partial words.

**DO:** I went to the groc -- supermarket.

**DO NOT:** I went to the g -- grocery store.

**Slang** such as gonna, y'all, gotcha, wanna, ain't, and 'cause **are allowed** for any speaker. Use these spellings.

If any speaker says some kind of affirmative noise (aha, umhmm, etc.), write that as uh-huh.

If any speaker says some kind of negative noise (uh-uh, nuh-uh, etc.), write that as huh-uh.

If a speaker says "yeah" or "yep" or some variation of that, please write that and **DO NOT** change it to "yes."

If someone spells out a name or term, please write it all caps and separated by dashes, with a comma between the names.

For example: My name is Sarah West, S-A-R-A-H, W-E-S-T.

This will often come up (for current remote proceedings): Florida Supreme Court Administrative Order No. AOSC20-23 (keep it all together like this)

Feedback noises like "uh-huh" from the attorney will not be included during a witness's answer. Feedback words like "okay" and "all right" will always be included.

**DO NOT:**

A: So I went to the store --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: -- and then home again and --

Q: Okay.

A: -- that's it.

**DO:**

A: So I went to the store and then home again and --

Q: Okay.

A: -- that's it.

In legal contexts, there are two kinds of speech: colloquy and Q&A.

Q&A is a question and answer sequence where one lawyer is questioning the witness about **facts pertinent to the case** (examination). The lawyer asking the questions is given the speaker name Q (no period). The witness answering the question is given the speaker name A (no period).

A deponent will often be asked to show a form of identification at the start of a remote deposition.

When they do so, type, on its own line (with speaker ID of TITLE):

(Witness presented government-issued identification and identity is verified.)

## Swearing-In

When the deponent is sworn in, the verbatim language of the swearing-in should be typed exactly as they are said. Later on, immediately prior to the Q&A actually starting, type the following lines:

THEREUPON, (in all caps - use TITLE for speaker ID)  
FIRST LAST (deponent's name in all caps - use CENTER for  
speaker ID)  
was called as a witness and after having been first (use TITLE for speaker ID)  
duly sworn, was deposed and testified as follows: (use TITLE for speaker ID)

This will be followed by an examination line, as specified below:

### The order of examinations is:

EXAMINATION: When a new attorney begins questioning (from either side), put EXAMINATION on its own line (and use CENTER for the speaker ID)

FURTHER EXAMINATION: Use when an attorney (from either side) begins a SECOND round of questioning (and use CENTER for the speaker ID)

Follow EXAMINATION/FURTHER EXAMINATION lines with a by-line to show who is doing the questioning:

BY MR. SMITH: (use TITLE for speaker ID)

Then Q&A begins.

This will look like (when the first attorney begins questioning, for example):

THEREUPON,  
JOHN SMITH  
was called as a witness and after having been first  
duly sworn, was deposed and testified as follows:  
EXAMINATION  
BY MS. THOMAS:  
My first question, Mr. Smith, is...  
Well, I first met him when...

Colloquy is anything else. Here are a few scenarios of colloquy:

1. Discussion about something unrelated to the case (breaks, lunches, waters, parking, small talk)
2. Discussion about something physical in the courtroom (move here, it's cold, technical issues)
3. If the lawyers are talking to each other or other court personnel
4. Any third-party interruption during Q&A (objections, court reporter asking to repeat)

5. A witness answering a question posed by someone OTHER THAN the questioning attorney in an examination
6. The lawyer saying "that's all I have" or "no further questions" to end his/her examination
7. **The lawyer's introductory instructions to the deponent should be in colloquy.**

**IMPORTANT\*\*\*\*\* Q&A must always begin with a "Q" \*\*\*\* please read below**  
**If Q&A is interrupted by colloquy, such as an objection by the other attorney, etc, and the witness continues to answer in the midst of this, their speaker ID should be THE WITNESS and not "A." Q&A only resumes when the attorney asks their next question. Please insert a by-line to remind us who is doing the questioning before the Q&A resumes after a colloquy interruption of any length.**

Speakers are noted as (in all caps):

- THE WITNESS: for the witness (if they speak before being sworn in, they're still THE WITNESS)
- THE REPORTER: for the court reporter (swearing in, reading back questions, getting correct spellings, ordering transcripts at the end)
- THE VIDEOGRAPHER: for the videographer (announcing on/off the record and/or calling a case)
- THE INTERPRETER: for the interpreter
- MS./MR. [LAST NAME]: for counsel and anyone not listed above. If two people have same last name, like siblings, use first name as well (MR. JOHN SMITH and MR. KEVIN SMITH)

PLEASE NOTE: when a videographer is present (which is noted on the documentation - it'll say the Videographer's name and typically on the notice it'll say VIDEO DEPOSITION), they are usually the ones giving the introduction and also giving the on and off the record times as well as the conclusion time on the record, not the reporter. When a videographer is not present and the audio reflects these same sayings, then it would be the reporter.

**Example:**

In this examination, Mr. Kline is the questioning attorney during Q&A. He is interrupted by the opposing counsel, Mr. Jones.

Q: So when did you leave your apartment?

A: Around noon.

Q: So you left your apartment around lunchtime?

MR. JONES: Objection. Asked and answered.

MR. KLINE: You're right. I apologize. You know, let's take a break for lunch. I think the witness is hungry.

THE WITNESS: I am. Thank you so much.

## **Paragraphing**

Do create new paragraphs in a speaker's text if they speak for more than a few sentences. Try to break the paragraphs up logically. To paragraph, press Enter then put PARAGRAPH in the speaker ID box.

Strike that -- always paragraph after someone says "Strike that."

## **Beginning and Ending of Transcript**

### **Beginning --**

For remote (Zoom-type) depositions:

For the very first line of the transcript, on a TITLE speaker ID line, type the following and fill in the reporter's name as well as any certification acronym (CET, CER, etc.) from the attached documentation:

Remote video teleconference deposition taken under oath before XXXX XXXXX, CER and Notary Public in and for the State of Florida at Large, in the above cause.

\*\*After this intro paragraph, type seven hyphens with a space between each on a new line, and use CENTER for the speaker ID for this.

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**Ending --** After the last line of speech, insert two BLANK lines using speaker ID of TITLE.

Then: (this is specific to a remote proceeding - please remove "Remote video teleconference" if it's in-person)

On a TITLE speaker ID line, type the following and fill in the end time from attached documentation (or what the videographer/reporter says):

(Remote video teleconference deposition concluded at X:XX a.m./p.m. ET)

Follow this with, also on a TITLE speaker ID line, one of the following depending on if the deponent chose to read or waive the reading of the deposition:

(Reading and signing of the Deposition Transcript was requested by the witness and all parties.)

(Reading and signing of the Deposition Transcript was waived by the witness and all parties.)

## **Inaudibles / Phonetics / No verbal response**

1. If you absolutely cannot hear or understand a word, please mark it **inaudible** using the inaudible button at the top of your screen.

2. If you hear a word or name, but you cannot confirm the spelling then please mark it **phonetic**. There is no button for phonetic, so please write (phonetic). You only need to mark the first instance of the unknown word with (phonetic), not each time. It will really help your reviewer if you highlight each instance. **Hotkey F6**

\*\* Before you mark something phonetic, spend a minute Googling it or looking at the notes.

3. If a speaker is asked a question but does not answer out loud, mark their lack of a verbal response. Put (No verbal response.). **Hotkey F8**

For example:

Q: Do you believe the accident was his fault?

A: (No verbal response.)

Q: All right. We'll move on.

## Sic / Sound effects / noise interruptions

1. Sic is an abbreviation of Latin (*sic erat scriptum*, "thus it was written") and signifies a mistake made by the original speaker, not the transcriber. Do not use this very often. Do not use [sic] for common made-up words (thingy, guesstimate) or poor grammar. Use it when you are fairly sure based on context that the speaker has used the wrong word. If the incorrect statement is corrected immediately after the speaker says it (by themselves or someone else), then no [sic] is needed. **Hotkey F7**

For example:

A: I moved here from Dayton last year.

Q: Why did you decide to leave Daytona [sic] last year?

2. When a speaker makes a sound effect to describe something instead of words (such as the sound of brakes or a baby crying), replace the sound itself with (sound effect). **Hotkey Shift F5** If they say a word that can be easily spelled out, do so, and surround it with quotes: I slammed the book, "bam," on the table.

For example:

Q: What happened after you saw his car pull out?

A: I turned my wheel and hit the brakes. It was like (sound effect), then I slid off the side of the road.

3. In general, we do not include bodily function noises in the transcript. If someone sneezes or coughs and **no one acknowledges it, responds to it, or says anything about it, ignore it** -- even if it is a miscellaneous non-bodily sound such as a telephone ringing or strange buzzing, the same rules apply. If the interruption is acknowledged, you must put in a notation. Below is a list of common notations:

- (sneezes) **Hotkey Shift F6**
- (coughs) **Hotkey Shift F7**

- (phone rings) **Hotkey Shift F8**

\*\* Do not put in a notation for laughter or whispers.

\*\*\* If someone belches or burps and it is acknowledged, use (coughs).

## Off the record

If an attorney or the videographer says they are going off the record, put the off-the-record on its own line using speaker ID of CENTER. Follow it immediately with an on-the-record done the same way, also on its own line:

(Off the record at X:XX a.m./p.m.)

\*CENTER

(On the record at X:XX a.m./p.m.)

\*CENTER

## Other parentheticals

(XX exited the proceedings.) \*CENTER speaker ID line

(XX entered the proceedings.)

(Cross-Talk) - use this when two or more people are talking at once for more than a few words and (inaudible)(s) would not cover it sufficiently. Put parenthetical on its own CENTER speaker ID line.

## Certified questions / objections (Hotkey Shift F3 and F4) -- put on a CENTER speaker ID line

An attorney may sometimes ask to certify a question or an objection, mark a parenthetical just above the question or objection. Sometimes they will later ask to mark a previous question or objection, so you will have to go back and insert it.

Example 1:

Q It sounds like the business stayed afloat.

A It did okay, I guess.

MR. GOME: I'd like the certify the next question.

(CERTIFIED QUESTION)

Q Did your parents loan you money for the business?

A: I don't want to get my parents involved.

Example 2:

(CERTIFIED OBJECTION)

MS. TOMBS: We would like to mark Exhibit 7 as the Manatee County ENS EOB and bill.

MR. GOLD: Objection. We're not going to attach it and produce it. We've already objected in discovery.

MS. TOMBS: We'll just certify that objection and bring it up if we need to later.

## Marking exhibits

When a lawyer wishes to mark an exhibit for identification for the record, they will say so and you will need to include a parenthetical to show this. The lines where the lawyer talks about marking the exhibit should be in colloquy even if they're in the midst of Q&A. Use CENTER for the speaker ID:  
(Exhibit 1 was marked for identification.) \*CENTER

If several exhibits are marked at once, they can be combined in the same parenthetical:  
(Exhibits 7 and 8 were marked for identification.)  
(Exhibits 2 through 4 were marked for identification.)

- If it's very clear that the exhibit was marked prior to going on the record, no parenthetical is needed. When in doubt, put the parenthetical.
- This rule also applies if you think the exhibit may have been marked prior to the part of the job you're working on, but you're not sure. When in doubt, put the parenthetical even if there's a chance it may be a duplicate.

BY MR. SMITH:

Q: Is this the July '07 medical report you were referring to?

A: Yes, it is.

Q: Okay.

MR. SMITH: I'll mark your Notice of Deposition as Exhibit 1.

(Exhibit 1 was marked for identification.)

BY MR. SMITH:

Q: Now, I believe you mentioned that you've seen this medical record before; is that right?

A: Yes, that's right. I've seen it before.

Party names will be included in the exhibit parenthetical **ONLY** if more than one side uses the same number/letter designation.

DO: If both the plaintiff and the defense mark an exhibit 1, mark as so:

(Plaintiff Exhibit 1 was marked for identification.)

(Defense Exhibit 1 was marked for identification.)

## Playbacks or readbacks

Sometimes an attorney will ask the reporter to repeat a question or answer that happened earlier in the proceedings. This is considered a readback or playback. If the reporter reads the questions back, it is a readback. If the reporter plays the video or audio of the question back, it is a playback. Do not transcribe the actual readback/playback, instead put the following parenthetical on a TITLE speaker ID line: (REPORTER PLAYS BACK REQUESTED TESTIMONY) **Hotkey F12** or (REPORTER READS BACK REQUESTED TESTIMONY) **Hotkey F11**.

## Redactions:

Nothing is redacted regularly, however if an attorney requests for something to be redacted from the record, please do so.

1) To redact a Social Security number, please use the following format: XXX-XX-XXXX. If they ask to redact all but the last four, keep it XXX-XX-1234

2) To redact a minor's name, use their initials.

If the minor's name is Mary Smith, then every time the lawyer says Mary in the audio, write M.

If the lawyer says Mary Smith then write M.S.  
3) To redact a birthday, please use the following format: XX-XX-XXXX.

**PLEASE NOTE:** If they say something and then "strike that," write what was said and the strike that. That does not count as a redaction request.

For example:  
MS. JOHNSON: What is your Social Security?  
MR. KLINE: XXX-XX-XXXX.

For example:  
MR. SMITH: I'd request that Mr. Doe's name is redacted for the record. What is your daughter's name and age, John?  
MR. DOE: Her name is K.L. and she is 15 years old.

### **Punctuation rules:**

- Never use an exclamation point.
- AOSC20-23 should be written all together with no spaces. Also for other similarly-formatted codes, etc.
- For a polite request, end in a period, not a question mark. Ex. - And may I see your driver's license, please. Can you spell that last name for me, please.
- Capitalize Plaintiff/Defendant. Do not capitalize counsel.
- Double dashes with a space on either side ( -- ) should be used for a change in thought mid-sentence, an interruption, as well as resuming the rest of a sentence after being interrupted. Single dash should be stuck to partial words, followed by space, then double dash, space, then rest of sentence. Outlined at beginning of guidelines with examples also.
- Ellipses should be used when someone trails off at the end of a line without completing their sentence.
- Do not end sentences with "so" or "or". Use an ellipses (...) to show that it trails off.
- Use "vs." when they're citing a case name, including the case at hand. Spell out "versus" if used in a general way.
- Capitalize brand name drugs. Generic drug names should not be capitalized. Research to find out which one it is. Some common generic: aspirin, ibuprofen, acetaminophen, codeine, hydrocodone. Brand name examples: Advil, Tylenol, Vicodin, OxyContin, Z-PAK, Percocet, Xanax, Valium.
- Use commas to separate address, city, and state.
- Capitalize document names - Assignment of Benefits, Notice of Deposition
- Put commas around "like" when used in this way: "So when I saw her she was, like, acting strangely."
- Use the Oxford comma. In a list of three items or more, you need to put a comma between the second and third item (For example: I have apples, oranges, and bananas.
- Do not put commas around "kind of" or "sort of" in most cases, as it interrupts the flow of the sentence unnecessarily.
- If a speaker is illustrating a sound and it's an easily-written word (as opposed to more of a sound effect), type it out and use quotes around it.  
Ex. - I slammed the book, "bam," on the table.
- Do not use quotes around "yes" or "no," "uh-huh" or "huh-uh" in the attorney's introductory instructions.

- Put quotation marks outside of punctuation. Quote ONLY something that is being read directly from a document or quoting VERBATIM something that was said before. When a quote is interrupted, put the double dashes outside of the quotation marks.

For example:

Q: At the top, it says, "Patient complained" --

A: Where?

Q: -- "of lower back pain."

- Use a comma between yes/no and names or terms of address like sir. (For example: Yes, sir. No, Doctor.)
- Use a comma before the word "so" if "so" means therefore. If "so" means "so that" or explains the first part of the clause, it will not have a comma before it.

For example:

I was eating dinner early, so I couldn't have been driving at that time.

I was eating dinner early so I wouldn't get hungry later.

- Use a semicolon for a tag question of three words (ie. ;is that correct? ;do you recall? etc.) Use a comma for one- or two-word tag questions. If it's four words or more, it should be a separate sentence at that point.
- Use a colon in the following circumstances:

Example 1: My question was: Why did you do that?

Example 2: I asked you this: Did you contact the police?

- If you have the phrase "Can you state your name for the record" use **a period** NOT a question mark.
- Do not capitalize a word that comes after a double dash unless it's a name or proper noun.
- When writing Exhibit number #, do not capitalize the "n" in number.

Parties will be capitalized if used as a term of address or a proper noun ONLY

DO: What do you think, Defense?

DO NOT: What does the Defense think?

Job titles will not be capitalized.

DO: I am the assistant manager.

DO NOT: I am the Assistant Manager.

Divisions and departments will be capitalized.

DO: This is the Florida Department of Workmans' Comp.

DO NOT: This is the Florida department of workmans' comp.

## Numbers / Times / Miscellaneous

There are two kinds of numbers: identifiers and quantifiers.

Identifiers are numbers which answer the question "which one?" are **always in digits**. (For example: which page? Page 5. which exhibit? Exhibit 3)

Quantifiers are numbers which answer the question "how many/how much?". The rules for quantifiers are below. (how many kids? Eight kids. How many minutes ago? 30 minutes)

Quantifiers: Numbers zero through ten should be written out in words. Anything 11 and up is in digits **except at the beginning of a sentence**.

**Spell out numbers at the beginning of a sentence with the exception of phone numbers, addresses, and years. (Please ask if you come across something from a different category that seems unreasonable to spell out.**

List numbers or enumerations will be spelled out.

**DO: So rule number one of depros is don't talk when I'm talking. Rule two is don't guess.**

**DO NOT: So rule number 1 of depros is don't talk when I'm talking. Rule 2 is don't guess.**

Times are written out X:XX, so 5:00 and not 5. You can include a.m. or p.m. if they say it, but do not write "o'clock" even if they do say it.

Dates are written using slashes, not dashes (10/3/98)

Do not use a dash to indicate ranges. If they say "nine to five," it should be 9:00 to 5:00.

Ages, exhibit numbers, pain scale numbers, height, page numbers, and decimals are **ALWAYS** digits.

If a date is written in Month Day Year format, do not include "th", "st", or "rd". (For example, January 23rd, 2018 would be January 23, 2018). If it is just Month Day or the speaker includes "the" or "of" in the middle, write it as they say it. (For example, if the speaker says "June the first of 2018", it would be transcribed "June the 1st of 2018")

Partial years are written with an apostrophe (For example: '92, the '60s)

Money: \$42 (no .00 needed for round number amounts)  
42 bucks (If they say "bucks," write "bucks." Do not use \$ unless they say "dollars.")  
\$42.67  
\$42,000  
\$42 million (billion, etc.)  
\$42,100,000 (if they say "forty-two million one hundred thousand dollars")  
\$42.1 million (if they say "forty-two point one million dollars")  
\$1 to 2 million (if they say "one to two million dollars")  
\$0.67 (if they say "67 cents")

## Glossary

There is now a feature on the platform called the Glossary. You can see a box on the left side of your screen below the audio tags where all transcribers who are working on different parts of the same parent file can write entities in real time to help maintain file consistency across the parts. When you are transcribing, any name, address, place, or non-standard term (legal, medical jargon etc.) should be added here. When you add a term, you can now choose one of four options to explain how you have confirmed the spelling of this term. The BEST PRACTICE is to always double check and find a reliable link online, even if something is already in the documentation. (Documentation can sometimes have typos or mistakes)

Example: If the speaker is talking about Ted Bundy, you will need to add the name Ted Bundy to the glossary, Google to see how to properly write his name, and paste a link confirming it once you choose the link.

If you cannot confirm the spelling, write (phonetic) after the word in the body of the transcript.

You **do not** need to highlight the term in the text and provide the link. The glossary is the place to confirm terms.

## Interpreters

If the interpreter does a literal translation in the 1st person (speaking for the witness) then it is as though the witness spoke and the speaker ID is A (or THE WITNESS if colloquy)

Q: What is your date of birth?  
A: My birthday is October 15, 1978.

Here the lawyer asked a question, the interpreter translated the question into the foreign language, the witness answered in the foreign language, and the interpreter translated the witness's answer into English.

If the interpreter does a non-literal translation and uses the 3rd person, then the speaker ID is THE INTERPRETER.

MR. WALL: Ask her what her date of birth is.  
THE INTERPRETER: She says October 15, 1978.

Here the lawyer asked, the interpreter translated into the foreign language, the witness answered in the foreign language, and the interpreter paraphrased (3rd person) the witness's answer into English.

If the limited-English proficiency speaker (LEP) generally speaks in a foreign language, but the answer in English at times then do it this way.

Q: Do you understand and speak English?

A: Just a little (in English).

That way we know the witness said it themselves and not the interpreter for them.