Show notes, chapters and transcripts

A fill-in template for one episode's written material, in the order to write it.

1. Work in this order

Write the transcript first, then the summary, the notes, the chapters and the credits. Write the summary after the transcript, so it says what was actually said. Check every chapter timestamp against the finished audio, not the rough cut, because the edit moves everything after a cut.

1. Transcript: name the speakers at each change, and remove filler words where the meaning does not change.
2. Summary: two sentences, written from the transcript.
3. Notes: links to anything mentioned, each with a short reason.
4. Chapters: one line per chapter, starting at 00:00:00 with the intro.
5. Credits and disclosures: who made the episode, and any sponsor, named in the sponsor's own words.

2. Episode details

Episode number	*[number]*
Episode title	*[the title as you would say it, with the guest's name if it helps someone find the episode]*
Guest name, as they want it written	*[spelling, and any title or post-nominal they want used]*
Release date	*[day, month, year]*
Length of the episode	*[hh:mm:ss]*

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3. Transcript

[Start with the speaker's name in bold, then the words. Leave opinions exactly as they were said. Where a sentence is unclear in the audio, mark it rather than guessing.]

[Paste or type the full transcript here. Continue on a new page if it runs long.]

4. Summary

[Two sentences. Say who is speaking and what they cover.]

[Sentence one]

[Sentence two]

5. Notes

[List the links and names mentioned. Include a guest's own links only if the guest has agreed to them going out.]

Name or item mentioned	Link	Why it came up	Guest agreed to link?
[the book, place or person]	*[web address]*	*[one line on why]*	*[Yes or No]*

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Name or item mentioned	Link	Why it came up	Guest agreed to link?

6. Chapters

[One line per chapter: the timestamp, then a short, specific title. Keep each chapter long enough to stand alone. A chapter of a few seconds is usually a sentence that belongs in the chapter before it.]

Timestamp (hh:mm:ss)	Chapter title
00:00:00	Intro

7. Credits and disclosures

Made by	*[production company or name]*
Sponsor, if any	*[name, in the same words the sponsor uses]*
Sponsor label	*[say it at the start of the ad, for example sponsored or paid-for advertisement]*
Other credits	*[music, guests, editing, or anyone else who should be named]*

8. Before you publish

- [ ] Every chapter timestamp has been checked against the finished audio.
- [ ] Every speaker is named in the transcript, at each change of speaker.
- [ ] Filler words are removed where the meaning does not change, and nothing has been tidied into something the speaker did not say.
- [ ] The summary is two sentences, written after the transcript.
- [ ] Every link in the notes has a reason beside it, and the guest has agreed to any of their own links.
- [ ] A sponsor's label is at the start of the ad, not only in the show notes.
- [ ] The guest's name is spelled the way they want it.

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Worked example (an invented show)

[A boatyard podcast publishes episode 14 with a guest who restores wooden boats.]

Title	Restoring a clinker hull, with Dan Ashby
Summary	Dan Ashby talks through a season of restoring a clinker dinghy. The conversation covers planking, why he still uses hand tools, and what he would tell a first-time restorer.
Notes	Links to the boatbuilding book Dan mentions, and to the local museum where he learned the trade, each with a line on why it came up.
Chapters	00:00:00 Intro, 00:02:10 Why clinker, 00:14:40 Replacing a plank, 00:38:05 Advice for beginners
Transcript, first turn	Host: Why clinker? Dan: Because it is light, and you can see every plank you have fitted.

Common mistakes

- Timestamps copied from a rough cut.
- A transcript that tidies a speaker into someone they were not.
- Notes that list links with no reason to follow them.
- Unnamed speakers, so the reader cannot tell who said what.

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