



How to make accessible Videos

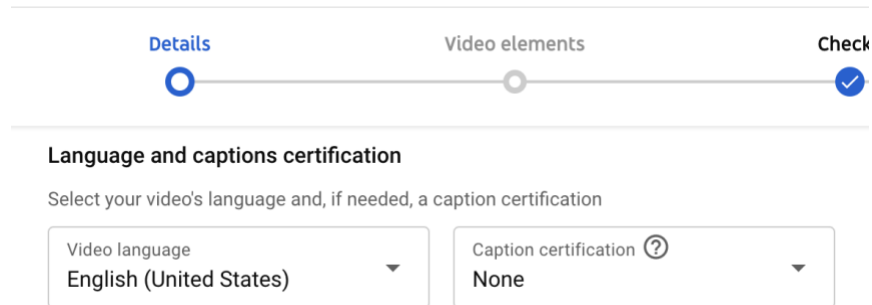
Making videos accessible is achieved using several techniques and software programs. Depending on the software program and operating system you are using, the steps and processes may vary however the steps will be similar. In this document we will focus on using YouTube. The accessibility tips below are designed to make a video accessible for both viewers with visual impairments and hearing impairments, however, they can also be useful for everyone (i.e. closed captions can be used by users who prefer to mute the audio, or descriptive voice overs can be used by users who prefer to listen to the content of the video).

1. Always include **closed captions (subtitles)**

- a. There are many companies and tools to add closed captions to your videos. Some examples include:
 - i. [Amara](#);
 - ii. [Dotsub](#);
 - iii. [Subtitle Horse](#); and
 - iv. [YouTube Auto-captions](#)
- b. We will focus on using YouTube's free Auto-caption tool which uses artificial intelligence to transcribe spoken word in your video to text.
- c. The key steps to add captions across software programs:
 - i. **Upload** the video
 - ii. **Generate** the captions
 - You can use the automatic caption technology or watch and transcribe the video using a tool.
 - iii. **Review** and **edit** the captions
 - Most importantly, auto-generated captions will need to be proof-read by you to ensure they have accurately captured the audio in the video.
 - iv. **Download** the captions if you plan to use them offline.
- d. The steps to add auto captions to YouTube is as follows:
 - i. **Sign-in** to your YouTube account
 - ii. **Upload** your video to YouTube

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- iii. Add your **video details**
 - While the video is uploading and processing, you can add a clear and descriptive title and a helpful description. This will help users understand what your video is about before watching it.
- iv. Choose the **video language**
 - Scroll down to press “Show More” > then scroll down again to find the box “Video language”. You will not be able to use auto-captions without this.



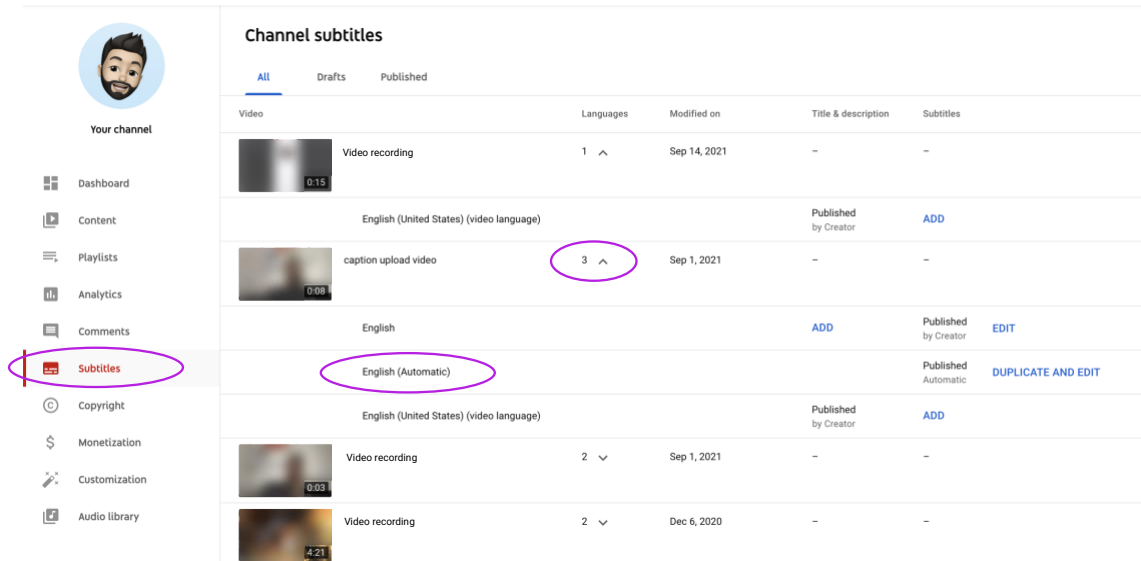
The screenshot shows a progress bar at the top with three steps: 'Details' (active, blue circle), 'Video elements' (grey circle), and 'Check' (checked, blue circle with checkmark). Below the progress bar is the 'Language and captions certification' section. It contains the text 'Select your video's language and, if needed, a caption certification'. There are two dropdown menus: 'Video language' set to 'English (United States)' and 'Caption certification' set to 'None'.

Figure 1 A dialog box showing YouTube Language and Caption settings

- v. Press Next
- vi. Skip “Add subtitles”
 - On the “Video elements” tab, you can **skip** the option “Add subtitles.” If you have a subtitle file you can upload it here and it will auto-match the subtitles to your video.
- vii. Press Next
- viii. Check for copyright issues
 - On the Checks screen you can confirm there are no copyright issues > if none found press Next.
- ix. Choose **video visibility** and press **save**
 - Your video is now published you can close the popup.
- x. Press on the **subtitles** tab
 - You should see your uploaded videos in a list. In the left-hand menu one of the options is the “subtitles” tab.
- xi. Display the **subtitle tracks**
 - Press the down arrow with the number under the *Languages* heading to see how many subtitle languages you have.
 - If the auto-caption process is complete it will display your language (i.e.. *English*) with the text (Automatic) in brackets next to it.

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- If you don't see this, you may have to wait until the process is complete. So have a cup of coffee and then come back and refresh your browser.



The screenshot shows the YouTube Channel Subtitles management interface. On the left is a navigation menu with 'Subtitles' highlighted. The main area is titled 'Channel subtitles' and contains a table of subtitle entries for various videos. The 'English (Automatic)' entry is circled in purple, and its '3' language count is also circled. The 'English' entry for the 'caption upload video' has a 'DUPLICATE AND EDIT' button.





Video	Languages	Modified on	Title & description	Subtitles
 Video recording	1 ^	Sep 14, 2021	-	-
English (United States) (video language)				Published by Creator ADD
 caption upload video	3 ^	Sep 1, 2021	-	-
English				ADD Published by Creator EDIT
English (Automatic)				Published Automatic DUPLICATE AND EDIT
English (United States) (video language)				Published by Creator ADD
 Video recording	2 v	Sep 1, 2021	-	-
 Video recording	2 v	Dec 6, 2020	-	-

Figure 2 A window showing YouTube channel subtitle options

- xii. **Duplicate and edit** the auto generated caption file
 - Press the “Duplicate and edit” button to the far right of the subtitles screen.
- xiii. **Edit** the caption file
 - Now edit each caption and adjust the timings if it doesn't match the video. You can even type while it's playing.

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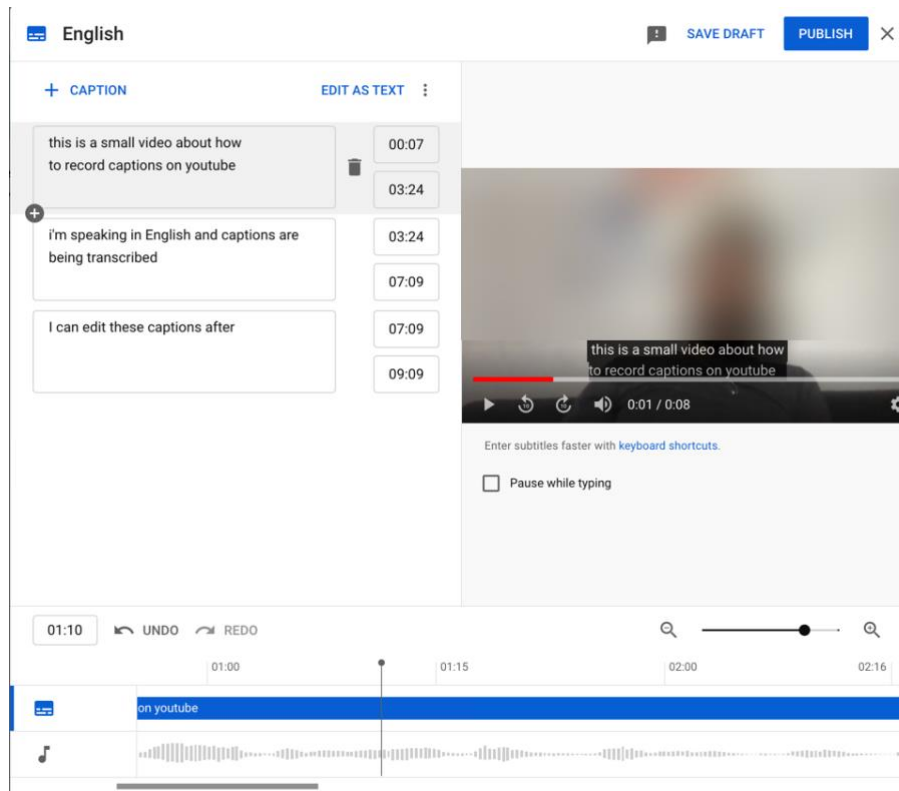


Figure 3 A window showing editing captions in YouTube

- xiv. **Publish** your caption track
- xv. **Watch** the video
 - You can turn on captions by pressing the [CC] button at the bottom of the YouTube window.
- e. You can **download** the captions in several formats to add to your videos offline. A caption file is a text file with start and stop times for each group of words. The type of caption file you need to download depends on the website or software you are intending to use them with. Please consult the documentation of that software.

Languages	Modified on	Title & description	Subtitles
2 ^	Sep 14, 2021	-	-
		Published by Creator	EDIT ⋮

- Unpublish
- Download →
- Delete

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Figure 4 A close up of the download subtitle menu in YouTube

- f. Check the **color contrast** of the captions you are adding so that they are readable by all users. For example, using a dark background against white text can make your captions easier to read.
 - i. YouTube includes options to customize how the closed captions appear.

2. Create a descriptive **voice-over** or **audio description**

- a. If you have a video with a lot of visual content but no voice-over, a user with a visual impairment may not be able to understand the content in the video.
- b. A descriptive voice-over that explicitly describes all the content in the video, for example “An eagle takes flight and soars over a river.” If the video is a text-based presentation, all the text must be read out loud “you can see five points...”
- c. If the video’s voice-over is not sufficient to be able to understand the content of the video, you will need to create a separate audio description track, and include that track in your video for users to access,
 - i. The process of adding your audio description will vary depending on the software you are using to view the video. In YouTube, it is generally common for a second video with the audio description track mixed in to be provided. This also requires re-doing the closed captions so they match the audio description.

3. Consider **audio** and **music levels**

- a. The balance between the voice track and the background music and sound can greatly affect a viewer’s ability to hear and understand. This can be particularly challenging for users with hearing loss but can also affect users with learning impairments who have difficulty focusing and with comprehension.

4. Avoid videos with **flashing** imagery

- a. Flashing content in videos can lead to seizures for some users and is likely to be distracting for other users. If the video contains flashes, ensure you include a warning so users can opt out of watching it. If you are unsure, check your video does not cross the [three flashes or below threshold](#). You should not have more than three flashes within a period of 1 second.

5. Provide a **transcript**

- a. Providing a link to download the transcript of your video can benefit users who are deaf-blind as they will be able to convert the transcript to Braille to understand the content.
- b. To download a transcript from YouTube:
 - i. Click on the three dots next to the save button,
 - ii. Press on “Open transcript,”
 - iii. From the list of sentences of text, press the three dots above the text and press “Toggle timestamps,”
 - iv. Select the first word,
 - v. Scroll-to the bottom of the transcript,
 - vi. Holding down the shift key, click on the final word,
 - vii. Copy and Paste into any Word Processor.

6. Include **sign language**

- a. You can also add sign language to existing videos or create entirely new pieces of content like sign language video books. This requires fluency in sign language and experience in recording sign language videos. Successful approaches require working with a deaf centric team and specialist interpreter from a school district or Deaf support service. It is recommended to:
 - i. Reach out to Deaf people and experts to find resources;
 - ii. Check the [catalog](#) for freely available Deaf materials;
 - iii. Ensure content you are providing is in **local** sign language.

NOTE: Sign language is different in each country and region. It is an interpreted language and does not follow the same structure as English, nor the same symbols in each country. Signing each word individually is called ‘exact English sign’ and is not recommended.

- b. If you are attempting to create your own sign language videos, the following guidelines can help:
 - i. Use **local** sign language,
 - ii. Include **deaf** persons in the recording process,
 - iii. Ensure **fluency in sign language** for interpreters,
 - iv. Be mindful of **deaf culture** and the deaf community,
 - v. Ensure **high quality** recording,

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- vi. Wear **simple clothing** the **contrasts** with the skin tone of the interpreter and the background – no stripes or patterns, no V-necks or scooped neck lines – long sleeves preferred,
 - vii. **Hair** should not obscure the face or hands,
 - viii. Ensure the interpreter is **well lit**,
 - ix. Ensure the **speed** is appropriate for the target age – if young children, the sign language speed should be slower.
- c. For more information on creating sign language video, refer to Annex D in the [Emerging Lessons document](#) developed as part of UNICEF’s Accessible Digital Textbooks initiative.
 - d. Some schools and communities have successfully collaborated with parents who use sign language to create videos for pupils to use. This can be a good use of expertise in the community that is otherwise untapped.

7. Test your video with an **accessible video player** and with **persons with disabilities**

- a. Try your video out using the target video player you intend the video to be consumed on. Some built in online video players inside of platforms like education portals, may not support captions. It is important to test with these video players before you distribute your content.
- b. The best way to test your video is directly with persons with disabilities. You will be able to discover usability issues and correct these before this is distributed to a wider audience.

Additional Links

Read more about ways to make your word documents accessible:

- <https://webaim.org/techniques/word/>
- <https://www.washington.edu/accessibility/videos/>
- <https://www.boia.org/blog/checklist-for-creating-accessible-videos>
- <https://digital.gov/2014/06/30/508-accessible-videos-why-and-how-to-make-them/>