

YouTube SEO Checklist

Complete Steps to Optimise Every Video

Here's the full checklist, split into four stages that match how a video actually gets made.

Before Planning the Video

9 steps

These are the research and planning steps to work through before you script or film anything.

- ☐ Define the intended viewer's experience level, problem, and desired outcome.
- ☐ Identify the viewer's job to be done after watching.
- ☐ Determine the search intent (tutorial, comparison, review, etc.)
- ☐ Select one primary search query for the video.
- ☐ Identify related viewer questions.
- ☐ Review the current ranking videos for gaps.
- ☐ Check whether Google displays video results for the query.
- ☐ Identify the content gap.
- ☐ Choose the correct video format and depth.

During Production

8 steps

These are the content, retention, visual, structural, transcript, and end-screen decisions you'll make while actually producing the video.

- ☐ Create an answer-first outline.
- ☐ Match the opening to the title and thumbnail.
- ☐ Improve the first 30 seconds.
- ☐ Demonstrate instead of only explaining.
- ☐ Remove repetition and delayed answers.
- ☐ Organise the video into logical sections.
- ☐ Plan accurate captions and transcripts.
- ☐ Plan the next relevant video.

Before Publishing

11 steps

These are the title, thumbnail, description, chapter, caption, tag, playlist, card, and upload-setting steps to knock out right before the video goes live.

- ☐ Write a search-aligned video title.
- ☐ Create an accurate custom thumbnail.
- ☐ Write a useful video description.
- ☐ Add descriptive video chapters.
- ☐ Upload and review captions.
- ☐ Use tags selectively
- ☐ Use hashtags sparingly
- ☐ Review video classification and compliance settings.
- ☐ Add the video to a relevant playlist.
- ☐ Add cards and an end screen.
- ☐ Review the pinned comment.

After Publishing

6 steps

These are the analytics, diagnosis, engagement, testing, and updating steps you'll come back to once the video is live.

- ☐ Review impressions and click-through rate.
- ☐ Review average view duration and percentage viewed.
- ☐ Analyse audience-retention dips and spikes.
- ☐ Review search terms and traffic sources.
- ☐ Test titles and thumbnails
- ☐ Update underperforming evergreen videos.