



# How to build your Artist Channel

Your **Official Artist Channel (OAC)** is your main stage for fans and new listeners. It's their landing page for everything about you – your music, your brand, your presence and your community.

## Build your presence

With over 2 billion logged-in viewers watching music videos on YouTube every month, **your channel can reach massive audiences while creating deep, meaningful connections with your biggest fans.**

# 2B+

logged-in viewers watching music videos every month

## Why create an OAC?

An OAC unites your full body of work and simplifies how your audiences engage with your work by **merging subscribers** under one single channel that you, your label or your manager can control. An OAC is indicated by a **musical note icon** next to your channel name. OACs are created from existing YouTube channels.

If your channel isn't yet an OAC, [learn more about how to apply](#)

## Customise your channel

### GETTING SET UP

1. Sign in to YouTube Studio
2. From the left-hand menu, select 'Customisation'
3. From here you will see three tab options:
  - 'Basic info'
  - 'Branding'
  - 'Layout'

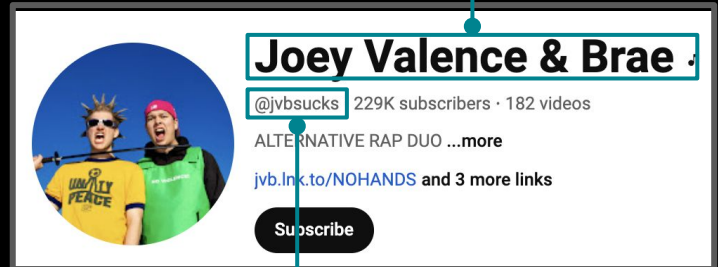
Let's walk through what to consider when setting up each section.



## Basic information

### Channel name

Channel names can help fans easily find your official channel in search results and your official videos across YouTube. **Use your official artist name or band name for your OAC.** Keep your capitalisation and spacing consistent with what you use for your official releases. We suggest that you avoid adding extra words like 'Official', 'TV', 'Channel', 'YouTube', 'Music' or 'Productions' to your name.



### Channel handle

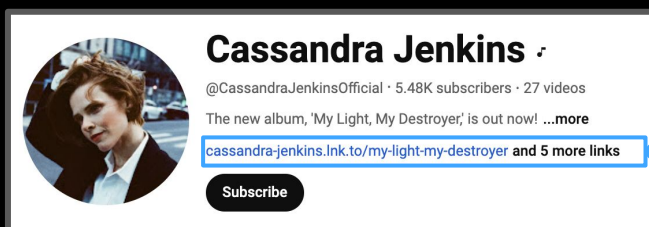
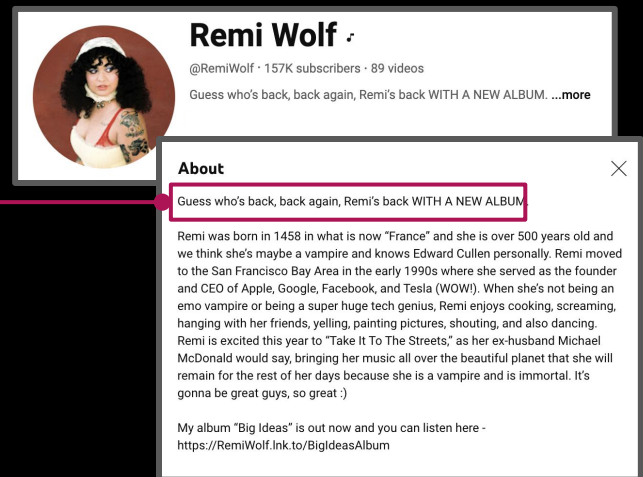
Handles are short, unique channel identifiers that are distinct from channel names. Where channel names are used mostly for video and channel discovery, channel handles are meant to be specifically searched across YouTube from the Shorts Feed down to individual comments. [You can learn more here.](#)

**Keep your handle close to your official channel name or keep it consistent with what you use across your other social channels.** If your preferred naming is taken, don't worry – this does not impact how videos are recommended. Adding in extra identifiers, phrases or even jokes that are true to your brand will work to create a unique handle.

### Description

The 'About' section of your channel is where you can share who you are. This section should read like an extension of you, your artistry and humour, and less like a Wikipedia page.

- **The first line of your description is particularly important as it's visible in your channel header.** Use this prime location for calls to action to take a look at recent releases, tease upcoming projects or make other important announcements.
- Make sure that you check in and keep this line updated over time.
- As an artist, bear in mind that your bio may be used across YouTube search, your individual YouTube channel and also YouTube Music.



### Links

You can add up to 14 links on your channel's Home tab – just make sure that they follow our [external links policy](#). Your first link will be prominently displayed on your OAC near the Subscribe button, and your remaining links will be shown when your audience clicks to see more links or when they navigate to your 'About' section.

**Many artists use this visibility to feature Linktrees, their official website or other social platforms that they're specifically trying to promote.**

## Branding

### Banner

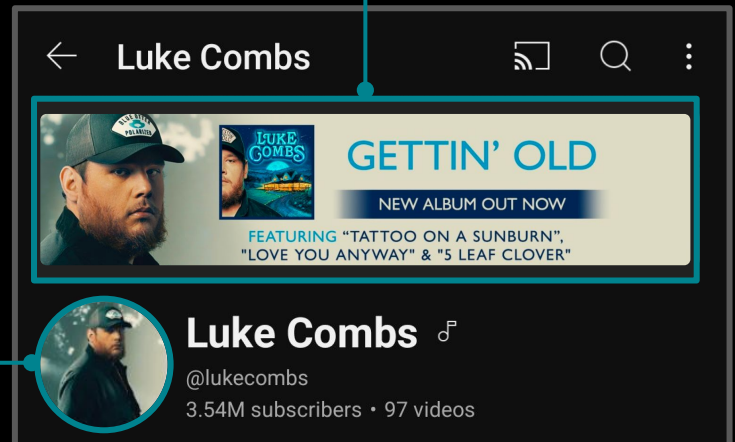
Your banner, also known as your channel art, is the large image at the top of your channel page. It's not just for looks – it can be functional too.

- Use your banner to tease upcoming releases, announce tour dates or showcase merch.
- Maintain design consistency with your channel icon and other social media profiles to create a cohesive and professional look.

### Picture

Your profile picture, also known as your avatar or channel icon, is the image that represents you across the platform. It appears next to your channel name in search results and the comments section.

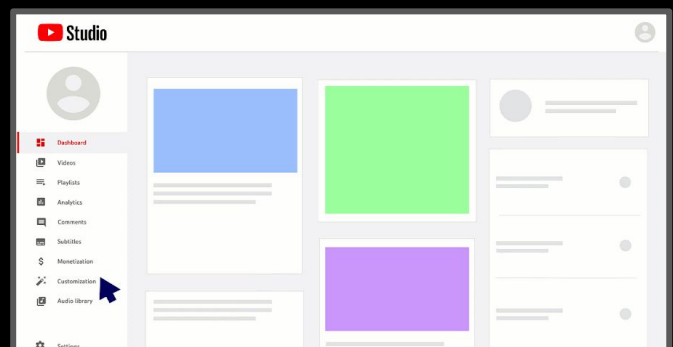
- Choose a consistent, recognisable image that you use across your social platforms. Consistency helps with brand identity and makes it easy for fans to recognise you.



## Channel layout

### Channel sections

Channel sections, also referred to as shelves, let you customise the format of your OAC by deciding what content, videos or playlists you want to display on your page. These sections appear on your channel page under your featured video and let audiences quickly browse your content. OACs also offer you new options for your channel layout.



In addition to the **standard channel sections**, you can include the following tabs on your OAC

#### Releases

The 'Releases' section is an auto-generated tab that encompasses all of your official releases. This section allows your audience to quickly find all of your music consolidated in one place.

#### Videos, Shorts and Live

The 'Videos', 'Shorts' and 'Live' tabs automatically pull in all of your most recent content from each respective format on your OAC. If you don't produce content in a particular format, no worries – the corresponding tab will only be populated if you have an active upload.

#### Standard channel sections

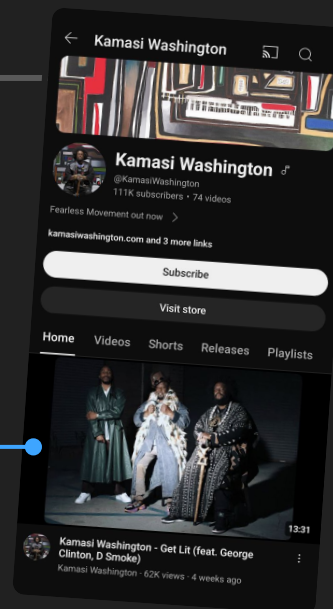
The standard channel sections let you organise your channel page using up to 12 custom sections. These sections are typically created by selecting a specific playlist to display but can also be set up to highlight videos, multiple playlists, members-only content, featured channels, a 'For you' section and more.

## Channel layout – Continued

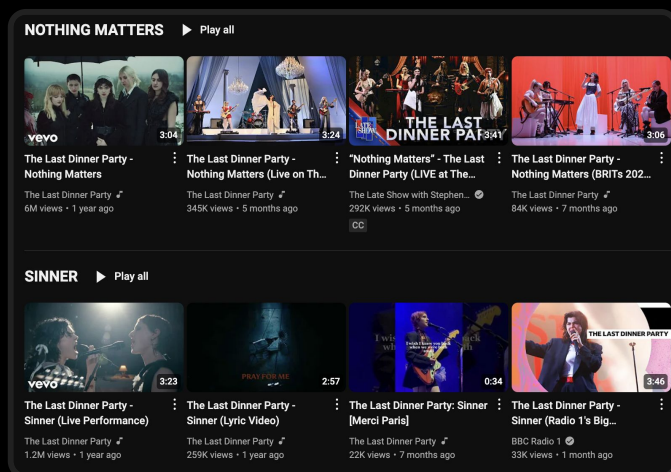
### Video spotlight

Video spotlights let you choose which video you want to show at the top of your OAC – even if it's not a video that you've uploaded.

- **Focus on highlighting videos** that best demonstrate your **recent work**.
- If you want to customise your video spotlight further, you can choose different videos for new visitors and returning subscribers.



### Other Studio setup



**The Last Dinner Party** leverage playlists to showcase relevant videos (including third-party uploads) specific to single song releases. They then feature these playlists as channel sections to increase visibility.

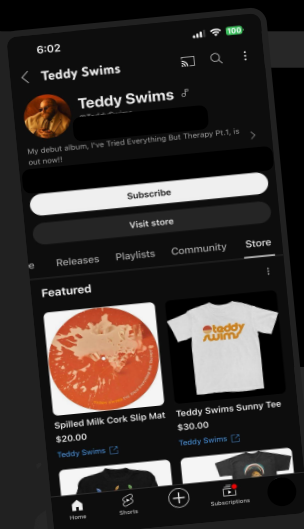
### Playlists

**Playlists are one of the largest traffic sources for music viewership on YouTube.** They organise, curate and make content more accessible to users – in turn increasing watch time.

- **You should organise and customise your own content into playlists and update them regularly.**
- **Think about bucketing your content and creating playlists for interviews, tour content, album-specific content, original content and more.**
- You can create playlists that include videos posted by other channels. Take advantage of this for fan uploads, live performances and collaborations.
- Looking to further increase discovery of these playlists? Make sure that you add playlist links in video descriptions so that interested viewers can easily kick off their viewing session.

**Access playlists by navigating to:**

YouTube Studio → Content → Playlists



### Channel store

YouTube Shopping lets eligible artists easily promote products and merch from their own shops across YouTube. **Once you've connected your shop to your channel, you'll unlock the Store tab,** product tagging and a product shelf. Learn more about connecting your merch directly to your OAC [here](#).

## At the video level

### Increasing video appeal with titles and thumbnails

Videos are a crucial pillar of your artist strategy on YouTube. Optimising elements like titles and thumbnails can **increase video appeal while staying authentic to your brand as an artist**. These elements are updated when you are in the upload flow for a video. Although several factors influence video performance, titles and thumbnails play a particularly large role in attracting listeners. They are the first things potential viewers see when deciding whether to watch a video. Here, we will focus on long-form content, as Shorts have different packaging needs.

#### Titles

Titles appear directly under your thumbnail on discovery surfaces, making accuracy and succinctness essential. **The most significant search terms for music are the artist and song names, so make sure that you lead with them.** Additionally, listing the content type (e.g. 'official music video') will ensure that fans know what they're clicking on.

When crafting your titles, consistency is key. This includes capitalisation and punctuation. **Your formatting doesn't have to be proper, but you should make sure that your style aligns with your brand and remains consistent across all videos.**

#### Artist name – Song name (Format)

Official music video  
Official audio  
Visualiser  
Lyric video  
Behind the scenes

#### Official music video/ visualisers

Use a compelling, high-quality still

#### Official audio

Feature album art

#### Lyric video

Include prominent text

#### Behind the scenes

Show candid shots, often with some production equipment visible

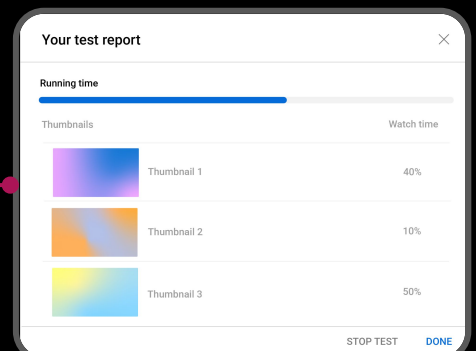
#### Thumbnails

Thumbnails are your content's billboard. A compelling thumbnail can entice viewers to click while also setting expectations for your content. **Focus on what you want your audience to notice first and highlight that. Use high-contrast and compelling imagery without too much clutter, staying true to your brand to stand out.**

**TIP:** Use click-through rate in YouTube Analytics to get a better understanding of whether your thumbnails and titles are enticing viewers to click through to your content.

#### Need more help refining your thumbnail strategy?

Take a look at thumbnail test and compare. This feature lets you upload up to three video thumbnails to test with viewers, helping you to choose the best option. This is more advanced than typical A/B testing, as it allows up to three options. Test thumbnails on a subset of videos to gather initial learnings before applying your findings to new videos.





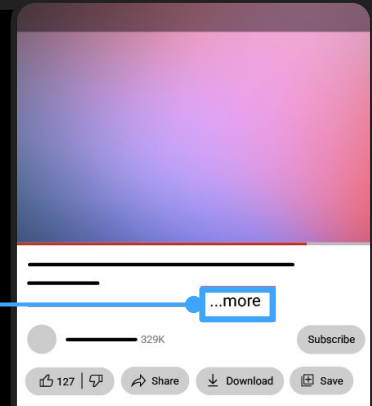
## At the video level – Continued

### Descriptions

**Descriptions tell the YouTube algorithm and your viewers what the video is about.** You can think about the description as two parts – what viewers see before clicking 'Show more' on desktop or 'more' on mobile, and what they see afterwards.

#### Take advantage of the space before 'Show more' for calls to action

while using the rest of the description for a quick video summary, lyrics, tour dates, crediting collaborators and social links. Additionally, you can add three hashtags above video titles to improve search results.



**TIP:** Consider refreshing the descriptions of old but popular videos with updated CTAs for new releases, active tours, merch drops, etc.

## Guidelines, not absolutes

All of the above video-level guidance are general observations on what we've seen work well on the platform. However, they are not strict requirements. **Your videos and channel are an extension of your artistry and should first and foremost represent you, authentically.**

### Let's take a look at some artists in action

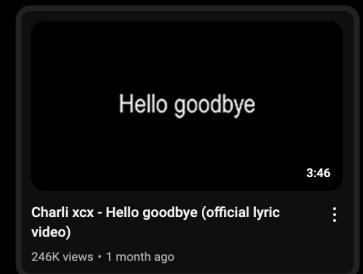


## 01 ZENTYARB

ZENTYARB adds a date as the main point of focus for his official teaser thumbnail. This strategy immediately **conveys to audiences that this is a sneak peak while building hype** around an upcoming release.

## 02 Charli XCX

Charli maintains consistency in her thumbnail and titling strategy. Her **use of all lower-case to describe video formats in her titles is a thoughtful style choice and one that works since she leverages it across all uploads.** Charli also has a thumbnail strategy of grainy white text on a plain black background for recent lyric videos. This simple yet distinctive strategy is bold, capturing viewer attention while also tying in directly to her overall album branding.



## 03 Caroline Polachek

Successful thumbnails can set viewer expectations without them needing to read the title. Caroline Polachek **leverages a grainy image seen through a viewfinder to quickly and effectively convey a behind-the-scenes look**, aligning with her content's theme and encouraging viewer engagement.

## Want more resources for artists?

LATEST BEST PRACTICES PLAYBOOKS AND ARTIST SUCCESS STORIES ON OUR WEBSITE →