



Self Help for Hard of Hearing People



The official website for Self Help for Hard of Hearing People (Australia) Inc

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## Information Sheets

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### Information Sheet Number 14

#### **DO YOU HAVE TROUBLE HEARING YOUR TV?**

Do loved ones complain your TV is too loud?  
Do you miss the punch lines for your favourite shows?  
Do you feel lost when people talk about that TV show they saw last night?

There is a simple solution to all these questions! Captions are a free service, and they are on your TV right now. All you have to do is turn them on!

#### **WHAT ARE CAPTIONS?**

Captions are used to help people understand the soundtrack of a TV program or DVD. They re-create the entire soundtrack in text format, usually at the bottom of the screen, so that the viewer can read it. Captions are coloured and positioned on the screen to show each character's speech. Sound effects, music and other audio cues are also incorporated in the captions so that all relevant information is available to the viewer.

This is the main difference between captions and **subtitles**, because subtitles just show a translation of the dialogue into English.

### **WHAT TV SHOWS HAVE CAPTIONS?**

On free-to-air TV, all news and current affairs, and all programs between 6:00pm and 10:30pm are captioned. 70% of programs shown between 6:00am and 12 midnight are also required to be captioned.

Check your local TV guide –captioned programs are indicated by an (S), S\*, (ST) or CC in the program listing.

Look for the **S** or **CC** logos on the program or in one corner of the screen as the program is starting. The **S** logo stands for Supertext, the registered name for Media Access captioning services. **CC** stands for Closed Captioning, which is captioning that has to be turned on, as opposed to Open Captioning, which is visible all the time.

Captions are also available on Pay TV. You can find out which programs are available with captions from the Foxtel website ([www.foxtel.com.au](http://www.foxtel.com.au)) or your Foxtel program guide. Austar's Entertainment Magazine has details of captioned programs.

### **HOW DO I ACCESS CAPTIONS?**

To access captions you need either (1) a modern TV set capable of receiving digital transmissions, (2) a teletext TV, or (3) a digital set-top box.

#### **Digital Reception TV**

These usually have captions (often called subtitles) available as a menu option which only needs to be activated.

#### **Teletext TV**

To access closed captions on a teletext TV you will need to:

1. Select channel.
2. Press the TEXT/TELETEXT button on the remote control or the button marked with three horizontal lines. A black strip will appear at the top of the screen, or the screen may go black. (If you are watching Channel 7, a full menu of Austext will appear).
3. Press the numbers 8-0-1. This will reveal page 801 and captions will be superimposed over the picture of the captioned program. You may need to wait a few seconds for the teletext system to turn to page 801.
4. To change channels you will need to press the TEXT/TELETEXT or button to turn off the captions on the channel you are currently on,

change the channel, and then press the TEXT/TELETEXT button followed by 8-0-1 again.

### **Digital set-top boxes**

A digital set-top box can be connected to any TV and it will enable you to access digital television as well as captions. There are a number of digital set-top boxes that will decode and display captions.

The remote control for your digital set-top box should have a button marked TEXT or SUBTITLES. When the menu appears, turn the teletext option on. Then press 8-0-1 to reveal the captions.

### **WHERE ELSE ARE CAPTIONS AVAILABLE?**

Closed captions are available on videos that have the **Closed Caption Video** logo (**CCV**) on the case. You need a gadget called a video reader attached to your VCR to decode them.

Captions are also available on DVDs. They are usually located in the Subtitles menu. You don't need any special equipment to watch captions on DVD – all you need to do is turn them on.

Open captioned movies are screened at metropolitan cinemas in all capital cities three times a week on Friday evenings, Sunday afternoons and Wednesday mornings. Visit the Media Access website ([www.mediaaccess.org.au](http://www.mediaaccess.org.au)) for more details (follow the links to Cinema, then Captioned Cinema Schedules). Alternatively, check for session times in your local paper. Open caption sessions are marked using the Supertext (**S**) logo.

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