



Creating Captions with YouTube

This guide will walk you through how to create and edit captions with YouTube, as well as some basic information about captions and transcripts.

Why Caption?

Captioning isn't just for students who are deaf and/or hard of hearing. It helps students who don't speak English as their first language, those who may need to watch videos with the sound muted, and those who learn best by seeing and hearing the material. It also helps viewers learn new vocabulary. If a student doesn't have a good internet connection, a transcript is very useful. Content in multiple mediums helps everyone learn better; it's a principle of Universal Design for Learning. In a 2016 study by the [Oregon State University Ecampus Research Unit](#), most students report using closed captions for maintaining focus, comprehension, and retention. Transcripts are often used as study aids.

Legally, multi-media needs to be accessible.

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Captioning Terms

- **Subtitles** are transcript files with time codes (aka a time-stamped transcript). These tell the computer when to display the text on the screen. Technically, YouTube creates subtitles.
- **Transcripts** are just text - where all spoken words from the audio are presented textually. An audio-only clip will only have a transcript or a time-stamped transcript.
- True **Captions** display all sounds from the audio (spoken words, background noises/music, etc.) in text form synced to display with the video and have standards for sizing, color, etc. Captions are typically professionally produced.
- **Video Description** (aka Audio Description) is used in order provide access for users who are visually impaired. This is where all meaningful content that is provided visually (which is not also provided in the dialog) is described. Think of video description like a screenplay.

YouTube and Accuracy

You may wonder, "Why not just use the Automatic Captions in YouTube?" YouTube's Automatic Captions create a somewhat accurate time-based transcript. It used to be very inaccurate; however, it's been improving greatly. With clear, moderately spaced speakers, automatic captions may give you about 80% accuracy, but right now they provide **no** punctuation. The **meaning** needs to be clear for all users. To be accessible, everyone should have **equal access** to your communication, and you'll want to make sure your students have an **accurate** account of what you're saying. It doesn't look good on your part to have lots of errors, especially on new vocabulary!

YouTube Help offers up-to-date, step-by-step guidance on how to [Add your own subtitles & closed captions](#).

Getting Started

These directions assume you have the following items:

1. Video file you would like to caption
2. Transcript that matches the audio in the video (optional)
3. Google account
4. Text editor

Video File

In order to upload a video to YouTube, you'll need to have a video in one of these [supported formats](#).

The video file also needs to be no longer than 15 minutes (and no larger than 2 GB.) If you have a verified YouTube account, you will be allowed to upload longer videos. However, it's really best to break up longer lectures into smaller segments.

If you must upload videos longer than 15 minutes, YouTube provides directions for [Computer, Android, and iPhone & iPad](#).

Transcript

This guide will walk you through the steps for using an existing transcript and creating a transcript using YouTube.

Transcript files need to be in .txt format to work with YouTube. If you have the text in another document format, you'll just need to convert/save it to plain text.

Caption File

If you happen to already have a caption file (time-stamped transcript), you can upload it to YouTube as well.

[Supported YouTube subtitle and caption file formats](#)

Google Account

If you don't have a Google account, navigate to **Google Accounts** <https://myaccount.google.com/> and choose **Create an Account**.

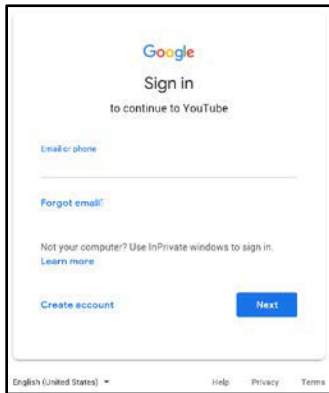
Sign into YouTube and set up a YouTube Channel

Note: Due to recent changes with how Google allows its applications to work (or not work) in other browsers, **Chrome** may provide a better experience when working with your YouTube channel.

1. Go to **YouTube**: <http://www.youtube.com/>
2. Click on the **Sign In** button – it will be on the upper right corner.



3. Use your Google account credentials to **Sign In**.



4. Set up your [Channel](#) on YouTube. (Check out the [directions on creating a new channel](#). Option: If you wish to use a business or other name, check out options for Brand Accounts.)

YouTube offers additional guidance on signing up [managing your account and channels](#)

Privacy and Community Guidelines

Depending on your personal privacy preferences, you'll want to check out Google's [protecting your identity information](#).

Please be aware that identity/privacy features may be updated from time to time, so pay attention to any updates in the same way you would for any other social media.

You may have seen stories in the news about issues with censorship in how YouTube applies how it holds content creators to allegedly vague and/or unevenly applied **Community Guidelines**. Keep this in mind when posting content. For example, YouTube has in the past blocked or age-restricted what is seemingly clear fair use of copyrighted material for education purposes, as well as educational material about controversial figures and topics. All content creators should become familiar with the [Community Guidelines](#).

Copyright

YouTube provides helpful information on copyright, fair use and creative commons, including protecting your own [copyrighted content](#).

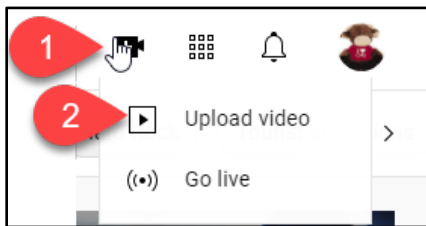
Remember that you can only post video that you have the rights to post. YouTube explains what's going on if you've ever had a video removed with a [Takedown Notice or an automatic Content ID Match](#).

YouTube Account Verification

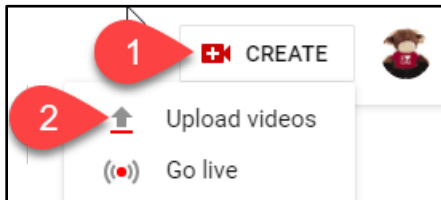
To verify your YouTube account, go to: <https://www.youtube.com/verify>. Or, you can navigate to the Status and features area in your Channel settings. Verifying your account allows you to upload videos longer than 15 minutes if needed. The maximum file size is 128GB.

Upload your video

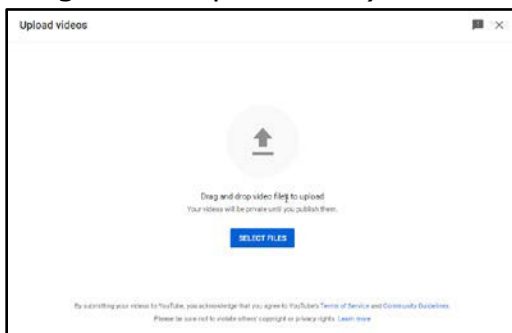
1. Click on the **Add Video** (webcam) icon and choose the **Upload** video option at the top right of the screen.



Alternately, if you are already in your channel, click **Create** (webcam) icon and choose the **Upload** videos option at the top right of the screen.

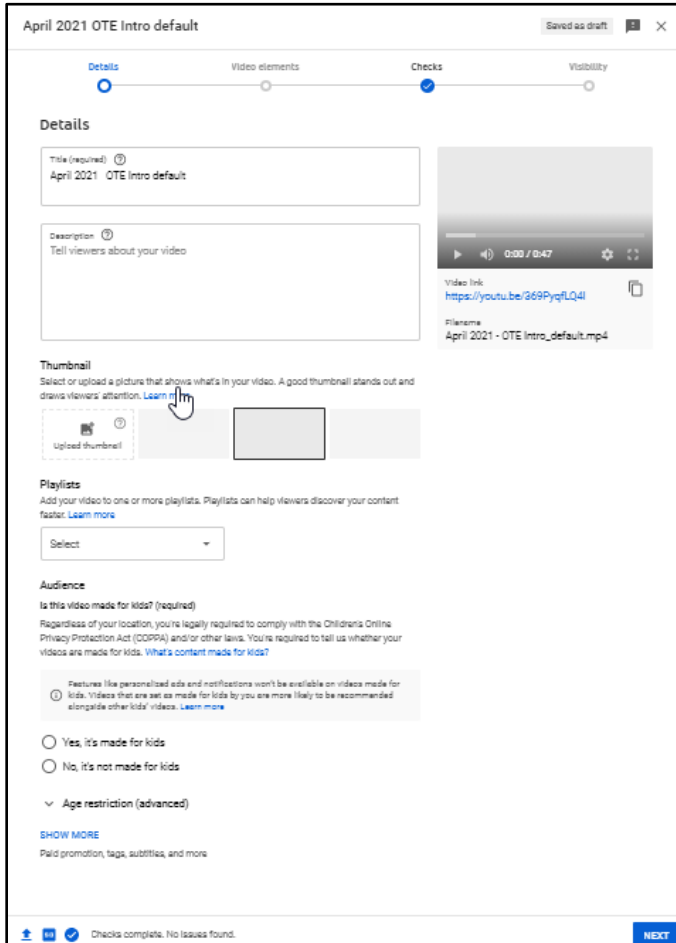


2. **Select Files** to upload. (You have the option browse your computer for the file or drag and drop the file.)



3. Once you've uploaded your video, YouTube needs some time to process the video.

4. Add a **Title** and **Audience** (required) and any optional details such as applicable **Description**, **Thumbnail** selection, **Playlist** selection, etc. Click on Show More to access additional options such as **Tags**.



April 2021 OTE Intro default

Details

Title (required) ①
April 2021 - OTE Intro default

Description ②
Tell viewers about your video

Thumbnail
Select or upload a picture that shows what's in your video. A good thumbnail stands out and draws viewers' attention. [Learn more](#)

Upload thumbnail

Playlists
Add your video to one or more playlists. Playlists can help viewers discover your content faster. [Learn more](#)

Select

Audience
Is this video made for kids? (required)
Regardless of your location, you're legally required to comply with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) and/or other laws. You're required to tell us whether your videos are made for kids. [What's content made for kids?](#)

Features like personalized ads and notifications won't be available on videos made for kids. Videos that are set as made for kids by you are more likely to be recommended alongside other kids' videos. [Learn more](#)

☐ Yes, it's made for kids
☐ No, it's not made for kids

Age restriction (advanced)

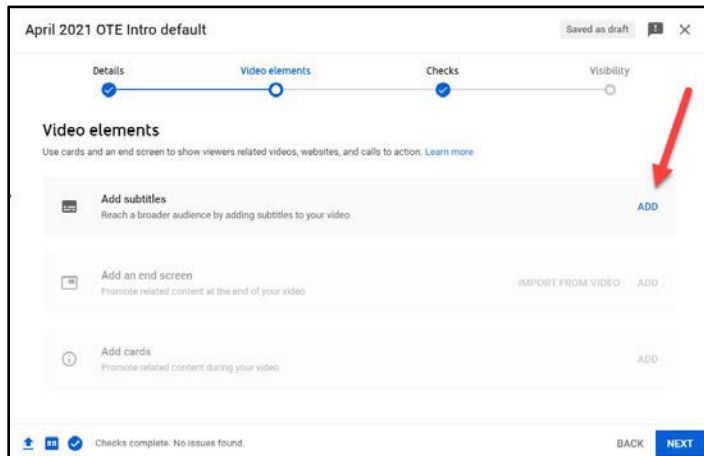
[SHOW MORE](#)
Paid promotion, tags, subtitles, and more

Checks complete. No issues found.

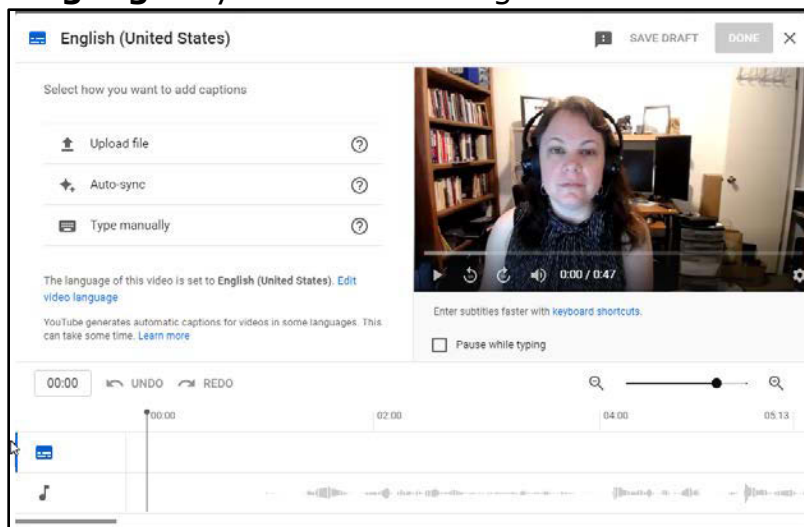
NEXT

5. Click the **Next** button once you're finished.

6. In the **Video elements** dialog, you have the opportunity to **Add subtitles, end screen, and cards**. If you already have a transcript, caption file or wish to type your own captions, click **ADD** to Add subtitles. (If you want to use or start with YouTube's automatic captions, click **NEXT** instead.)

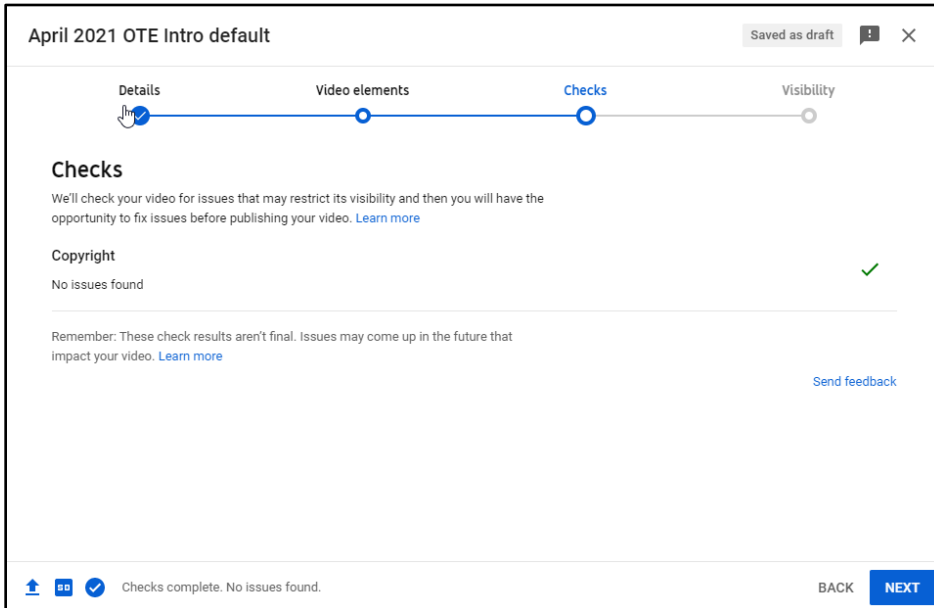


7. By default, your language will most likely be **English**; you may click **Edit video language** if you need to change this.



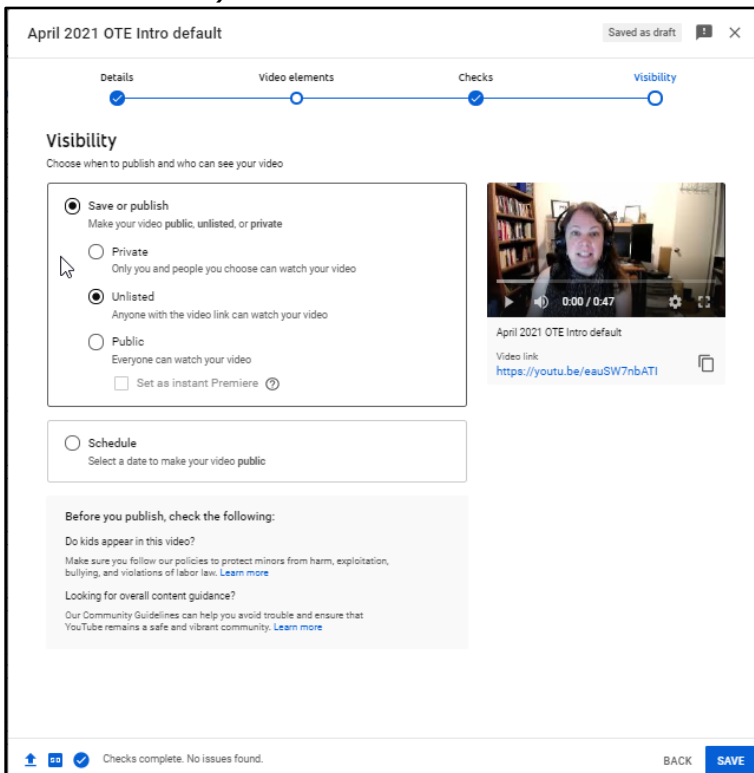
8. Then, select how you want to add captions yourself:
- **Upload file** (with timing or without timing) A subtitle or closed caption file contains the text of what is said in the video. It also contains time codes for when each line of text should be displayed. Some files also include position and style info, which is especially useful for deaf or hard of hearing viewers.
 - **Auto-sync** Type or paste in a full transcript of the video and subtitle timings will be set automatically.
 - **Type manually** Create subtitles and closed captions by typing them in as you watch the video.

9. If you skipped creating your own captions, you'll advance to **Checks**. Click **NEXT**.



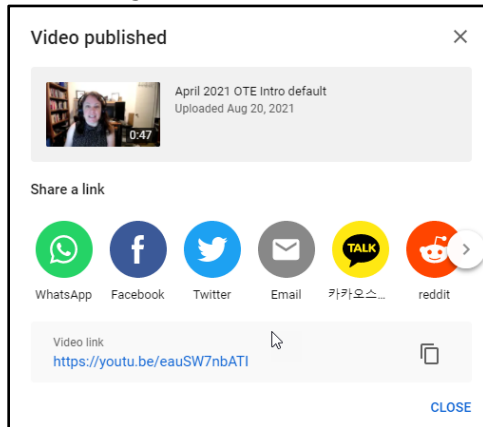
The screenshot shows the 'Checks' step in a four-part process: Details, Video elements, Checks, and Visibility. The 'Checks' step is currently active. It displays a 'Copyright' check with a green checkmark and the text 'No issues found'. Below this, a reminder states: 'Remember: These check results aren't final. Issues may come up in the future that impact your video. [Learn more](#)'. A 'Send feedback' link is also present. At the bottom, a status bar indicates 'Checks complete. No issues found.' and provides 'BACK' and 'NEXT' buttons.

10. In **Visibility**, choose when to publish and who can see your video. Click **Save** once you've made your selections. (Refer to the following [Privacy](#) section for more details.)



The screenshot shows the 'Visibility' step in the four-part process. It offers two main options: 'Save or publish' (selected) and 'Schedule'. Under 'Save or publish', there are three sub-options: 'Public' (selected), 'Unlisted', and 'Private'. A 'Set as instant Premiere' checkbox is also visible. To the right, a video player shows a thumbnail of a person with the title 'April 2021 OTE Intro default' and a video link: <https://youtu.be/eauSW7nbATI>. Below the player, a section titled 'Before you publish, check the following:' includes questions about kids appearing in the video and content guidance. The bottom status bar shows 'Checks complete. No issues found.' and 'BACK' and 'SAVE' buttons.

11. Once the video is published, you have the opportunity to **Share a link** if you wish or just click **Close**.

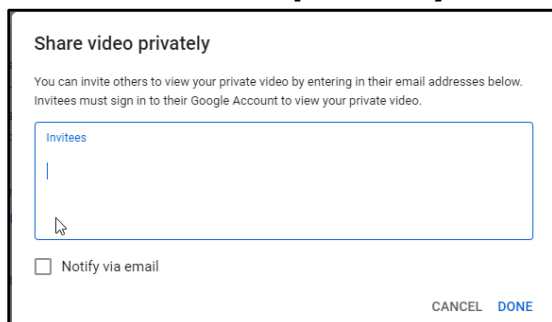


YouTube Privacy Settings

Videos are private until you publish them.

Your choices are: Public, Unlisted, Private, or Scheduled. (You are able to adjust these settings as you wish later in the Video Manager, too.)

- **Public:** Anyone anywhere with web access can see your video.
- **Unlisted:** Only people with the link to your video can see it. They don't need to have a Google account to access it, just the link. Unlisted videos won't show up in searches or on your channel page. However, people who you've shared the link with can share it with others, so it may become more public than you intended.
- **Private:** Only people you specifically add can view your video. These people must have a Google account in order to view your video, and you'll need to add them to the **Share video privately** area once you've chosen to post your video as Private.



- **Scheduled:** You may use this option to schedule a private video to go public at a specific time. (For more details, check out YouTube's directions on [scheduling video publish time](#).)

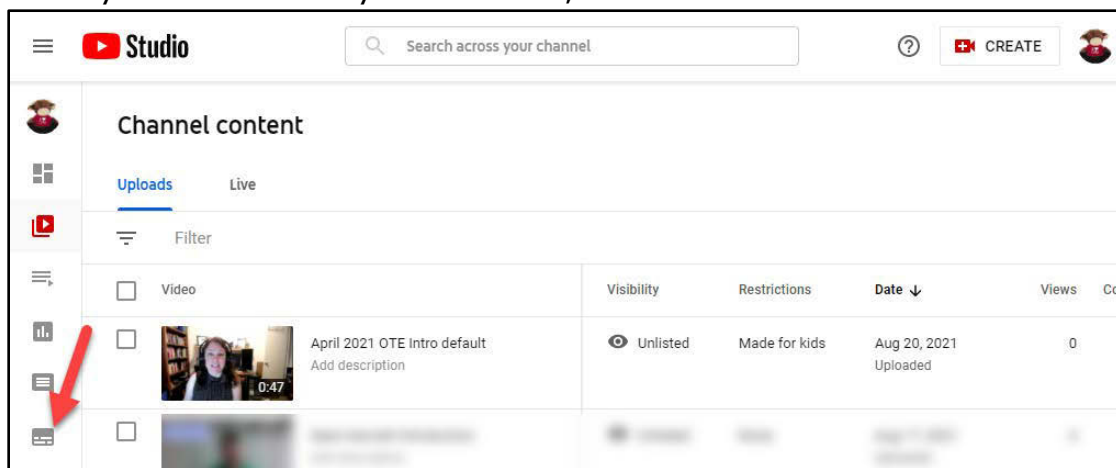
YouTube offers more information on [Video Privacy Settings](#).

For instructional videos, we suggest choosing the **Unlisted** setting unless you want others to have access to your lecture.

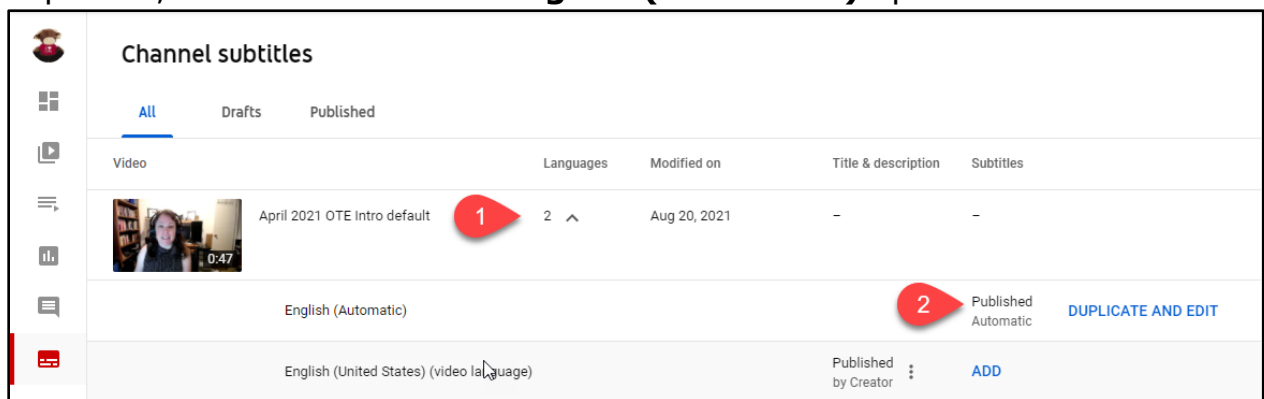
Think about others' privacy, too! If anyone appears in the video besides you, be sure that you have permission from those shown to post the material.

Add Automatic Captions/Subtitles

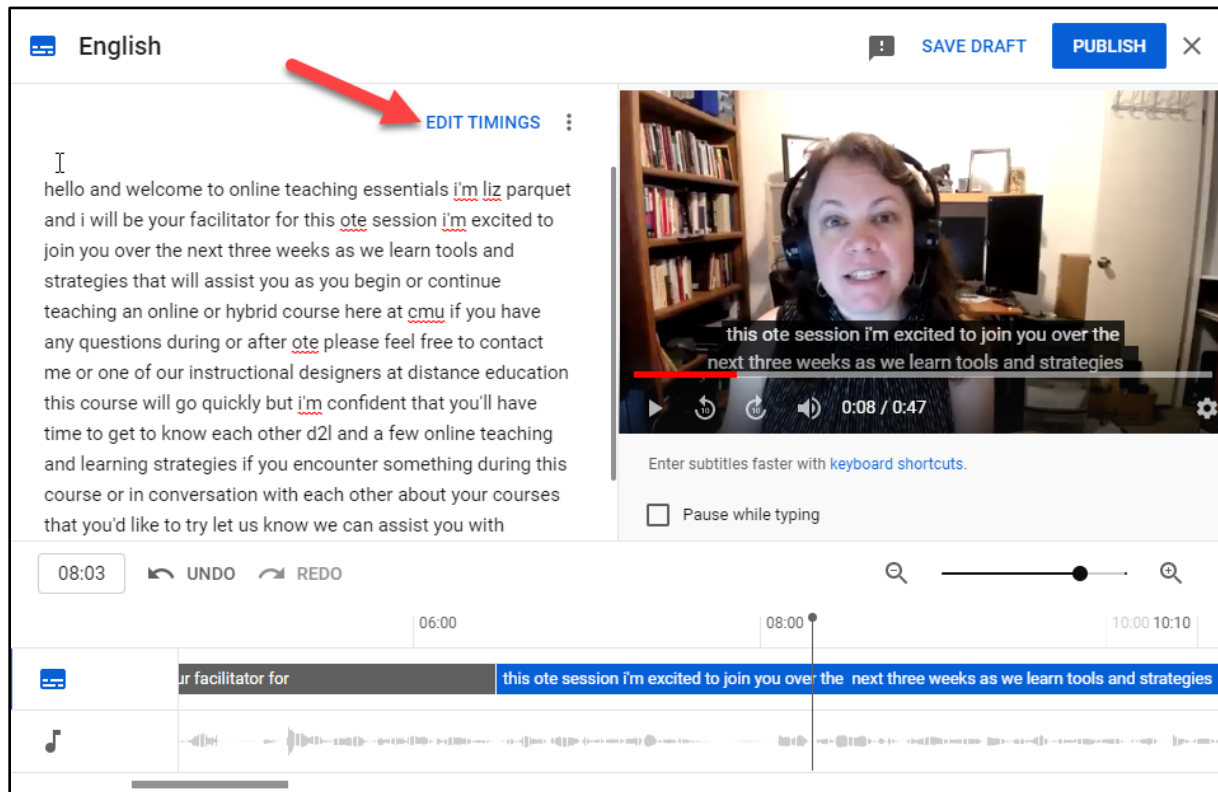
1. Once your video is in your channel, click on the **Subtitles** icon.



2. In **Channel subtitles**, find your video, click on the link under **Languages** to expand it, and then select the **English (Automatic)** option.



3. Use the editor to review your automatic captions and adjust as needed. By default, you're in the **Edit as Text** option. Click the **Edit Timings** option if you find that format easier to edit.



You'll notice that there is no punctuation or capitalization. You can add proper punctuation and capitalization and correct meaningful spelling/wording errors.

Note: If there are meaningful sound effects or non-dialog sounds that you want to be sure someone who is unable to hear the audio has access to, you can include these in the text, too, with brackets around them. Examples:

- [Sneezes]
- [Door slams]
- [Explosion]

You can **Save Draft** if you need to finish editing later. Once your edits are complete, remember to click the **Publish** button. When you save the draft or publish the edits, this creates a new English subtitles file.

Disable automatic captions

If you do not want the automatic option to pop up for viewers, you may **Unpublish** or **Delete** it in the **View subtitles** area by clicking on the **3-dot menu** beside the Published Automatic track and then selecting the **Unpublish** or **Delete** option from the dropdown menu.

Video subtitles

Language	Modified on	Title & description	Subtitles
English	Aug 23, 2021	ADD	Draft by Creator EDIT PUBLISH
English (Automatic)	Aug 20, 2021		<div> <div>2</div> <div> <div>1</div> <div>Unpublish</div> <div>Download →</div> <div>Delete</div> </div> </div>
English (United States) (video language)	Aug 20, 2021	Published by Creator	

[ADD LANGUAGE](#)

Other options

You may want to skip the automatic captions option if you have a text transcript, or a captions file already. If you have a brief video and are used to the editor, you may prefer typing your own captions.

1. Click the **ADD** button by the **English** option (not the automatic option).

Video subtitles

Language	Modified on	Title & description	Subtitles
English (Automatic)	Aug 20, 2021		Published Automatic DUPLICATE AND EDIT
English (United States) (video language)	Aug 20, 2021	Published by Creator	ADD

2. In **Select a how you want to add captions**, you'll have three choices: **Upload a file**, **Auto-sync**, or **Type manually**.

English (United States)

Select how you want to add captions

A

Upload file

?

B

Auto-sync

?

C

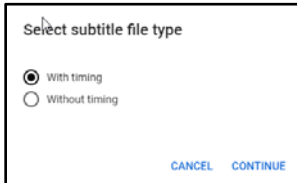
Type manually

?

Auto-translate

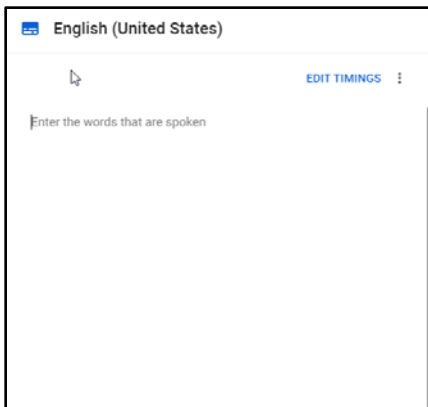
?

- a. **Upload a file:** Use this option if you already have a caption file. Check out YouTube Help's [Supported subtitle and closed caption files page](#). You'll need to select **With timing** or **Without timing**.

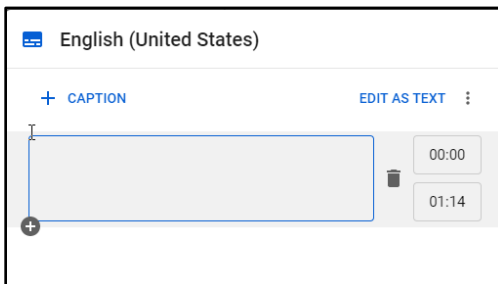


Then, select the file you wish to upload from your device. Depending on the length of the video, it will take a few minutes for the captions to process. Once they are available, you'll want to disable automatic captions.

- b. **Auto-sync:** This option allows you to type or paste a full transcript of the video and YouTube will create the subtitle timings automatically.



- c. **Type manually:** This option allows you to type or edit your subtitles/CC as in YouTube as you watch the video.



Using automatic captions to create a transcript

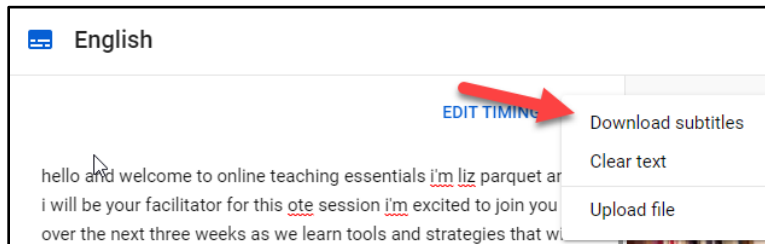
You may use this option as soon as YouTube provides automatic captions for your video.

1. Click **Edit** on the English automatic transcripts track.
2. Review the time-stamped transcript for your video. You'll probably notice some errors right away. You have two options to edit the transcript. 1) You can click on

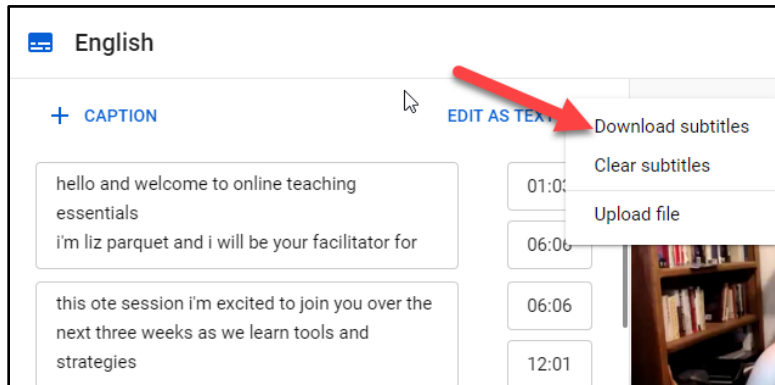
the text and/or time stamps to edit them directly in YouTube. Or, 2) you can download a copy of the time-stamped transcript and use a text editor to fix the transcript.

- Take a look at the errors. If they are minimal, such as no punctuation or a few spelling mistakes, it's probably easiest to edit directly in YouTube. If the timing is off and there is lots of incorrect text, it's probably best to edit in another program.
- If there are no Automatic Captions, possible problems may be: the video is too long, the file is too large, the sound quality is too poor, there is a long silence at the start of the video, or the audio may be jumbled due to too many speakers with overlapping dialog.

3. **Text:** If you only want text (transcript.txt file), use the Options (3-dot menu) beside **Edit Timings** to select **Download subtitles**.

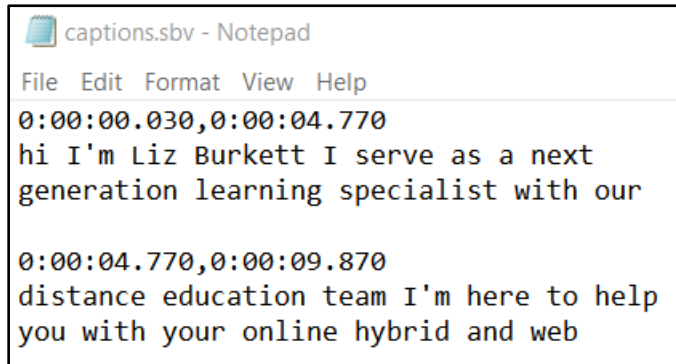


Timestamped: If you want text with time-stamps (captions.sbv file), use the Options (3-dot menu) beside **Edit Timings** to select **Download subtitles**.



4. Save the file or choose which program to use to open the file. (By default, the file will be named transcript.txt or captions.sbv.) Note: For most browsers, the file download will go to the Downloads folder by default.
5. Open the transcript.txt or captions.sbv file with **Notepad**.

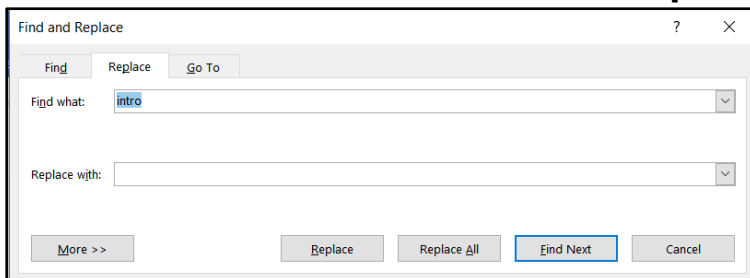
6. Edit your time-stamped transcript in Notepad.



Note: If you have Notepad++ on your computer, you can use it instead of Notepad. You can edit your transcript directly in Notepad++ and save it as a .srt file. (Notepad only allows you to save as a .txt file.)

7. If you prefer editing your transcript in Word: select all (CTRL+A) and copy (CTRL+C) all of the text from Notepad.
8. Open a new Word document
9. Paste (CTRL+V) the transcript into Word.
10. Edit the transcript.

Note: A quick way to fix proper names, course specific vocabulary or other common errors in Word is to use the **Find and Replace** feature (CTRL+F).



11. Save your transcript as a plain text file (.txt), or .sbv file if you want to keep the timestamps.

Note: If the time stamps make the editing process difficult, you may delete them and work with just the text of the transcript. YouTube is able to create time stamps with your transcript once you upload it back to YouTube. Also, if you plan on posting the transcript in D2L or Panopto at some point, go ahead and save an accessible PDF copy of the transcript you edited in Word, too.

Add your caption file or transcript

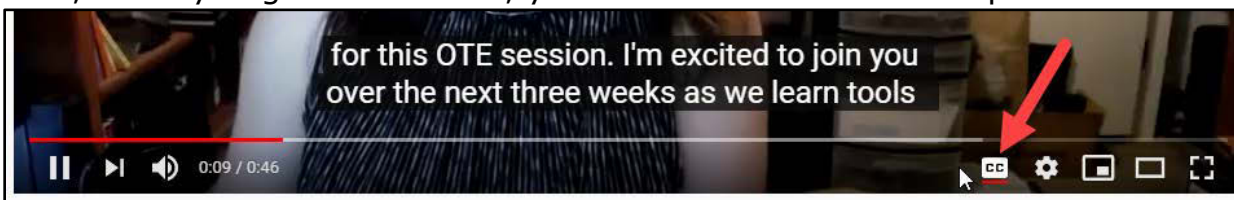
1. Navigate to your video in the **Video Manager**.
2. Click **Edit** on the English automatic transcripts track.
3. In **Select how you want to add captions**, choose **Upload a file**.
4. Choose **With timing** for **captions.sbv** file or **Without timing** for **transcript.txt** file.
5. Browse for your file.
6. Once the timings are set, you'll be able to view the scrolling transcript and the CC.
7. You may make changes as needed.
8. Once you are happy with your captions, be sure they are saved and click **Publish**.
9. YouTube will let you know that the Subtitles have been published. Once subtitles have been published, you'll need to return to the editor to make any changes.



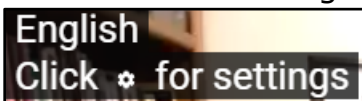
View your captions

Depending on the length of the video, it may take a few minutes for the transcript to sync with the video. Once the transcript syncs, an English (or other language) track will be added.

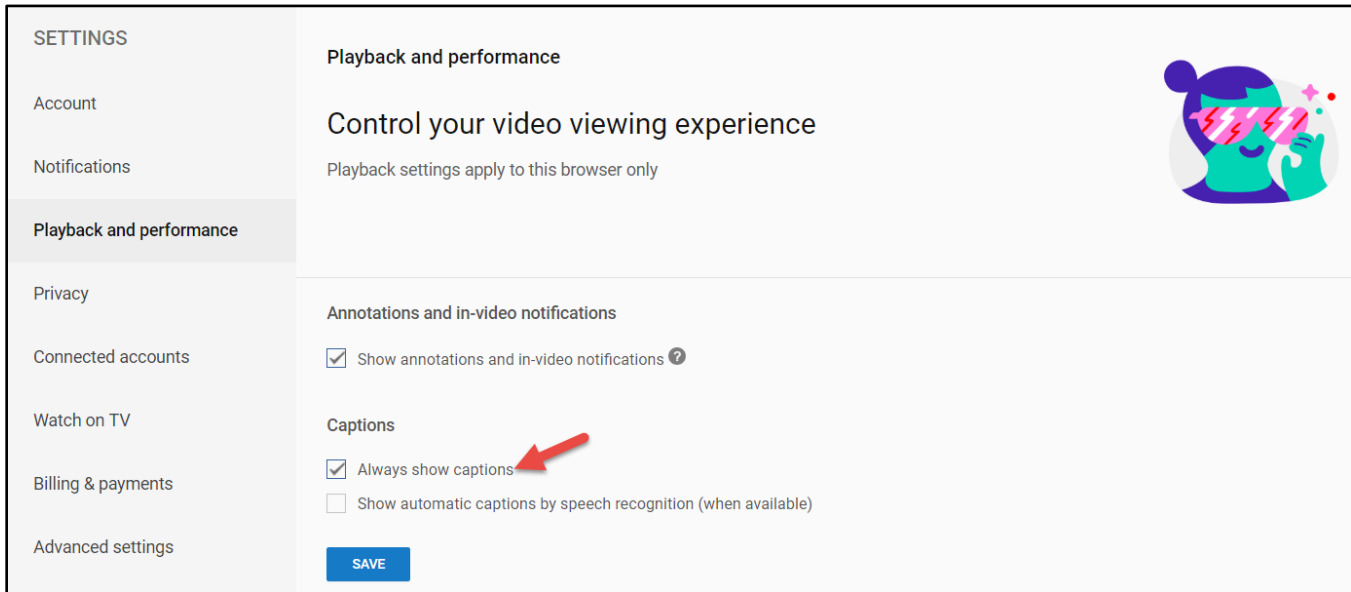
Now, when you go to the video, you should be able to see captions!



If you don't see captions, click on the CC button and make sure that the English captions are on. (The English automatic captions track is the track automatically created by YouTube. These will be your only two options unless you've uploaded additional tracks, such as another language translation.)



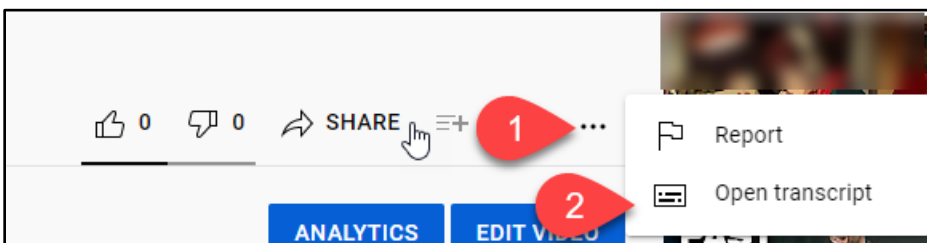
If you still don't see captions, you may need to check your YouTube [Playback settings](#) under Account Settings. In the Captions area, check the box for **Always show captions** and click **Save**.



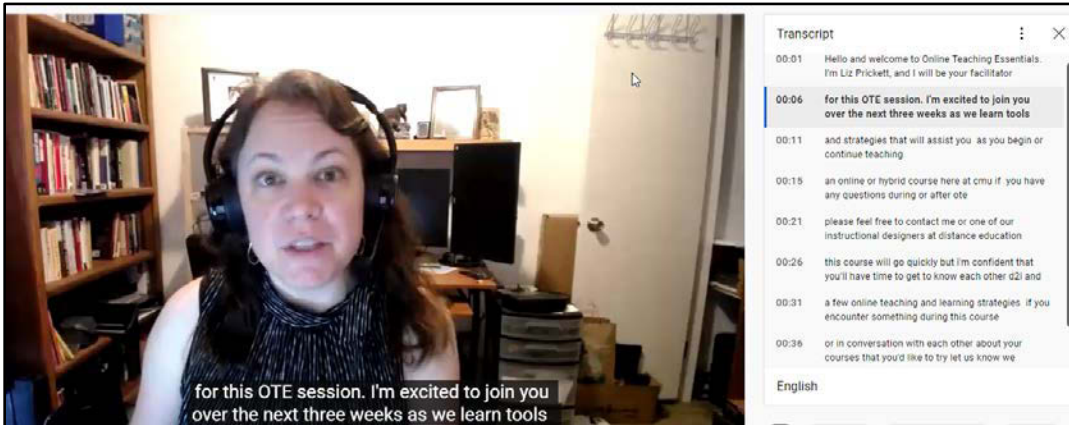
Note: Viewers will still have the option to toggle captions on or off while viewing. This just displays captions automatically when the video starts.

Interactive Transcripts

In addition to captioning, YouTube also offers an **interactive transcript** feature. Viewers may view the transcript by clicking on the **3-dot menu** and then selecting **Open Transcript**. This menu is located below the video along with the other interactive options where viewers can Like, Share, Save, etc. You have the option to view the automatic transcript (if you didn't unpublish it) or the English transcript (the one you've just created.)



Viewers can view the captions and transcript at the same time, just captions, or just the transcript. Viewers can also click on a line of text in the interactive transcript and the video will jump to that section of the video.



Note: The interactive transcript feature only works when the video is played within the YouTube player. It will not be visible if the video is embedded (i.e., embedded in D2L) or if you are using the captions you created with YouTube elsewhere (e.g., VoiceThread, Panopto, etc.). Panopto has its own version of an interactive transcript.

For more information on the [Impact of Closed Captioning and Interactive Transcripts](#), check out the research by the University of South Florida, St Petersburg.

Use your captions created with YouTube elsewhere (optional)

Maybe you don't want to share your videos with students as YouTube videos. You still have the option to use the captions you've created in other programs that use a .srt file format. The .srt file doesn't need YouTube to play, but you do need to have the .srt file named the same as the video file to play properly in most instances.

If your program requires another file format, you'll need to use a conversion tool. One such free conversion tool is [3Play Media's Captions Format Converter](#), which converts .srt and/or .sbv file formats (outputs from YouTube) to other captioning formats.

You can also download a text transcript (.txt) from YouTube.

Create a Playlist (optional)

If you have multiple videos, you may want to create a Playlist. This allows you to group videos together.

- YouTube Help's [Create & manage playlists](#)
- **YouTube Creators Academy** provides lessons, including one on [Playlists](#)