A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE FOR BEGINNERS

Launch a Faceless YouTube Channel

Research, scripting, production, and publishing



LATEST QUEEN

First Edition · 2026 · latestqueen.com

CONTENTS

Contents

About This Edition 3
Copyright and Reader Licence 4
Educational Disclaimer 5
AI-Assistance Disclosure 6
Introduction: Your First Video Without a Camera on You 10
- What you will have made by the end 10
- Meet the example channel: Simple Digital Desk 11
- A few words you will meet early 11
- How to use this book, the workbook and the files 12
- How long this will take 12
- A note on platform details 13

1. Choose a Faceless Format You Can Keep Making 14
- The four main faceless formats 14
- Compare what each format really costs 15
- Step by step: choose your main format 16
- Write a one-sentence channel promise 17
- Turn the promise into three repeatable series 17
- Two shorter examples in different formats 18
- Check your format after three videos 19
- Original explanation versus reassembled material 19
- Prompts for this chapter 20

2. Research What Viewers Actually Need 22
- Step 1: Check the niche before the ideas 22
- Step 2: Collect real viewer questions 23
- Step 3: Learn from competing videos without copying them 24
- Step 4: Build an idea bank 24
- Step 5: Score three ideas side by side 25
- Step 6: Write a one-page research brief 26
- Step 7: Keep a source and fact-check log 26
- Prompts for this chapter 28

3. Set Up the Channel and Production Workspace 30
- Step 1: Choose a channel name you can live with 30
- Step 2: Make a simple profile image and banner 30
- Step 3: Write the About section 31
- Step 4: Create one playlist per series 32
- Step 5: Set up a simple recording space 32
- Step 6: Choose your starter equipment 33
- Step 7: Prepare a clean demonstration setup 34
- Step 8: Build the project folder 35
- Prompts for this chapter 37

4. Write a Script That Keeps Its Promise 39
- The shape of a tutorial script 39
- Write the hook: a weak opening and an improved one 39
- Use two columns: narration and on-screen action 40

The complete long-form script 41
What the steps look like on a real screen 43
Write the Short 45
The same method in another format 46
Revise an AI draft: four things to fix 46
Check the script against the promise 47
Prompts for this chapter 48
5. Record, Illustrate, and Edit the Video 50
Step 1: Storyboard the video in six panels 50
Step 2: Turn the storyboard into a shot list 51
Step 3: Decide what to make yourself and what to license 52
Step 4: Record the screen 53
Step 5: Place the microphone and record the voice 53
Step 6: Mark the voiceover for delivery 54
Step 7: Optional — synthetic narration 55
If your format is slides, animation or footage 55
Step 8: Edit on a simple timeline 56
Step 9: Keep a rights log as you edit 57
Step 10: Add captions 59
Step 11: Export and review 59
Prompts for this chapter 60
6. Make Thumbnails and Publish with Confidence 63
Step 1: Write a title and thumbnail brief 63
Step 2: Choose the title 63
Step 3: Design three thumbnails 64
Step 4: Compare at phone size and pick one 64
Step 5: Write the description and chapters 65
Step 6: Prepare the captions 66
Step 7: Upload and choose the settings 67
Step 8: Choose visibility and schedule 68
Step 9: Publish the Short 68
Step 10: Run the publishing checklist 69
Step 11: The first 48 hours after publishing 69
Prompts for this chapter 70
7. Read Your First Results and Choose One Improvement 73
Where to find your numbers 73
The five numbers that matter first 74
Step 1: Record the first 28 days 75
Step 2: Read the retention chart 75
Step 3: Diagnose with two common cases 76
Read comments as research 78
What the data cannot tell you yet 78
Step 4: Choose one improvement 79
Prompts for this chapter 79
8. Follow a Realistic 30-Day Launch Plan 81
Step 1: Size the plan to your real time 81
Step 2: Follow the four-week schedule 81
Step 3: Batch similar tasks 83
Step 4: Make reusable project files 83
Step 5: Simplify a format that takes too long 84

Step 6: Understand monetization as a possible later step 85
Step 7: Review the month and plan the next 86
Prompts for this chapter 86
The Whole Process on One Page **89**
Questions Beginners Ask **90**
Your Next Video **92**
Workbook Guide **93**
How the files fit together 94
A suggested order 94
Glossary **96**
References **98**
Image Credits and Register **101**

CHAPTER 6

06 Make Thumbnails and Publish with Confidence

Launch a Faceless YouTube Channel · Simple Digital Desk worked example

WHAT YOU WILL HAVE BY THE END OF THIS CHAPTER

By the end of this chapter you will have three thumbnail options compared at phone size, a chosen thumbnail with a clear reason, a final title, a description with chapter timestamps, reviewed captions, the right visibility and audience settings, and a completed publishing checklist. Workbook sheets: **WS12** and **WS13**.

A **thumbnail** is the small picture people see before they click. Together with the title, it is the video's first impression. For a faceless channel the thumbnail cannot rely on a surprised face, so it has to show the problem or the result clearly. The good news: clear beats clever, and clear is a skill you can learn.

Step 1: Write a title and thumbnail brief

Before designing anything, fill in **WS12**. The brief keeps the title and thumbnail working together rather than repeating each other.

WORKED EXAMPLE **Title and thumbnail brief for SDD_E01 (fictional)**

Viewer's situation: a messy Downloads folder and a fear of deleting the wrong thing.

The one idea the thumbnail must show: a mess becoming tidy.

Words on the thumbnail (three at most): "TIDY DOWNLOADS" or "NO FILES LOST".

What the title adds that the thumbnail doesn't: the platform (Windows) and the reassurance (without losing files).

Honesty check: the thumbnail shows only what the video delivers: five folders, no deletion.

Style: channel navy, white and teal; one gold accent; no faces; no logos of companies.

Step 2: Choose the title

Write five title options, then choose using four questions: Does it use the viewer's words? Does it say what they will get? Is it honest? Is it clear when cut short? Titles can be up to 100 characters (R12), but the start matters most because long titles are cut off on small screens.

Option	Notes
Organize Your Downloads Folder FAST!	Vague, and "fast" overpromises for a beginner
Windows Downloads Folder Tutorial	Accurate but flat; doesn't name the benefit
Stop Losing Files in Downloads (Windows)	Good words, but implies the viewer is losing files now
How to Clean Up Downloads on Windows	"Clean up" suggests deleting — the opposite of the video

Option	Notes
How to Organize Downloads on Windows Without Losing Files	Viewer's words, clear task, platform, and the reassurance from research. 57 characters. **Chosen.**

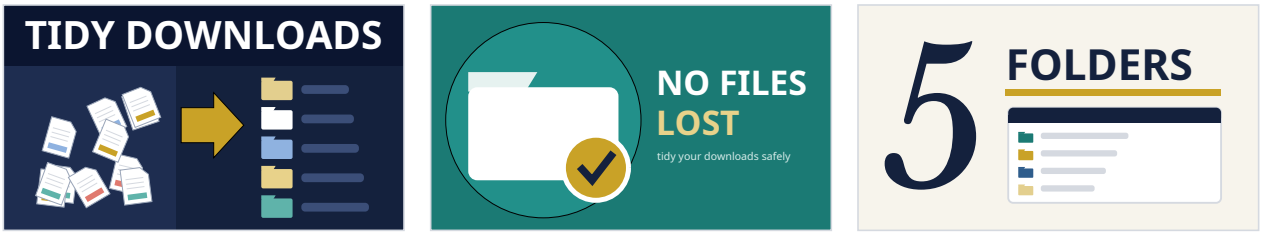
Step 3: Design three thumbnails

Make three genuinely different designs, not three colour versions of one. Each should take a different approach to the same idea. Design at 16:9, the shape YouTube suggests for video thumbnails, and check the current size and file requirements on the custom thumbnails help page before uploading (R16). That page said on the check date that custom thumbnails need a verified account, accept JPG or PNG, and need a minimum width of 640 pixels.

Principles for faceless thumbnails:

- **One idea.** If you need to explain it, it is too complicated.
- **Three words or fewer,** in a bold, plain font, large enough to read on a phone.
- **Strong contrast:** light on dark or dark on light. Avoid thin text over busy pictures.
- **Show the result or the problem,** not the software's logo. Using another company's logo can confuse viewers about who made the video.
- **Leave the bottom right corner quiet.** The video length is shown there.
- **Stay honest.** Show only what the video delivers.

FIGURE 6.1 · ORIGINAL ILLUSTRATION



A Before and after chosen **B Reassurance** **C Number**

Figure 6.1. *Three finished thumbnail designs for the same video. A, "Before and after": the messy file list becomes five tidy folders. B, "Reassurance": one folder with a protective check mark and the words NO FILES LOST. C, "Number": a large "5 FOLDERS" with a simple window. Each uses the channel colours and has no faces or third-party logos.*

Step 4: Compare at phone size and pick one

Most viewers see thumbnails small. Shrink all three to the size they appear on a phone — about the width of your thumb — and look at them next to each other, ideally among other thumbnails. Ask a friend which they understand fastest.

FIGURE 6.2 · ILLUSTRATIVE MOCKUP — NOT AN ACTUAL YOUTUBE SCREEN

Illustrative mockup — not an actual YouTube screen.



At about thumb width:

A The arrow and tidy folders still read. The problem and the result are both visible.

B "NO FILES LOST" still reads, but the small line under it blurs and the check mark is unclear.

C The big 5 is the clearest shape, but nothing shows the messy folder — the problem is missing.

Choice: A. It shows the result at a glance and complements the title instead of repeating it.

Figure 6.2. *The three designs reduced to phone size inside a simplified feed. Illustrative mockup — not an actual YouTube screen. Notice that A's before-and-after arrow still reads at this size, B's small text becomes hard to read, and C's number is clear but says less about the problem.*

WORKED EXAMPLE **Choosing the thumbnail for SDD_E01**

Design	At full size	At phone size	Fits title?	Decision
A Before and after	Clear transformation; two words	Arrow and tidy folders still read	Yes — title adds "without losing files"	**Chosen**
B Reassurance	Strong message	Small text blurs; shield unclear	Repeats the title's last words	Keep as a test option later
C Number	Bold and simple	Very readable	Doesn't show the mess, so the problem is unclear	Reuse the style for list videos

Reason for choosing A: it shows the result the viewer wants in one glance, stays readable at phone size, and complements the title instead of repeating it. B's reassurance is already in the title.

Step 5: Write the description and chapters

The **description** is the text below the video. The first one or two lines are visible before viewers tap "more", so put the most useful sentence first. Descriptions can be up to 5,000 characters (R12). Include:

1. A first line that repeats the promise in plain words.
2. What the viewer needs.

3. **Chapters**: timestamps that split the video into labelled sections. YouTube's rules for chapters from timestamps, on the check date, were: the first timestamp must be 00:00, there must be at least three timestamps in ascending order, and each chapter must be at least 10 seconds long (R17).
4. Links to related videos or playlists.
5. Any credits your licences require (from **WS11**).
6. A short note about how the channel works.

> **WORKED EXAMPLE** **Completed description for SDD_E01 (fictional)**
> Sort a messy Downloads folder into five simple folders in about 15 minutes — without deleting or losing a single file.
>
> You'll need: a Windows computer. No extra software.
>
> Chapters
> 00:00 The messy Downloads folder
> 00:25 One safety rule: move, don't delete
> 00:45 See what you have: sort and group
> 01:50 Make five folders
> 03:00 Move files by type
> 04:20 The "To check" folder
> 05:20 Check your result
> 05:50 Your two-minute weekly habit
>
> Next: Find a file you saved yesterday → [link to next video]
> Tidy Computer playlist → [playlist link]
>
> Music: [track title and artist, plus the exact attribution text if the track requires it]
>
> Every tutorial on Simple Digital Desk is recorded on a demo laptop with practice files. Simple Digital Desk is independent and not affiliated with Microsoft.

The timestamps match the section markers in the script and timeline, and every chapter is longer than ten seconds. Before publishing, check them against the exported video, not the script: editing often shifts times by a few seconds.

Step 6: Prepare the captions

Upload your reviewed caption file from Chapter 5, or use auto-sync with your final script (R23). Then play three random sections and check that captions appear on time.

> **WORKED EXAMPLE** **Caption excerpt, Step 3 section (fictional, as uploaded)**
> 22

00:03:00,000 --> 00:03:04,300
Now the satisfying part. Because
the files are grouped,

23
00:03:04,300 --> 00:03:07,100
you can select a whole group at once.

24
00:03:07,100 --> 00:03:11,800
Click the first document, hold Shift,
and click the last document in the group.

Step 7: Upload and choose the settings

In YouTube Studio, uploading starts from the Create button, then Upload videos (R12). The steps that follow ask for the video's details and, at the end, its visibility. Screens may look different in your account, and YouTube noted on the check date that an updated Studio experience was being rolled out gradually (R28), so look for these settings by name rather than by position.

FIGURE 6.3 · ILLUSTRATIVE MOCKUP — NOT AN ACTUAL YOUTUBE SCREEN

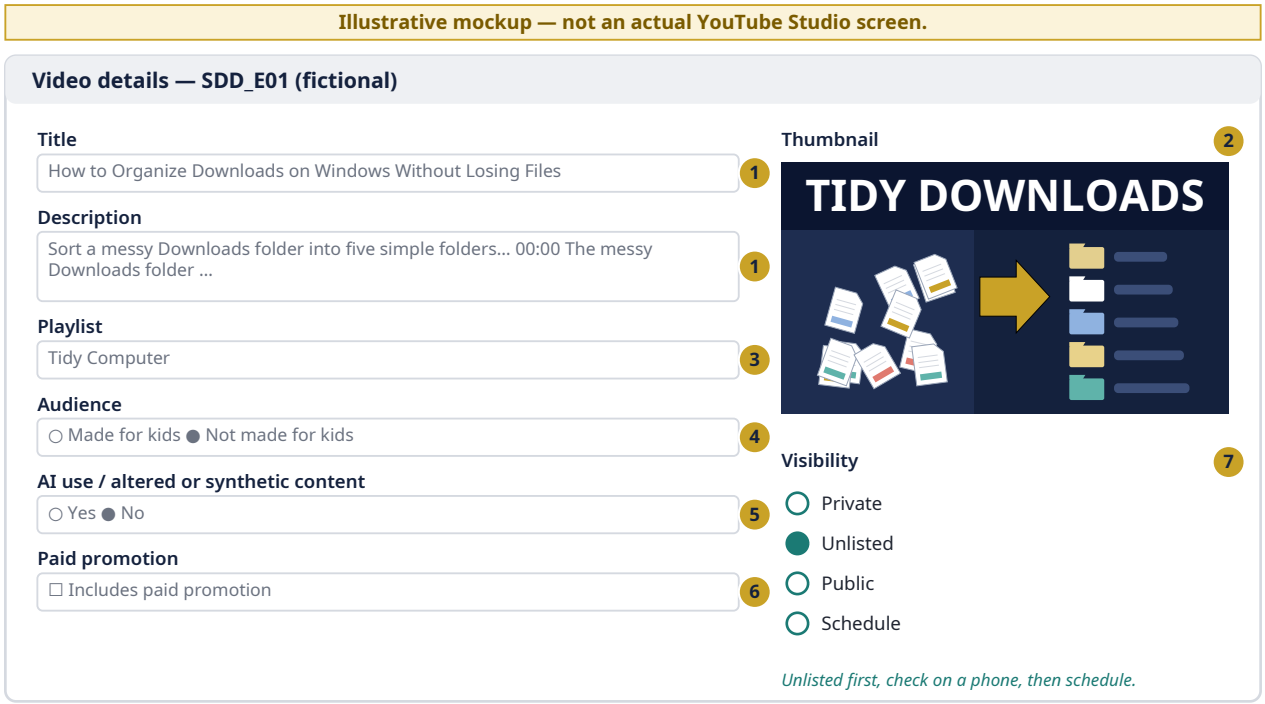


Figure 6.3. *The settings to look for during upload, as a simplified diagram. Illustrative mockup — not an actual YouTube Studio screen. Notice the numbered settings: (1) title and description, (2) thumbnail, (3) playlist, (4) audience — made for kids or not, (5) the AI use / altered content choice, (6) paid promotion, (7) visibility — private, unlisted, public or scheduled.*

The settings, in plain English:

Setting	What it means	What Simple Digital Desk chose
Title and description	As written above	As above

Setting	What it means	What Simple Digital Desk chose
Thumbnail	Upload your chosen design; custom thumbnails need a verified account (R16)	Design A
Playlist	Add the video to its series playlist (R22)	Tidy Computer
Audience	You must tell YouTube whether the video is made for kids; don't rely on YouTube's systems to decide for you (R11)	Not made for kids — it is aimed at adult beginners
AI use / altered or synthetic content	Disclose realistic altered or synthetic content as described on the GenAI disclosure page (R05)	No — real screen recordings, own voice; AI helped only with checking the script's wording, which the page lists as not needing disclosure
Paid promotion	Tick it if the video includes a sponsorship, endorsement or other paid relationship (R10)	No — nothing paid
Captions	Upload or sync captions (R23)	Reviewed SRT file uploaded
Visibility	See below	Unlisted for checking, then scheduled

Step 8: Choose visibility and schedule

Visibility controls who can see the video (R14):

- **Private:** only you and people you choose can see it.
- **Unlisted:** anyone with the link can watch it, but it does not appear on your channel or in search (unless you add it to a public playlist).
- **Public:** anyone can find and watch it.
- **Scheduled:** the video stays private until a date and time you choose, then becomes public automatically (R15).

A calm way to publish your first video: upload it as **unlisted**, open the link on your phone, and watch it there exactly as a viewer would — thumbnail, title, captions, chapters and all. Fix anything you find, then **schedule** it for a time your viewers are likely to be free. You will learn when that is from your analytics later; for now, any reasonable time is fine.

Step 9: Publish the Short

Shorts are uploaded from a square or vertical video of up to three minutes (R21). For Simple Digital Desk's first Short:

1. **Export vertically** (9:16), with captions in the picture, because the Short must work with the sound off.
2. **Title it with the single action**, for example "Find your newest download in 2 clicks". Keep it short; there is less room on a phone.
3. **Give the same audience, AI disclosure and paid promotion answers** as for any video, after reading the current pages.

4. **Point to the full video in the Short itself**, with on-screen text naming the long-form video. The Short should stand alone even if the viewer never clicks anything.
5. **Publish it a day or two after the long-form video**, so the full guide already exists when people look for it.

Remember the music rule from Chapter 5: YouTube's claims page noted on the check date that Shorts of one to three minutes with an active Content ID claim are blocked (R08). Use only music you have a licence for, or none.

Step 10: Run the publishing checklist

WORKED EXAMPLE **Completed publishing checklist for SDD_E01 (fictional, from WS13)**

- ☑ Export reviewed on a phone, with headphones, and once with sound off
- ☑ No private information in any frame
- ☑ Every claim in the script has an evidence mark in the fact-check log
- ☑ Rights log complete, with proof saved for every asset
- ☑ Title chosen and under 100 characters
- ☑ Thumbnail checked at phone size; JPG or PNG; meets current size rules
- ☑ Description: first line, chapters from 00:00, links, credits, channel note
- ☑ Captions uploaded and spot-checked
- ☑ Playlist selected
- ☑ Audience set (made for kids or not)
- ☑ AI use / altered content choice made after reading the current page
- ☑ Paid promotion answered
- ☑ Watched as unlisted on a phone
- ☑ Scheduled, with a reminder to check comments on the day

Step 11: The first 48 hours after publishing

Publishing is not the end of the job. A short, planned routine in the first two days catches problems while they are easy to fix:

1. **Watch the public version once** on a phone, from your channel page, as a viewer would find it. Check that the thumbnail, chapters and captions appear.
2. **Read and reply to comments.** Thank people briefly, answer questions, and note any confusion in your research log (**WS03**).
3. **Fix mistakes in the details, not by re-uploading.** You can edit the title, description, thumbnail and captions of a published video. A re-uploaded video is a new video, so it starts again without the original's views and comments.
4. **If a step in the video is wrong,** add a correction to the top of the description and pin a comment explaining it. If the mistake could cause harm or data loss, make the video private while you fix it (R14).

5. **Add the video to any other playlist it fits,** and link it from the description of the related earlier video when one exists.
6. **Don't read the numbers yet.** Chapter 7 explains why a week is the minimum.

WORKED EXAMPLE **Simple Digital Desk's first 48 hours (fictional)**

Asha watched the video on her phone the evening it went live and noticed that chapter "Make five folders" appeared correctly but one caption line said "down loads". Asha corrected the caption file and uploaded it again. Two viewers asked whether the method works on a work laptop; Asha replied that it does on most Windows laptops but that work computers may have rules set by an employer, and added "Organizing files on a work computer" to the idea bank as a question to research.

OFFICIAL SOURCE — CHECK BEFORE RELYING ON IT **Settings that may change**

Upload steps, visibility options, thumbnail requirements, chapters, captions and disclosure settings were checked on 11 November 2026 against the YouTube Help pages cited in this chapter (R05, R10 to R17, R22, R23). Check the current pages before relying on any detail.

COMMON MISTAKES **Common mistakes**

- **A thumbnail that repeats the title word for word.** Use the two together: the picture shows, the title explains.
- **Tiny text.** If you can't read it at thumb size, viewers can't either.
- **Misleading thumbnails.** A promise the video doesn't keep loses the viewer and their trust.
- **Chapters copied from the script without checking the export.** Times shift during editing.
- **Publishing straight to public.** An unlisted check on a phone catches most problems.
- **Guessing the audience or disclosure settings.** Read the current help pages and decide deliberately.

TROUBLESHOOTING **Troubleshooting**

"I can't upload a custom thumbnail." Custom thumbnails need a verified account (R16); follow the verification steps linked on that page.

"My chapters don't appear." Check the three rules: start at 00:00, at least three timestamps in order, each at least ten seconds (R17). The help page also mentions access to advanced features.

"My video is longer than 15 minutes and won't upload." By default, uploads can be up to 15 minutes; verified accounts can upload longer videos (R13).

Prompts for this chapter

PROMPT P15 Title options

You supply	the viewer's words from research, the video's promise, your platform or topic, words to avoid
Expect	ten title options with notes on clarity, honesty and length
Check afterwards	the chosen title is true to the video; count its characters; avoid misleading or overpromising words

Suggest 10 YouTube titles for this video.

Viewer's words: [quote from research]

What the video delivers: [specific result]

Topic or platform: [for example Windows]

Words to avoid: [for example "clean up" because we don't delete]

For each title give: the title, its character count, and one note on clarity and honesty.

Do not use exaggerated claims ("insane", "secret", "never"), and do not promise results the video does not deliver. If you need more detail about the video, ask under "Missing information".

PROMPT P16 Three thumbnail concepts

You supply	your title and thumbnail brief (WS12)
Expect	three different thumbnail concepts, each with layout, words and why it works at phone size
Check afterwards	you design them yourself with your own or licensed assets; test all three at phone size

Using my title and thumbnail brief below, describe three genuinely different thumbnail concepts (different approach, not just colours).

For each give: the one idea it shows, layout (what is where), words on the image (three or fewer), colours from my palette, and how it will read at phone size.

Rules: no faces; no company or product logos; no misleading elements; keep the bottom right corner clear for the video length.

Do not describe or imitate any existing creator's thumbnail.

If my brief is missing something you need, list it under "Missing information" instead of guessing.

<<<START BRIEF>>>

[paste WS12]

<<<END BRIEF>>>

PROMPT P17 Description and chapters

You supply	the final script with section times, links, required credits, your channel note
Expect	a description with a strong first line and chapter timestamps
Check afterwards	check every timestamp against the exported video; chapters start at 00:00, at least three, each 10 seconds or longer

Write a YouTube description using the material below. Structure: a first line stating the result in plain words; what the viewer needs; "Chapters" with timestamps; links (use my placeholders); credits exactly as I give them; my channel note.

Use only the section times I provide. Do not invent times, links or credits. If a chapter would be shorter than 10 seconds, flag it.

<<<START MATERIAL>>>

[paste]

<<<END MATERIAL>>>

RECAP Recap

- Write a brief first so the title and thumbnail work together (**WS12**).
- Choose a title in the viewer's words that promises exactly what the video delivers.
- Design three different thumbnails, compare them at phone size, and choose with a reason.
- Add a description with a strong first line, chapters from 00:00 and any required credits.
- Set audience, AI disclosure and paid promotion deliberately; check unlisted on a phone; then schedule (**WS13**).

DO THIS NOW Do this now (60 minutes)

Complete **WS12**. Write five titles and choose one. Make three thumbnail designs and compare them at phone size. Write your description with chapters. When your video is exported, work through **WS13**, upload as unlisted, check it on your phone, and schedule it.

Make the video you can explain, then make the next one.

Thank you for reading. For corrections, questions and permissions, write to support@latestqueen.com and include the page number and any sheet or prompt ID. Find more practical guides at latestqueen.com.

Launch a Faceless YouTube Channel · First Edition, 2026 · English · Release edition
Independent publication. Not sponsored or endorsed by YouTube or Google.

