

Closed Captions vs. Subtitles

Closed Captions (CC) are a standardized method of encoding text into an NTSC television signal. The text can be displayed by a TV with a built-in decoder or by a separate decoder. All TVs larger than 13 inches sold in the US since 1993 have Closed Caption decoders. Closed Captions can be carried on DVD, videotape, broadcast TV, cable TV, and so on.

Even though the terms "*caption*" and "*subtitle*" have similar definitions, "*captions*" commonly refer to on-screen text specifically designed for hearing impaired viewers, while "*subtitles*" are straight transcriptions or translations of the dialogue. Captions are usually positioned below the person who is speaking, and they include descriptions of sounds (such as gunshots or closing doors) and music. "*Closed*" captions are not visible until the viewer activates them. "*Open*" captions are always visible, such as subtitles on foreign videotapes.

Closed Captions on DVDs are carried in a special data channel of the MPEG-2 video stream and are automatically sent to the TV. You can't turn them on or off from the DVD player. Subtitles, on the other hand, are DVD subpictures, which are full-screen graphical overlays (see [3.4](#) for technical details). One of up to 32 subpicture tracks can be turned on to show text or graphics on top of the video. Subpictures can also be used to create captions. To differentiate from NTSC Closed Captions and from subtitles, captions created as subpictures are usually called "captions for the hearing impaired."

If this is all too confusing, just follow this advice: To see Closed Captions, use the CC button on the TV remote. To see subtitles or captions for the hearing impaired, use the subtitle button on the DVD remote or use the onscreen menu provided by the disc. Don't turn both on at once or they'll end up on top of each other. Keep in mind that not all DVDs have Closed Captions or subtitles. Also, some DVD players don't reproduce Closed Captions at all.

Note that DVD does not support PAL Teletext, the much-improved European equivalent of Closed Captions.

The above is from: <http://www.allformp3.com/dvd-faqs/145.htm>