

Perceptive Verbatim:

Readback's Standard for Accurate, Readable Transcripts

Introduction

What is a verbatim transcript? The court reporting industry has [some standards](#) as to what “verbatim transcript” means, but these can vary depending on the state, individual firm, or reporter rules. For example, the [South Dakota Court Reporters Association Manual](#) states, “*What constitutes a ‘verbatim’ record is an ongoing issue in the field of court reporting and transcription...*”

Many court reporters are independent contractors, which means their standards will differ, since they are not governed by any company policies. Even when working with a reporting firm, court reporters are often not strictly regulated to uphold a certain standard of practice. This can affect the standards, consistency, and readability of transcripts. At Readback, we have strict standards for our in-house team that result in accurate, consistent, and readable transcripts.

Research

What does verbatim mean? Strict verbatim and clean verbatim are two distinctions that are commonly used in the court reporting and transcription industries. The Readback standard is *perceptive verbatim*. Definitions and examples are listed below.

Strict Verbatim, also known as Full Verbatim or True Verbatim

A strict verbatim transcript is one that includes all spoken language in a proceeding. This includes the actual words spoken as well as filler words, pauses, stutters, and

coughs, among others. While this can be helpful for pointing out nervousness or hesitations, it can make the transcript difficult to read. The following example illustrates a verbatim transcript.

Actually Spoken:

Q: Can you tell me what happened?

A: Well, [pause] I uh, I uh, th-th-th-thought th-th-that she was turning right since she had her, her, her blinker on. Then, [sneezes] excuse me.

Q: Bless you.

A: Then, um, uh, I pulled out on the street and her tr-, her truck slammed right into my car and then she went and slammed into another car and they went and bumped into the tree.

Strict Verbatim:

Q: Can you tell me what happened?

A: Well, [pause] I uh, I uh, th-th-th-thought th-th-that she was turning right since she had her, her, her blinker on. Then, [sneezes] excuse me.

Q: Bless you.

A: Then, um, uh, I pulled out on the street and her tr-, her truck slammed right into my car and then she went and slammed into another car and they went and bumped into the tree.

Clean verbatim, also known as Intelligent Verbatim or Non-Verbatim

A clean verbatim transcript is one that omits or adjusts certain language such as filler words, pauses, stutters, and coughs, among others. A clean verbatim transcript still captures an accurate record and does not change important words or infer meanings of utterances, like “mm-hmm” or “uh-huh.” It simply cleans up distractions for a more readable transcript. The following example illustrates a clean verbatim transcript.

Actually Spoken:

Q: Can you tell me what happened?

A: Well, [pause] I uh, I uh, th-th-th-thought th-th-that she was turning right since she had her, her, her blinker on. Then, [sneezes] excuse me.

Q: Bless you.

A: Then, um, uh, I pulled out on the street and her tr-, her truck slammed right into my car and then she went and slammed into another car and they went and bumped into the tree.

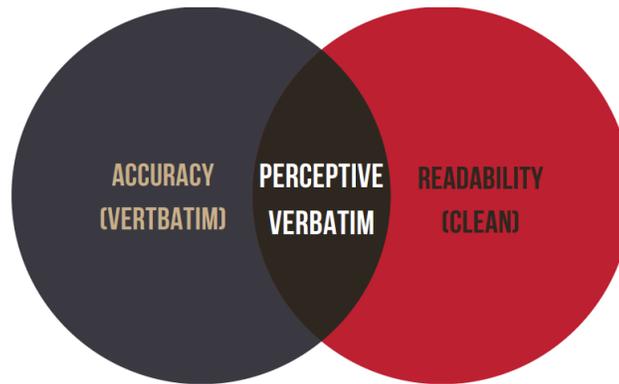
Clean Verbatim:

Q: Can you tell me what happened?

A: Well, I thought that she was turning right since she had her blinker on. Then, I pulled out on the street, and her truck slammed right into my car. Then, she went and slammed into another car, and they went and bumped into the tree.

Perceptive Verbatim: The Readback Standard

A perceptive verbatim transcript is one that Readback uses as a standard practice for all employees to follow. This combines the best practices of both strict verbatim and clean verbatim transcripts, as depicted in the diagram below.



As long as the meaning of the testimony is unchanged, for the purpose of readability, perceptive verbatim omits or edits:

- Stutters
- Filler speech, such as “um,” “uh,” etc.
- Partial words that are less than two syllables
- Non-speech sounds, such as sneezes, coughs, or throat clearing
- Slang terms, such as “gonna” or “kinda” (written as “going to” or “kind of,” respectively)

Perceptive verbatim does not edit any interruptions or run-on sentences. The following example illustrates a preceptive verbatim transcript.

Actually Spoken:

Q: Can you tell me what happened?

A: Well, [pause] I uh, I uh, th-th-th-thought th-th-that she was turning right since she had her, her, her blinker on. Then, [sneezes] excuse me.

Q: Bless you.

A: Then, um, uh, I pulled out on the street and her tr-, her truck slammed right into my car and then she went and slammed into another car and they went and bumped into the tree.

Perceptive Verbatim:

Q: Can you tell me what happened?

A: Well, I thought that she was turning right since she had her blinker on. Then, excuse me.

Q: Bless you.

A: Then, I pulled out on the street and her truck slammed right into my car and then she went and slammed into another car and they went and bumped into the tree.

Summary

Readback sets perceptive verbatim as our standard to produce the most accurate and readable transcripts possible for our clients. Our in-house team is trained and tested on this standard in addition to security, confidentiality, and other topics. Unlike most court reporters and reporting firms, Readback also provides the on-the-record audio, included [at all three service tiers](#). This can serve as the official record and also assist with confident read-and-signs so the deponent can verify the accuracy of their testimony. Readback upholds these standards for every proceeding to provide complete transparency and satisfaction to our clients.

Next Steps

We encourage you to learn more about Readback's security standards and [our brand promise](#). Schedule your next deposition at Readback.legal/schedule-now or [create an account](#) to schedule and monitor upcoming proceedings. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to us at experts@Readback.legal or 888-256-7776.