

YouTube Video Creation & Posting Checklist

A practical best-practices checklist covering planning, production, optimization, publishing, and post-publish review.

1. Strategy & Planning

- Define the video goal: educate, entertain, convert, or build community.
- Identify the target audience and the main problem or interest the video should address.
- Choose a focused topic with a clear value proposition and searchable angle.
- Research keywords, competing videos, and audience questions before scripting.
- Decide on the desired call to action: subscribe, comment, visit a link, download, etc.

2. Script & Structure

- Hook viewers in the first 5–15 seconds with a clear promise or curiosity gap.
- Outline the video so the content flows logically and stays concise.
- Remove unnecessary filler and keep each section moving toward the payoff.
- Include a strong ending with a recap and one primary next step for the viewer.
- Prepare any talking points, b-roll notes, visuals, examples, or screen recordings in advance.

3. Recording Quality

- Record in a quiet space with clear audio; prioritize microphone quality over camera quality.
- Use stable framing, good lighting, and a clean or intentional background.
- Check camera focus, exposure, and white balance before recording the full take.
- Record multiple takes of critical lines, especially the hook and call to action.
- Capture supporting footage, screenshots, or cutaways to improve pacing and clarity.

4. Editing & Packaging

- Trim dead space, awkward pauses, and repetitive sections to improve retention.
- Add captions, on-screen text, and graphics where they genuinely improve comprehension.
- Balance audio levels and remove distracting noise, pops, or harsh volume changes.
- Use music sparingly so it supports the message without overpowering speech.
- Export at high quality and verify the final file for sync issues, glitches, or spelling mistakes.

5. Title, Thumbnail & Metadata

- Write a compelling title that is specific, accurate, and curiosity-driven without clickbait.
- Design a thumbnail with strong contrast, limited text, and one obvious focal point.
- Make sure the title and thumbnail work together to communicate one clear promise.
- Write the description with a strong first sentence, helpful context, links, and chapters if relevant.
- Add relevant tags, category, playlist placement, and any needed disclosures.

6. Accessibility & Compliance

- Upload accurate subtitles or review auto-captions for errors.
- Confirm music, footage, images, and graphics are properly licensed or original.
- Mark paid promotion, made-for-kids status, or age restrictions correctly when applicable.
- Avoid misleading claims, unsafe advice, or policy-violating content.
- Check links, affiliate disclosures, and privacy-sensitive details before publishing.

7. Publish Settings

- Choose the correct visibility setting: public, scheduled, unlisted, or private.
- Add end screens, cards, and a pinned comment that supports the video objective.
- Select or create a playlist to improve session watch time and discoverability.
- Review monetization settings and suitability if the channel is monetized.
- Preview the upload on desktop and mobile before finalizing publication.

8. Post-Publish Promotion & Review

- Share the video where your audience already pays attention: email, community posts, socials, or embedded pages.
- Respond to early comments to build engagement and strengthen viewer signals.
- Monitor click-through rate, average view duration, retention dips, and traffic sources.
- Update the thumbnail or title later if performance is weak and the promise can be improved honestly.
- Capture lessons learned so the next video starts from better data, not guesswork.

Tip: The biggest YouTube wins usually come from stronger topics, better hooks, clearer thumbnails, and tighter editing — not from stuffing keywords.