

YouTube Channel Growth — Workbook

Use this workbook alongside each module: pause the video when you see a workbook prompt, complete the exercise or worksheet, then resume. Every section maps to one course module so you always know where you are. Come back to the reflection prompts after your first 10 uploads — your answers will look very different.

Channel Foundation and Niche Strategy

Lock in the specific audience, topic focus, and channel identity that will make every future video decision easier.

Exercise: Niche Intersection Finder

Great YouTube niches sit at the intersection of what you know, what you enjoy making, and what an audience actively searches for. Answer each prompt in one or two sentences, then look for the overlap.

- What topic could you talk about for 30 minutes without notes or preparation?

- Who is the specific person you are making this channel for — describe their age, problem, and goal in one sentence (e.g. 'A 28-year-old nurse who wants to start investing but feels overwhelmed by jargon')?

- Search that topic on YouTube right now. Name 3 channels already covering it. Are any of them under 100k subscribers and still growing? List them.

- What angle or format would make YOUR take on this topic different from those 3 channels?

Worksheet: Channel Identity Blueprint

Fill every field before you create or rename your channel. Leave nothing blank — a guess is better than a blank.

Channel name (exact text as it will appear on YouTube):

One-line channel description (under 100 characters, no buzzwords):

Primary niche keyword (the single phrase your ideal viewer types first):

Secondary niche keyword 1:

Secondary niche keyword 2:

Target viewer age range:

Target viewer's #1 problem your channel solves:

Upload frequency commitment (e.g. every Tuesday at 9 am EST):

Channel banner tagline (8 words or fewer):

Three channels you will study as benchmarks (name + subscriber count):

Checklist: Channel Setup Checklist

- Google account created or chosen for the channel (use a Brand Account, not personal)
- Channel name set and verified against trademark search
- Profile photo uploaded: minimum 800x800 px, face clearly visible
- Banner art uploaded: 2560x1440 px, safe zone 1546x423 px
- Channel description written with primary keyword in the first 125 characters
- Channel trailer uploaded (60-90 seconds, hooks a non-subscriber in the first 5 seconds)
- Custom URL claimed (requires 100 subscribers and 30 days old)
- Links section populated: at least website or one social handle
- Watermark/subscribe button added under Branding in YouTube Studio
- Channel keywords added in YouTube Studio > Settings > Channel > Basic Info

Reflection: Niche Commitment Check

- After completing the Niche Intersection Finder, do you feel genuinely excited about making 50 videos on this topic? If not, what would you change about your niche to make that feel achievable?
- What is the one thing you are most tempted to skip in the Channel Setup Checklist, and why is skipping it a mistake?

Video Planning, Scripting, and Production

Build a repeatable system for turning an idea into a published video — from concept to on-camera delivery to a polished final cut.

Worksheet: Video Idea Validation Sheet

Run every video idea through this sheet before you script a single word. A validated idea saves hours of wasted production.

Working title (rough — will be refined for SEO later):

Core question this video answers for the viewer:

YouTube search phrase a viewer would type to find this (5 words or fewer):

VidIQ or TubeBuddy search volume score for that phrase (enter 'N/A' if no tool yet):

Top 3 existing videos on this topic and their view counts:

What will yours do better or differently than those 3?

Estimated video length (aim for 7-15 minutes for most tutorial/educational content):

Thumbnail concept in one sentence (what image + text combination will stop the scroll):

Hook concept: what question or bold statement opens the first 30 seconds?

Exercise: Script Outline Sprint

Use the HOOK-BRIDGE-CONTENT-CTA framework. Set a 20-minute timer and complete the outline below for your next video. Do not write full sentences yet — bullet points only.

- HOOK (0-30 s): Write 3 different opening lines for this video. Each must create a curiosity gap or promise a specific result. You will pick the best one later.
 - BRIDGE (30-60 s): In 2-3 bullet points, tell the viewer what they will learn and why you are credible to teach it. No more than 60 words.
 - CONTENT (body): List your 3-5 main points in order. For each point, note one concrete example, stat, or on-screen visual that proves the point.
 - CTA (final 30 s): Write your call to action. What is the ONE thing you want them to do? (Subscribe, watch a specific next video, or comment with a specific answer.) State the next-video title if you are using end screens.
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Checklist: Pre-Upload Production Checklist

- Audio recorded at -12 to -6 dBFS peak level with no background hum
- Room echo reduced: at least one soft surface (rug, curtain, blanket behind camera)
- Key light positioned at 45 degrees to face, fill light or reflector on opposite side
- Camera or phone resolution set to minimum 1080p 30fps
- Script or outline visible just off-camera — not read word-for-word
- B-roll or screen recordings captured for every main talking point
- Jump cuts smoothed: remove filler words (um, uh, like) in edit
- Intro trimmed to under 30 seconds — viewer sees value before the logo sting
- Background music set at -20 dB or lower under voice
- Exported file: H.264 or H.265, at least 1920x1080, bitrate 8+ Mbps for 1080p
- Final watch-through on a phone speaker to catch audio issues before upload

Reflection: Production Honest Audit

- Watch the first 60 seconds of your last (or first) video with the sound off. Would a stranger know within 10 seconds what the video is about and who it is for? What would you change?
 - Which part of the production process takes you the longest right now, and what is one specific change you could make to cut that time in half?
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YouTube SEO and Discoverability

Optimise every upload so YouTube's algorithm and Google search send the right viewers to your videos at the right time.

Worksheet: Video SEO Optimisation Sheet

Complete this sheet for each video before you hit Publish. Copy the finalised values into YouTube Studio. Final video title (under 60 characters, primary keyword in the first 5 words):

Primary keyword (exact phrase, as researched):

Secondary keyword 1:

Secondary keyword 2:

Description line 1 (first 125 characters — visible before 'Show more', must include primary keyword):

Description paragraph 2 (2-4 sentences expanding on video content with secondary keywords):

Timestamps (list at least 3: format MM:SS Title):

Links in description (your next video, playlist, and one external resource):

Tags (list 5-10: start with exact-match keyword, then broad variants, then channel topic):

Playlist this video belongs to:

Thumbnail file name before upload (should contain the keyword, e.g. how-to-grow-youtube-channel.jpg):

Category selected in YouTube Studio:

Exercise: Thumbnail Split-Test Lab

Thumbnails drive click-through rate (CTR), which is one of YouTube's strongest ranking signals. A good CTR for a new channel is 4-10%. Complete this exercise before designing your next thumbnail.

- Open the YouTube search results for your primary keyword. Screenshot or list the thumbnails of the top 5 videos. What colours, fonts, face expressions, and text patterns do they share?
- Now design a thumbnail that breaks at least one of those patterns while still being instantly readable at 120x68 pixels. Describe your design: background colour, subject/image, text (3-5 words max), and how it creates curiosity or a value promise.
- Create a second thumbnail variant (Version B) that changes only ONE element from Version A (e.g. different text, different facial expression, or different background). Describe the difference.
- After your video reaches 500 impressions in YouTube Studio, check the CTR for each variant. Which performed better and what does that tell you about your audience?

Checklist: Post-Upload SEO Checklist

- Title contains primary keyword and is under 60 characters
- First 125 characters of description include primary keyword and a hook
- At least 3 timestamps added to description
- 5-10 tags added: exact keyword first, then broad variants
- Custom thumbnail uploaded (not auto-generated)
- Video added to a relevant playlist immediately after upload
- End screen added: at least one video suggestion and one subscribe button
- Cards added at relevant moments pointing to a related video or playlist
- Pinned comment posted within 30 minutes of going live (question to viewers)

[] Video shared to at least one external platform (community post, Reddit, forum, or newsletter) within 24 hours

[] Subtitles/captions uploaded or auto-captions reviewed and corrected

Reflection: SEO Reality Check

• Look at the Click-Through Rate (CTR) of your last three videos in YouTube Studio > Analytics > Reach. If any are below 3%, identify whether the problem is the thumbnail, the title, or the mismatch between the two.

• Which of your videos is currently ranking highest in YouTube search results for its target keyword, and what did you do differently on that video?

Analytics, Growth, and Monetisation Pathways

Read your data like a scorecard, fix what is hurting growth, and plan the first revenue streams that make sense before 1,000 subscribers.

Exercise: Channel Metrics Baseline Snapshot

Open YouTube Studio > Analytics. Pull the last 28 days of data and record every number below. Do this on the same date each month to track progress. If your channel is brand new, record all zeros and revisit after your first 5 uploads.

• Record your baseline metrics: Subscribers (total and +/- last 28 days), Views (last 28 days), Watch time in hours (last 28 days), Average View Duration (minutes:seconds), Click-Through Rate % (last 28 days), and Top Traffic Source (Browse, Search, Suggested, or External).

• Look at the Audience Retention graph for your most-viewed video. At what timestamp do the most viewers drop off? What was happening in the video at that moment?

• Which video has the highest Watch Time in the last 28 days? Compare its title, thumbnail, and topic to your lowest-performing video. List 3 differences.

• Set one 30-day goal for each metric: Views target, Watch time target, Subscriber gain target. Write the specific number and the one action you will take to hit it.

Worksheet: Monetisation Readiness Planner

You do not need 1,000 subscribers to earn money. Fill this worksheet to identify which revenue paths you can activate now, soon, and later.

Current subscriber count:

Current total watch hours (lifetime):

YouTube Partner Program eligibility: 1,000 subscribers + 4,000 watch hours OR 10M Shorts views in 90 days — how far away are you? (e.g. '600 subs, 1,200 h remaining')

Affiliate product 1 you could honestly recommend to your audience (product name + affiliate network):

Affiliate product 2:

Digital product idea you could sell TODAY on Gumroad or Patreon for \$5-\$29 (e.g. template, checklist, guide):

Brand/sponsorship niche you could target at 1,000 subscribers (be specific: e.g. 'budget audio gear brands' not 'tech brands'):

Email list platform you will use to capture subscribers off-platform (Mailchimp, ConvertKit, etc.):

Lead magnet (free download) you will offer in exchange for email sign-ups:

Your 90-day monetisation milestone: what will you have earned or launched by then?

Checklist: Monthly Growth Review Checklist

- Record all 6 baseline metrics in a spreadsheet (Views, Watch time, Subs, AVD, CTR, Top traffic source)
- Identify the single highest-retention video this month and reverse-engineer why it held attention
- Identify the single lowest-CTR video and either re-thumbnail or update the title
- Check Search tab in Analytics: note the top 3 search terms already driving traffic organically
- Add those 3 search terms as ideas for future videos if not already planned
- Review comment section: write down the most common question asked — turn it into a video
- Check whether any video hit 1,000 views this month — if yes, study it as a template
- Confirm next 4 weeks of video ideas are in your content calendar with publish dates
- Test one new format or thumbnail style this month
- Post one Community tab update or Shorts if over 500 subscribers to boost algorithmic signals

Reflection: Growth Strategy Debrief

- Look at your subscriber growth over the last 30 days. Was the growth driven more by Search traffic, Suggested videos, or Browse features? What does this tell you about where you should focus your optimisation energy next month?

- If you could only publish two types of videos for the next 90 days — one proven format that already works on your channel and one new experiment — what would each be and why?

Your Action Plan

1. Complete the Channel Identity Blueprint worksheet before touching YouTube Studio — every field, no blanks.
2. Run the Channel Setup Checklist and tick off all 10 items within 48 hours of starting Module 1.
3. Use the Video Idea Validation Sheet for your first 3 video ideas and only script the one that scores highest on search demand and differentiation.
4. Record and edit your channel trailer first: 60-90 seconds, hook in the first 5 seconds, clear statement of who the channel is for.
5. Script your first 3 videos using the HOOK-BRIDGE-CONTENT-CTA framework before recording any of them — batching scripts saves production time.
6. Fill in the Video SEO Optimisation Sheet for every video before you hit Publish — treat it as a non-negotiable pre-flight checklist.
7. Design two thumbnail variants (A and B) for each of your first 5 videos and check CTR at 500 impressions to learn what resonates with your audience.
8. After your 5th upload, open YouTube Analytics and complete the Channel Metrics Baseline Snapshot exercise to set your first data-driven growth targets.
9. Identify one affiliate product or simple digital product you can promote in your first 10 videos — revenue before the YPP threshold is real.
10. Run the Monthly Growth Review Checklist on the same date every month and adjust your content calendar based on what the data shows.

