**You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 1-14 which are based on Reading**

**Passage 1 below.**

**Working in the movies**



**Subtitling** is an exciting part of the translation profession. Melanie Leyshon talks to

Virginie Verdler of London translation company VSI about the glamour and the grind.

When people ask French translator Virginie Verdier what she does for a living, it

must be tempting to say enigmatically: ‘Oh me? I’m in the movies’. It’s **strictly true**,

but her starring role is behind the scenes. As translating goes, it doesn’t get more

entertaining or g**lamorous** than subtitling films. If you’re very lucky, you get to work

on the new blockbuster films before they’re in the cinema, and if you’re just plain

lucky, you get to work on the blockbuster movies that are going to video or DVD.

Virginie is quick to **point out** that this is as exciting as any translating job. 'You work

had. It's not all entertainment as you are doing the translating. You need all the skills

of a good translator and a top-notch editor. You have to be precise and. of course,

much more **concise** than in traditional translation work.'

The process starts when you get the original script and a tape. ‘We would start with

translating and adapting the film script. The next step is what we call ‘timing’, which

means synchronising the subtitles to the dialogue and pictures.’ This task requires

discipline. You play the film, listen to the voice and the subtitles are up on your

screen ready to be timed. You insert your subtitle when you hear the corresponding

dialogue and delete .it when the dialogue finishes. The video tape carries a time

code which runs in hours, minutes, seconds and frames. Think of it as a clock. The

subtitling unit has an insert key to capture the time code where you want the subtitle

to appear. When you press the delete key, it captures the time code where you want

the subtitle to disappear. So each subtitle would ‘have an ‘in’ point and an ‘out’ point

which represent the exact time when the subtitle comes in and goes out. This

process is then followed by a manual review, subtitle by subtitle, and time- codes are

adjusted to improve synchronisation and respect shot changes. This process involves playing the film literally frame by frame as it is essential the subtitles respect the visual rhythm of the film.’

Different subtitlers use different techniques. ‘I would go through the film and do the

whole translation and then go right back from the beginning and start the timing

process. But you could do it in different stages, translate let’s say 20 minutes of the

film, then time this section and translate the next 20 minutes, and so on. It’s just a

different method.’

For **multi-lingual** projects, the timing is done first to create what is called a **‘spotting**

**list’**, a subtitle template, which is in effect a list of English subtitles pre-timed and

edited for translation purposes. This is then translated and the timing is adapted to

the target language with the help of the translator for quality control.

‘Like any translation work, you can’t hurry subtitling,’ says Virginie. ‘If subtitles are

translated and timed in a rush, the quality will be affected and it will show.’ Mistakes

usually occur when the translator does not master the source language and

misunderstands the original dialogue. ‘Our work also involves checking and

reworking subtitles when the translation is not up to standard. However, the reason

for redoing subtitles is not just because of poor quality translation. We may need to

adapt subtitles to a new version of the film: the time code may be different. The film

may have been edited or the subtitles may have been created for the cinema rather

than video**. If subtitles were done** for cinema on 35mm, **we would need** to reformat

the timing for video, as subtitles could be out of synch or too fast. If the translation is

good, we would obviously respect the work of the original translator.’

On a more practical level, there are general subtitling rules to follow, says Virginie.

‘Subtitles should appear at the bottom of the screen and usually in the centre.’ She

says that different countries use different standards and rules. In Scandinavian

countries and Holland, for example, subtitles are traditionally left justified. Characters

usually appear in white with a thin black border for easy reading against a white or

light background. We can also use different colours for each speaker when subtitling

for the hearing impaired. Subtitles should have a maximum of two lines and the

maximum number of characters on each line should be between 32 and 39. Our

company standard is 37 (different companies and countries have different

standards).’

Translators often have a favourite genre, whether it’s war films, musicals, comedies

(one of the most difficult because of the subtleties and nuances of comedy in

different countries), drama or corporate programmes **( parallel Structures)** . Each requires a certain tone

and style. ‘VSI employs American subtitlers, which is incredibly useful as many of the

films we subtitle are American,’ says Virginie. ‘For an English person, it would not be

so easy to understand the meaning behind typically American expressions, and

vice-versa.’

**Questions 1-5**

Use **Complete the flow chart below.  
NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** from the passage for each answer.  
Write your answers in blank spaces next to 1-5 in your answer sheet.

**The Subtitling Process**

Stage 1: Translate and adapt the script

Stage 2: 1……………….………. matching the subtitles to what said. Involves recording time codes by using the 2…………………………………..and…………………………. keys.

Stage 3: 3……………………. in order to make the 4…………..……………………………. better

**Multi-lingual project**

Stage 1: Produce something known as a 5………………………………………………………..and translate that

**Questions 6-9**

**Do the following statements agree with the information given in Reading Passage 1?**

In boxes 6-9 on your answer sheet write

**TRUE**, if the statement agrees with the information

**FALSE**, if the statement contradicts the information

**NOT** **GIVEN**, if there is no information on this

6 For translators, all subtitling work on films is desirable.

7 Subtitling work involves a requirement that does not apply to other translation work.

8 Some subtitling techniques work better than others.

9 Few people are completely successful at subtitling comedies.

**Questions 10-13**

Complete the sentences below with words from Reading Passage I.

Use **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** for each answer.

Write your answers in blank spaces 10—13 on your answer sheet.

10 Poor subtitling can be a result of the subtitler not being excellent at…………………..…….

11 To create subtitles for a video version of a film, it may be necessary to………………….…..

12 Subtitles usually have a………………………………………. around them.

13 Speakers can be distinguished from each other for the benefit of…………………………………

## Answers

### Working in the movies Reading Answers (Passage 1)

#### Questions 1-5

1.

**Answer:** timing

**Question Type:** Flowchart Completion

**Answer location:** Paragraph C, line 2

**Answer explanation:** In the reference, paragraph author mentions that **“this process is then followed by a manual review, subtitle by the subtitle, and time- codes are adjusted to improve synchronization and respect shot changes. This process involves playing the film frame by frame as it is essential the subtitles respect the visual rhythm of the film.”** ‘Synchronising the subtitles to the dialogue and pictures’ means ‘matching the subtitles to what is said and seen’.

2.

**Answer:** insert; delete

**Question Type:** Flowchart Completion

**Answer location:** Paragraph B, line 5

**Answer explanation:** According to a line in the given paragraph **“you insert your subtitle when you hear the corresponding dialogue and delete it when the dialogue finishes. The videotape carries a time code that runs in hours, minutes, seconds and frames. Think of it as a clock. The subtitling unit has an insert key to capture the time code where you want the subtitle to appear. When you press the delete key, it captures the time code where you want the subtitle to disappear.”** You press the insert key to record the time on the tape when you want the subtitle to appear on the screen, and the delete key to record the time on the tape when you want it to disappear from the screen.

3.

**Answer:** (a) manual review

**Question Type:** Flowchart Completion

**Answer location:** Paragraph C, line 2

**Answer explanation:** If you read thoroughly, it is mentioned that **“this process is then followed by a manual review, subtitle by the subtitle, and time- codes are adjusted to improve synchronization and respect shot changes.”** After setting the places where each subtitle appears and disappears, you then check each one by (manually) pressing the necessary keys.

4.

**Answer:** synchronization

**Question Type:** Flowchart Completion

**Answer location:** Paragraph C, line 2

**Answer explanation:** The said paragraph states that **“this process is then followed by a manual review, subtitle by the subtitle, and time- codes are adjusted to improve synchronization and respect shot changes.”** While checking all the subtitles, some may be ‘adjusted’ (changed a bit) to ‘improve synchronization’ – to make sure that the subtitles match the dialogue and the pictures better.

5.

**Answer:**spotting list

**Question Type:** Flowchart Completion

**Answer location:** Paragraph C, 2nd last line

**Answer explanation:** The answer is clearly mentioned in the said paragraph and line. You must note the paraphrasing here. In the passage, it is said that **“it’s just a different method.’ For multi-lingual projects, the timing is done first to create what is called a ‘spotting list’, a subtitle template, which is in effect a list of English subtitles pre-timed and edited for translation purposes.”** All the subtitles are in English, all timed to fit in at the correct places in the film; these subtitles are then translated into the required language by a translator, who does not have to fit them into the correct places because this has already been done.

6.

**Answer:** TRUE

**Question Type:** True/False/Not Given Questions

**Answer location:** Paragraph A, line 2

**Answer explanation:** A line in the said paragraph discusses that **“as translating goes, it doesn’t get more entertaining or glamorous than subtitling films. If you’re very lucky, you get to work on the new blockbuster films before they’re in the cinema, and if you’re just plain lucky, you get to work on the blockbuster movies that are going to video or DVD.”** The writer says that if you work as a translator, there is nothing more ‘entertaining or glamorous’ than subtitling films. The best work is on new blockbuster films before they come out, but you are also lucky if you work on films being translated for video or DVD. All translators, therefore, want to do any work that involves subtitling films.

7.

**Answer:** TRUE

**Question Type:** True/False/Not Given Questions

**Answer location:** Paragraph B, last line

**Answer explanation:** Author states that **“you have to be precise and, of course, much more concise than in traditional translation work”**, you have to say things in fewer words than in traditional translation work.

8.

**Answer:** FALSE

**Question Type:** True/False/Not Given Questions

**Answer location:** Paragraph C, line 5

**Answer explanation:** If you read thoroughly, there’s a line in the said paragraph that describes **“but you could do it in different stages, translate let’s say 20 minutes of the film, then time this section and translate the next 20 minutes, and so on. It’s just a different method.”** Two different methods are described. The second is said to be ‘just a different method’, which means that it is neither better nor worse than the first. It is simply a different approach. The two methods are therefore equally effective.

9.

**Answer:**NOT GIVEN

**Question Type:** True/False/Not Given Questions

**Answer location:** Paragraph F, line 1

**Answer explanation:** The opening line of paragragph F states that **“translators often have a favourite genre, whether it’s war films, musicals, comedies (one of the most difficult because of the subtleties and nuances of comedy in different countries).”** Comedies are said to be particularly difficult to translate and provide subtitles for, but we are not told whether or not only a few people manage to do it successfully.

10.

**Answer:** the source language

**Question Type:** Sentence Completion

**Answer location:** Paragraph D, line 2

**Answer explanation:** Paragraph  states that **“mistakes usually occur when the translator does not master the source language and misunderstands the original dialogue.”** If the translator ‘does not master’ (is not excellent at) the source language, they will make mistakes when subtitling.

11.

**Answer:**reformat the timing

**Question Type:** Sentence Completion

**Answer location:** Paragraph D, last line

**Answer explanation:** **“If subtitles were done for cinema on 35mm, we would need to reformat the timing for video, as subtitles could be out of synch or too fast. If the translation is good, we would obviously respect the work of the original translator.’”** Here the timing of the subtitles has to be changed when a video version of the film is made because the subtitles for the film version may not match those required for the video version for technical reasons.

12.

**Answer:**thin black border

**Question Type:** Sentence Completion

**Answer location:** Paragraph E, line 4

**Answer explanation:** In the reference paragraph you can find the information that **“characters usually appear in white with a thin black border for easy reading against a white or light background. We can also use different colours for each speaker when subtitling for the hearing impaired.”** A border is something that surrounds something. Most subtitles have white letters with a thin black border around them, we are told.

13.

**Answer:**the hearing impaired

**Question Type:** Sentence Completion

**Answer location:** Paragraph E, 2nd last line

**Answer explanation:** The last line of paragraph E informs that **“we can also use different colours for each speaker when subtitling for the hearing impaired. Subtitles should have a maximum of two lines and the maximum number of characters on each line should be between 32 and 39. Our company standard is 37 (different companies and countries have different standards).”** The words spoken by different characters can be put into different colours for each character so that people who are deaf or cannot hear well will know which character Is speaking while they are reading the subtitles.