

YouTube Script Template

Long-form + Shorts script structures, 5 hook formulas, and a retention checklist.

Part 1 — Long-Form Video Script (8–12 minutes)

HOOK (0:00 – 0:15)

One or two sentences. State the promise or the stakes. No intro, no logo, no 'hey guys'.

[Write your hook here — pick one of the 5 hook formulas. Say the most interesting true thing about this video first.]

SETUP (0:15 – 0:45)

Context the viewer needs to care. Establish credibility in one line, preview the structure in one line.

[Why should the viewer trust you on this? What are the 2–3 things you'll cover? Keep it under 4 sentences.]

CONTENT BLOCK 1 (0:45 – ~3:00)

Your first main point. Lead with the most valuable insight — don't save the best for last.

[Point → example → takeaway. End the block with an open loop: 'but that only works if you avoid this next mistake...']

RE-HOOK (~3:00)

Retention dips around the 3-minute mark. Re-open the loop.

[Tease what's coming: 'The next one is the mistake even big channels make.']

CONTENT BLOCK 2 (~3:00 – 6:00)

Second main point. Vary the format: switch from talking-head to screen-share, b-roll, or a story.

[Point → example → takeaway.]

CONTENT BLOCK 3 (~6:00 – 8:30)

Third main point or worked example that ties blocks 1–2 together.

[A concrete walkthrough beats an abstract explanation. Show, don't summarize.]

PAYOFF (~8:30 – 9:30)

Deliver the full promise from the hook. This is what the viewer clicked for.

[The answer, the reveal, the final number, the finished result.]

CTA + NEXT VIDEO (last 20–30s)

One CTA only. Point to ONE next video that continues this topic — not 'check out my channel'.

['If you want the exact checklist I used, watch this next.' End-screen the specific video.]

Part 2 — YouTube Shorts Script (under 35 seconds)

HOOK (0:00 – 0:01.5)

[First frame + first line must stop the scroll. Text on screen mirrors the spoken hook.]

BUILD (0:01.5 – 0:20)

[One idea only. Cut every word that isn't load-bearing — Shorts scripts are ~2.5 words/second.]

PAYOFF (0:20 – 0:28)

[Deliver the promise fast. The payoff should land 2–3 seconds before the end.]

LOOP (final 1–2s)

[End on a line that flows back into the opening frame so rewatches feel seamless.]

Part 3 — 5 Hook Formulas That Retain

The stakes hook

“This one decision cost me 40,000 subscribers.” Open with what’s at risk or what was lost/gained — numbers make it concrete.

The contrarian hook

“Everything you’ve heard about YouTube SEO is outdated.” Challenge a belief your viewer already holds.

The curiosity-gap hook

“There’s a reason 90% of channels stall at 1,000 subs — and it’s not the algorithm.” Promise a specific answer, withhold it.

The in-medias-res hook

Start mid-action with the most dramatic moment of the video, then cut back: “So how did we get here?”

The direct-promise hook

“By the end of this video you’ll know exactly which niche to pick.” State the exact payoff and who it’s for.

Part 4 — Pre-Publish Retention Checklist

- The hook states the promise or stakes within 15 seconds
- No section runs longer than 3 minutes without a format change or re-hook
- Every content block ends with an open loop into the next
- The payoff fully delivers what the title + thumbnail promised
- Exactly one CTA, pointing at one specific next video
- Read the script aloud once — cut every sentence that made you speed up