EDIT LAB TOOLS

CaptionLab

Install Guide — get auto subtitles working in Premiere Pro

VERSION 1.0.6

CaptionLab installs with a small, free, widely-trusted third-party tool — no Terminal, nothing to type, nothing to approve in a scary dialog.

What you need

- macOS 11 (Big Sur) or later — Apple Silicon or Intel
- Adobe Premiere Pro 2022 or later
- ~5 GB free disk space for first-time setup (Python runtime + the default Whisper AI model, downloaded on first launch)
- More disk space only if you choose to download additional AI models later from the **Models** tab (see below) — each one is optional, from 480 MB to 3.1 GB
- Internet connection for setup and model downloads only — transcription itself runs fully offline

Install in 5 steps

⚠️ **Installed CaptionLab before? (upgraders only)**
If you've ever installed any version of CaptionLab on this Mac, first double-click `Uninstall CaptionLab.command` (included in the zip) and let it finish. It removes every old copy so they don't conflict with the new one. **Brand-new users can skip this** — go straight to step 1.

1. **Unzip** the file you downloaded — you'll get a **.zxp** file, this guide, and a cleanup tool (only needed if upgrading).

2. **Quit Premiere Pro** if it's running.

3 Download and install a free ZXP installer app (skip this if you already have one from installing another plugin before):

ZXP Installer (aescripts) or Anastasiy's Extension Manager — either works.

If a link above isn't clickable, copy the address below instead:
`https://aescripts.com/learn/zxp-installer/`
`https://install.anastasiy.com/`

💡 **Is this safe?**
Yes. Both tools above are free, widely used across the Adobe plugin community, and don't require an account or payment — they just copy extension files into Premiere's extensions folder, nothing more. aescripts in particular are a well-known, trusted name in this space — good folks who've been supporting Adobe plugin creators and editors for years.

4 **Launch the Creative Cloud desktop app and leave it open.** Adobe routes every extension install through it, so a ZXP installer cannot finish while it is closed.

Its background helpers start on their own at login and can make it look like it is already running — open the app itself and wait until you can see your account.

5 Open the ZXP installer app, then drag the **.zxp** file onto it (or use its "Install" button to pick the file). It installs the extension automatically.

💡 **"No application compatible with CaptionLab was found"**
Click **Install** anyway. ZXP installers carry their own list of Adobe versions and it lags behind each new release, so a recent Premiere often isn't recognised. CaptionLab supports **Premiere Pro 2022 and newer**, which includes every version that triggers this message.

💡 **"Couldn't access ZXP extensions database", or the install just fails**
This is almost always the Creative Cloud desktop app being closed. Open it, wait for it to finish loading, and run the installer again.

6 **Open Premiere Pro.** Go to `Window → Extensions → CaptionLab`. The panel asks for an email first — see **Start your free trial** below. Installing the AI engine comes after that.

CaptionLab downloads Python, ffmpeg and the Whisper AI model (~3 GB) itself, entirely inside the extension — 15–20 minutes on a typical connection. No Terminal, no admin password.

Start your free trial

You don't have to buy CaptionLab to use it. A **free 3-day trial** unlocks the complete plugin — every model, every language, real subtitles in your timeline. No card, no account.

1. Open **CaptionLab** in Premiere Pro and enter your **email address**.
2. Check your inbox — a **trial key** arrives within a minute (look in spam if it doesn't).
3. Paste the key into the panel and click **Start my free trial**.
4. Click **Install AI Engine**. This downloads the transcription engine and a ~3 GB AI model — by far the longest step, so start it and go do something else.
5. When it finishes, select a clip and click **Generate Subtitles**. **This is the moment your 3 days start** — everything before it is free.

💡 **Your 3 days start at your first transcription**
Not at download, and not when you enter the key. Installing the engine and downloading an AI model can take an evening — none of that comes out of your trial. Take your time.

💡 **Test your own language first**
Accuracy varies a lot between languages. If you work in one Adobe doesn't support, run a short clip of your own footage through it before deciding — that is exactly what the trial is for.

Activate your license

Bought CaptionLab, or ready to buy after your trial? You'll receive an email from Paddle with your **Order ID** (starts with `txn_`). Activating replaces the trial — anything you already downloaded stays where it is.

1. Open **CaptionLab** in Premiere Pro — you'll see the activation screen.

2 Enter the **email address** you used to purchase.

3 Enter your **Order ID** (`txn_01...` from your receipt email).

4 Click **Activate**. That's it — CaptionLab is unlocked forever.

💡 **Works offline**
After activation, CaptionLab works offline for 14 days before needing a quick online re-check. No subscription, no recurring fees.

What's new in v1.0.6

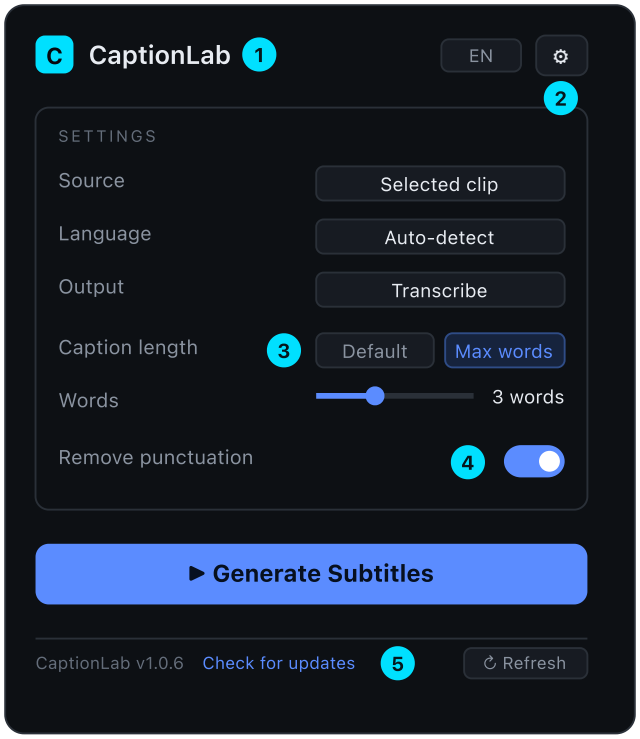
If you used an earlier version, these are the changes you'll notice most:

- **Remove punctuation.** A new switch in the settings strips full stops and commas from the finished captions — the usual look for short-form video. Timing and line breaks are unaffected, so nothing moves on the timeline. It works in every language, including the ones with punctuation marks of their own.
- **Your GPU is actually used now.** The graphics libraries are verified by loading them, so a half-installed CUDA can no longer report success and quietly fall back to the processor. That was the usual cause of “it works, but slowly”.
- **The model gives memory back between jobs** instead of holding several gigabytes, leaving your card free for playback and previews. And only one engine ever runs: a second copy could stay loaded after reopening the panel or switching accounts, and two models on one card is what turned a long transcription into a crawl.
- **Settings menu.** Everything that used to sit in different corners is now under the gear — repair the engine, open the install log, what's new, request a feature, leave a review, help. See the diagrams below.
- **Repair engine.** Re-checks every part of the AI engine and downloads only what is missing or damaged. This is the fix if transcription is unexpectedly slow on a machine with an NVIDIA card. Your models are not re-downloaded.
- **“Max words” is now a strict limit.** A caption could come out one word over the number you set — including when the model returned something like “39 dollars” as a single word. It no longer can.
- **Education licences.** There is now a separate version for universities, schools and studios: one key for an agreed number of computers, and nobody using them has to enter anything. Write

to editlabtools@gmail.com for a quote.

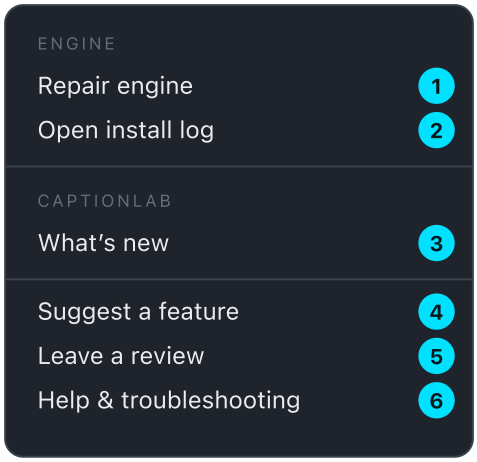
The panel, button by button

Two things moved in v1.0.6, so here is the whole panel with every control named. The numbers on the drawings match the lists underneath.

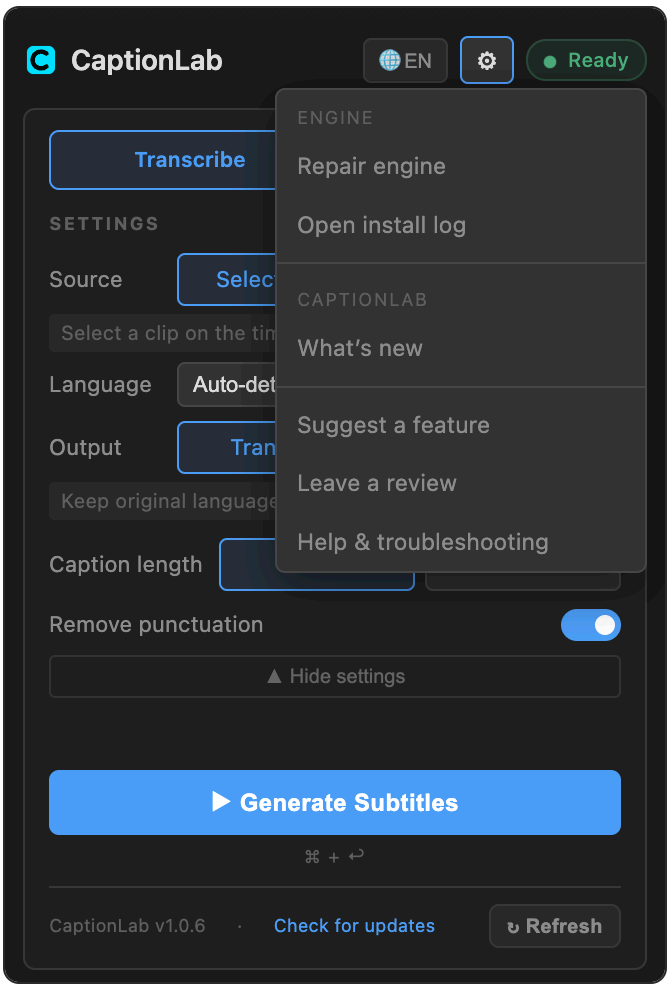


1. **The logo is a button.** Clicking it returns you to the main screen from anywhere in the panel — What's new, the engine screen, a finished job.
2. **The gear** holds everything that used to be scattered. Opened below.
3. **Caption length.** *Default* groups captions by sentences and pauses. *Max words* caps them at the number you set on the slider.
4. **Remove punctuation.** Full stops and commas are dropped from the finished captions. The switch changes the text only — every in and out point stays where it was, so nothing shifts on the timeline.
5. **Check for updates.** Checks once, when you click it. The panel never phones home on its own.

The settings menu



1. **Repair engine** — re-checks every part of the AI engine and downloads only what is missing or damaged. Your models are kept.
2. **Open install log** — the full setup log, the first thing to send if you write for support.
3. **What's new** — this release and every one before it, read from the changelog that ships with the plugin.
4. **Suggest a feature** — opens a screen with the address written on it. No mail app is launched behind your back; copy it or click through, as you prefer.
5. **Leave a review** — on captionlab.pro.
6. **Help & troubleshooting** — the FAQ on the site, which is kept up to date, rather than the PDF sitting in your downloads folder.



The same menu in the panel itself

If something is wrong with the engine, start with Repair. It is the fix for a machine with an NVIDIA card that transcribes unexpectedly slowly, for a setup that stopped halfway, and for a panel that says the engine is missing when it is not. It keeps your models.

What's new in v1.0.5

If you used an earlier version, these are the changes you'll notice most:

- **A free 3-day trial.** The complete plugin, before you pay anything — and the three days start at your first transcription, not at download.
- **A model built for Burmese.** Burmese is one of the languages the standard models handle badly: on real footage they produced the wrong script entirely, or repeated the same syllable for minutes. A Burmese-specific model is now in the **Models** tab and produces real, readable Burmese on the same clips.

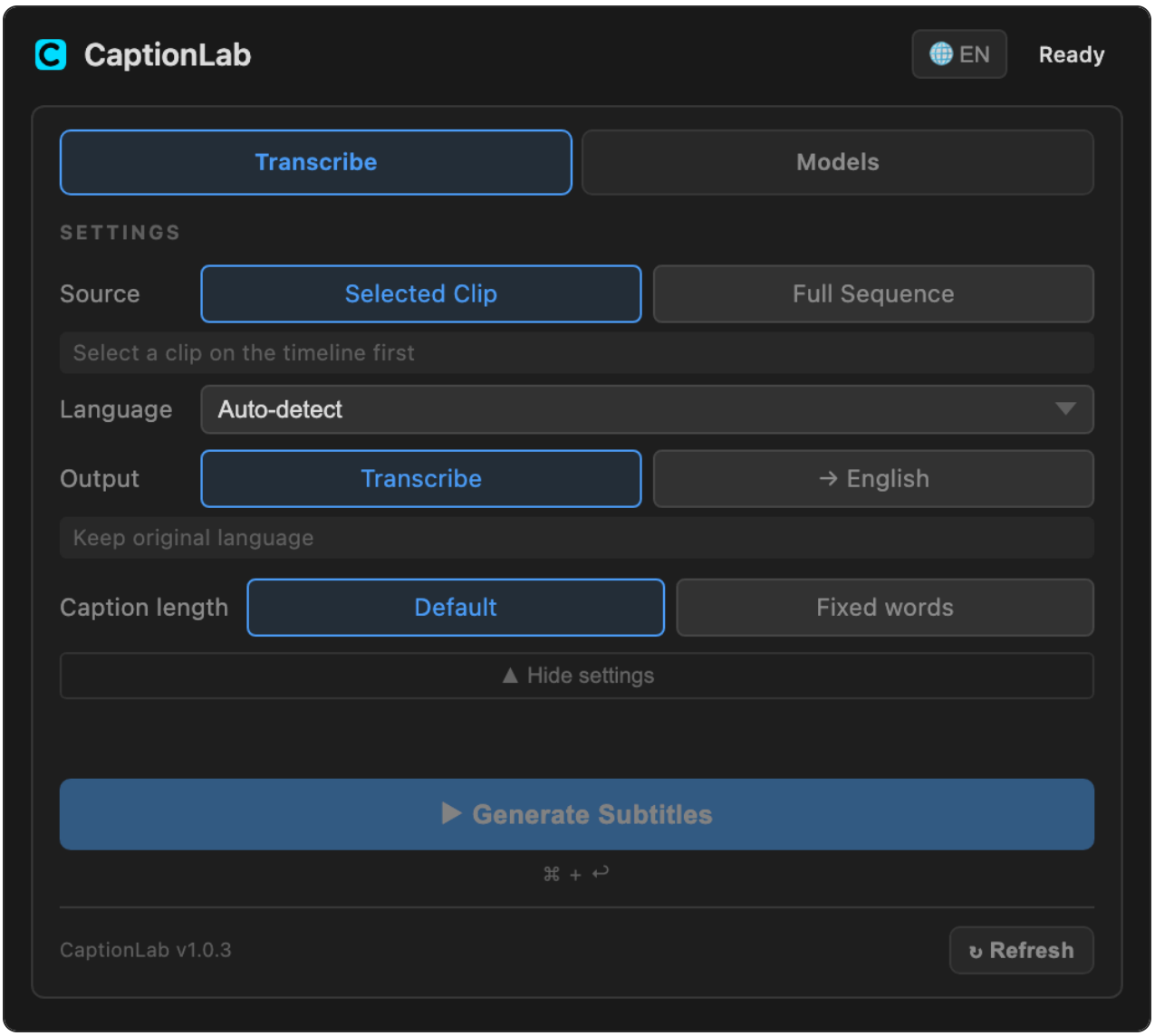
- **Installs that repair themselves.** A half-finished download used to be trusted forever — every retry saw the file was "there" and skipped it, so the same broken install came back however many times you clicked. Each piece is now checked to see it actually runs, and re-fetched if not. Stalled downloads time out and retry instead of hanging.

What's new in v1.0.4

If you used an earlier version, these are the changes you'll notice most:

- **Caption timing is measured against the audio.** Caption starts are now checked against the sound itself rather than taken from the model, so a caption no longer appears while the speaker is still silent. This matters most after long pauses, over B-roll with room tone, and after music.
- **Quiet speech is no longer skipped.** Audio recorded well below the level of the rest of a video — a location interview cut against a loud studio voice, for example — used to be dropped silently. It is now levelled before transcription.
- **Captions follow sentence structure.** A caption is never split across a sentence boundary, breaks at commas and clause boundaries, and short binding words are never left stranded on their own.
- **"Fixed words" is now "Max words"** — see below.

How to use — Transcribe tab

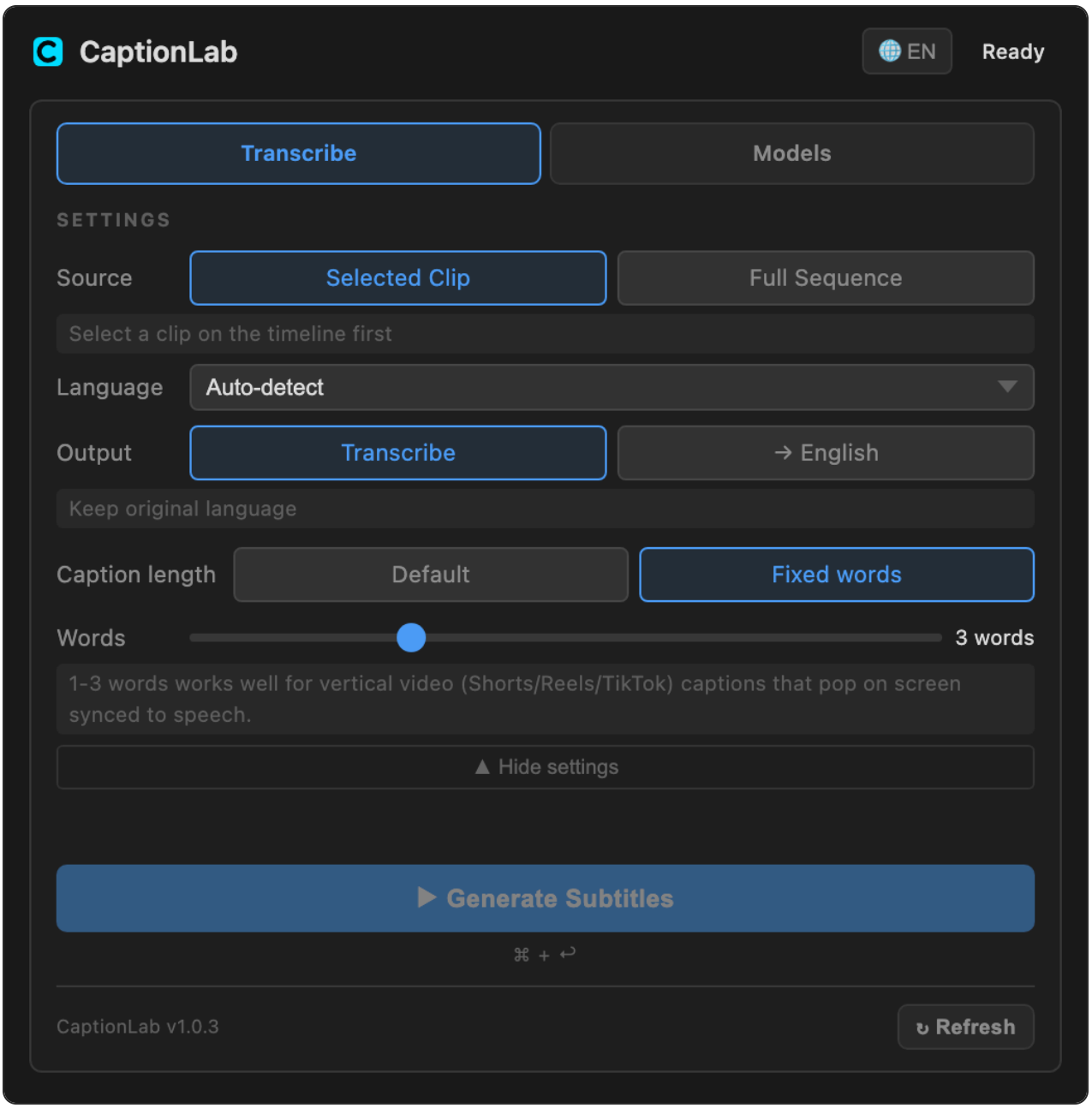


The Transcribe tab — this is the default screen every time you open the panel

1. Open `Window → Extensions → CaptionLab`
2. **Source** — select a clip on your timeline and choose **Selected Clip**, or pick **Full Sequence** to caption the whole timeline at once (multicam sequences and Merged/Synchronized clips are supported)
3. **Language** — leave on **Auto-detect**, or pick the spoken language from the dropdown (99 languages supported)
4. **Output** — choose **Transcribe** to keep the original language, or **→ English** to translate to English
5. **Caption length** — see the "Max words" section below for the short-form video option
6. Click **Generate Subtitles**
7. Drag the resulting `.srt` file from the Project Panel to your timeline

Keyboard shortcut: press `⌘ + Return` to generate subtitles without clicking.

New in v1.0.4 — Caption length: "Max words"



Caption length set to "Max words" — the Words slider appears, here set to 3 words per caption

By default, CaptionLab groups words into captions the same way a human editor would — by sentence structure, punctuation and pauses. That's right for regular horizontal video, but for **vertical short-form video** (Shorts, Reels, TikTok-style edits) you usually want short bursts of 1–3 words popping on screen in sync with speech instead.

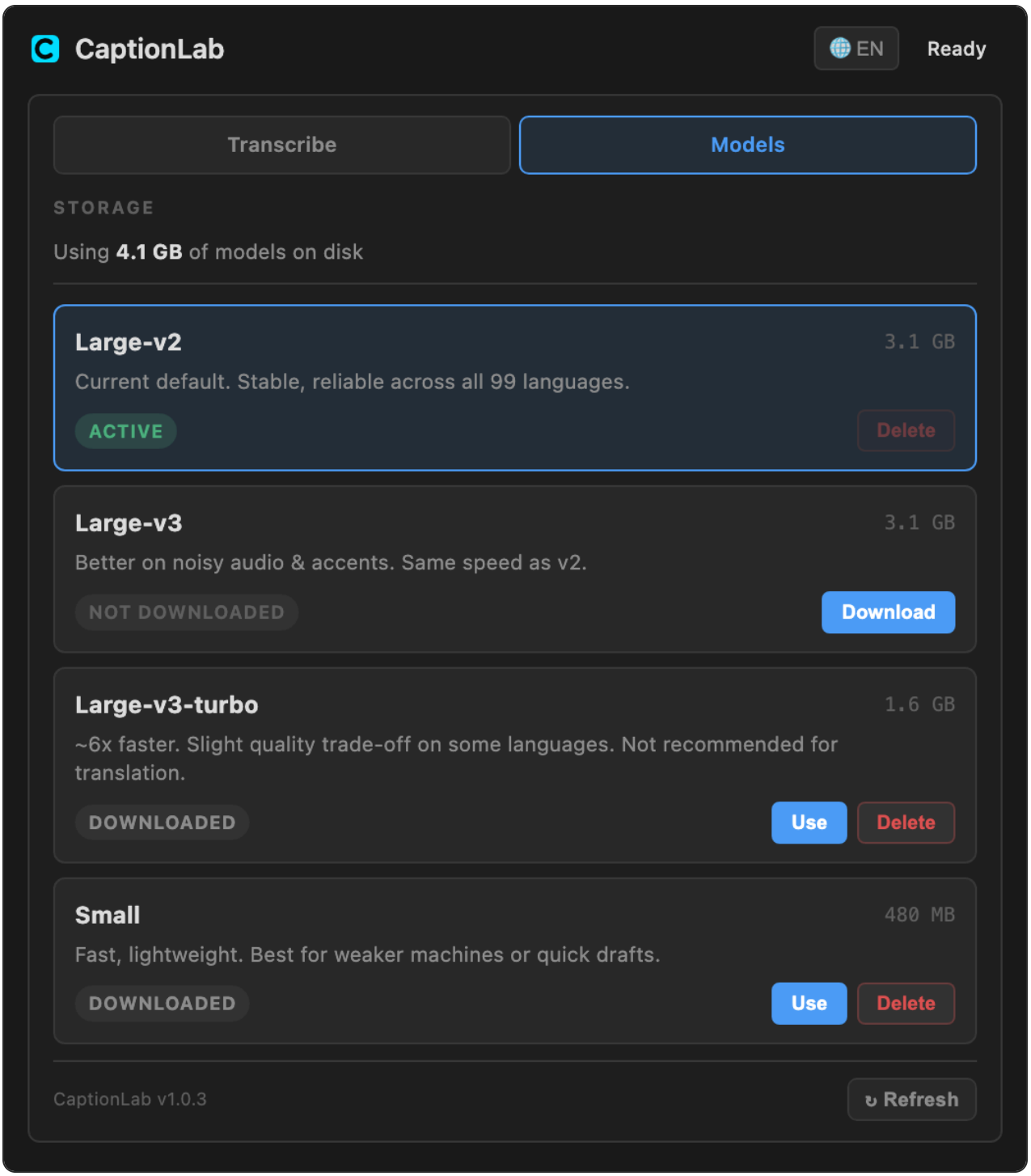
To use it:

1. Under **Caption length**, click **Max words** instead of Default
2. A **Words** slider appears — drag it to choose the maximum number of words per caption, from **1 to 8**
3. Generate subtitles as usual

It's a ceiling, not a quota. This setting was called "Fixed words" before v1.0.4, which was misleading. If you set 4, a caption will still be 3, 2 or even 1 word whenever that's where the line logically ends — a caption is never split across a sentence boundary, and it breaks at commas and clause boundaries too. Short binding words ("not", "the", "in" and their equivalents in other languages) are never left stranded alone on screen.

1–3 words works best for the fast-paced, word-by-word caption style common on Shorts/Reels/TikTok. Higher values behave closer to a short readable phrase per caption.

Models tab



The Models tab — Large-v2 is active here, Large-v3-turbo and Small are downloaded but not in use, Large-v3 is available to download

CaptionLab now lets you choose which Whisper AI model does the transcribing, right from the panel — no reinstalling, no Terminal. Click the **Models** tab at the top of the panel to open it.

Model	Size	Best for
Large-v2 *(default)*	3.1 GB	Stable, reliable across all 99 languages — the safest general-purpose choice

Large-v3	3.1 GB	Better on noisy audio and accents, same speed as v2 — try this if v2 struggles with a particular recording
Large-v3-turbo	1.6 GB	~6x faster than the others — great when you need speed and are transcribing (not translating). Slight quality trade-off on some languages, and not recommended for the "→ English" translate mode
Small	480 MB	Fastest and lightest — best for weaker/older machines or quick rough drafts
Myanmar (Burmese)	2.9 GB	Fine-tuned specifically for Burmese. Use this instead of Large-v3 if you work in Burmese — the general models struggle badly with it

What each button does:

- **Download** — downloads that model to your Mac. You'll see a live progress bar. This only needs to happen once per model.
- **Use** — switches CaptionLab to transcribe with that model from now on. Only appears once a model is downloaded.
- **Delete** — removes a downloaded model from disk to free up space. You can always download it again later. (The currently active model can't be deleted — switch to another one first.)

The **ACTIVE** badge shows which model is currently being used to transcribe. "Using X GB of models on disk" at the top of the tab shows your total storage used by downloaded models.

Troubleshooting

CaptionLab doesn't appear in Window → Extensions

Fully quit and reopen Premiere Pro — `Cmd+Q`, then relaunch, not just close the window.

Still missing? CaptionLab's .zxp is signed with a self-signed certificate (normal for indie plugins outside the Adobe Marketplace), so Premiere requires a one-time setting called **PlayerDebugMode** to be enabled before it will load. The two ZXP installer apps above usually enable this automatically — but if you used a different installer that doesn't, turn it on manually: open **Terminal** (Spotlight → type "Terminal") and paste this, then press Return:

```
for v in 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20; do defaults write com.adobe.CSXS.$v PlayerDebugMode 1; done
```

Then fully quit and reopen Premiere Pro.

The AI model download seems frozen

HuggingFace downloads metadata first (small), then a few large files one by one. The size jumps from ~30 MB straight to several GB — this is normal, just wait. Don't quit Premiere during setup. In the Models tab, downloads show a live byte-by-byte progress bar, so you can see it's still moving.

"Server not running" or panel stuck on Checking...

Quit and reopen Premiere Pro. If it's still stuck, reinstall the .zxp with your ZXP installer app.

"Premiere's scripting engine isn't responding" when clicking Generate

A known Premiere Pro quirk: some workspace layouts (Learning in particular, but potentially others) don't fully hand scripting access to panels. Try switching to `Window → Workspaces → Editing` and click **Refresh** in the panel, then try again. If that doesn't help, try a different workspace layout. Still stuck? Quit Premiere Pro completely (`Cmd+Q`) and reopen it.

A model download failed or got stuck

Click **Retry** on that model's card in the Models tab — CaptionLab resumes from whichever files are still missing rather than starting over. If it keeps failing, check your internet connection and try again; some corporate/antivirus networks briefly interfere with large downloads.

> ⚠️ **Reinstalling an update?**
> Always fully quit Premiere Pro (`Cmd+Q`) *before* reinstalling the .zxp, not just close the panel. Installing new files while Premiere is still open leaves it unable to run CaptionLab's scripts until Premiere is restarted.

Uninstall

Open your ZXP installer app and remove CaptionLab from there, the same way you'd remove any other extension.

Support

Email: editlabtools@gmail.com
Website: captionlab.pro

When reporting an issue, please include: macOS version, Premiere Pro version, Mac chip (Apple Silicon or Intel), and a screenshot.