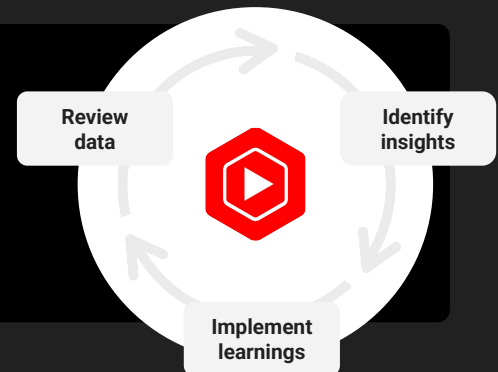


YouTube Decoding growth with Analytics

YouTube [Analytics](#) in [YouTube Studio](#) provides data on your viewers and their engagement with your content. By analysing the information, you can identify patterns that help shape your content and refine your creative process to grow your channel.

The cycle of growth

Think of it as a cycle of ongoing learning and improvement, powered by data-driven insights. This process is a continuous loop: you **review data** to understand what's happening on your channel, **identify insights** to find patterns and trends in your audience's behaviour and **implement learnings** by adjusting your content strategy. **This iterative process allows you to continually refine your approach and optimise your channel for growth.**



Channel health

Creators often ask, 'How is my channel doing?' or 'Where should I start looking?' Diagnosing your channel's health is a great way to keep a pulse on its overall growth. **This involves looking beyond individual video performance to understand the big picture of your channel's reach and audience engagement over time.**

Look for a steady stream of viewers

- **New viewers** are crucial for expanding your reach and introducing your content to a wider audience.
- **Casual viewers** are people who have watched your content before but are not regular viewers. This is a critical group to nurture and convert into loyal fans.
- **Regular viewers** are a sign that your content is resonating deeply, which helps to build a loyal community. A channel that is positioned for sustained growth strategically works to attract new people while also nurturing its existing audience.

Audience by watch behavior

Monthly audience · Aug 24, 2025



Check the 'Audience by watch behaviour' card within the Audience reports to dive into your channel's stream of active viewers.

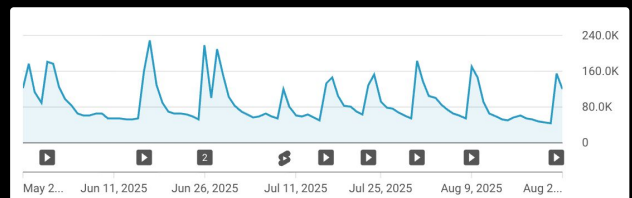
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Subscribers ≠ viewers: The subscriber count isn't always the same as the active audience. The subscriber count reflects how many people have hit the 'subscribe' button, but it doesn't indicate if they are still watching. For a more accurate measure of your active audience, look at [your monthly audience](#).

Look for a steady stream of views

- **A steady or growing view trend over time (e.g. 90 days) is the most immediate indicator of your channel's overall reach and content appeal.** A steady or growing trend indicates that your content is consistently being discovered by a wide audience.
- **Channel growth isn't always linear.** You can use year-on-year comparisons to identify seasonal trends and better understand whether a recent dip or spike is part of a recurring pattern.

Defining your own growth: How you define growth is up to you. Your goals, business aspirations and strategy should determine what success looks like. For some, growth might mean more views and watch time, while for others, it could be an increase in revenue. By setting your own targets, you can use analytics to measure what truly matters to you.

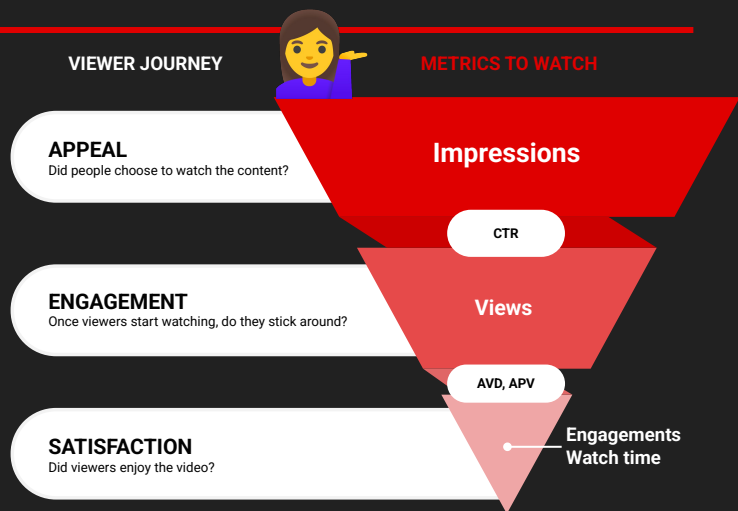


How does your schedule impact performance? The 'Overview' page in Analytics provides a visualisation of your views or watch time paired with a timeline of your **published videos**. You'll often see that publishing new videos correlates with a growth in views, as each video can serve as a new entry point for a viewer to discover your channel. You can check if this is the case for your channel by looking for spikes in your views that align with your recent uploads. **Using this data can help you understand how each new video contributes to your channel's overall performance.**

Content-level performance

While your channel's overall health gives you the big picture, other valuable analysis comes from **diving into the performance of individual videos**. To evaluate a single piece of content, it can be helpful to **think about a viewer's journey through a funnel**. It starts with **appeal** – when your video is recommended, does your content catch the viewer's eye and make them click? Next is **engagement** – if they clicked, did they actually watch? Finally, there's **satisfaction** – did they watch for a significant duration and did they have a good experience that might encourage them to return?

While the specifics of this journey **may look different across various formats** and content types, this framework provides a clear way to structure your analysis.



Common questions among creators

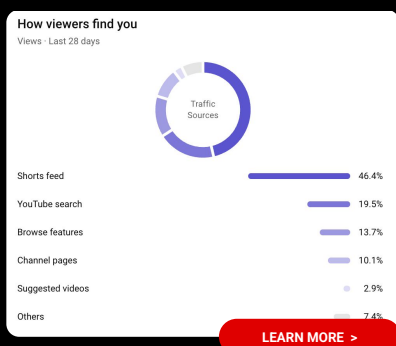
What's the most important metric to optimise for?

The reality is that there's no single metric to optimise for. All metrics are taken into consideration to help us understand viewer preferences across different intents, surfaces and devices. Similarly, there's no universal 'good' benchmark for performance metrics like CTR, as what's considered good varies wildly across content genres and formats. Instead, content is ranked against other videos that a user might want to watch. So, **when you're looking to improve, optimise against your own historical metrics rather than aiming for an external benchmark.**

Is it more important to focus on percentage watched or average view duration?

The algorithm uses both absolute and relative watch time as signals when determining viewer engagement, so we encourage creators to do the same. Ultimately, we want both Shorts and long-form videos to succeed, so we encourage you to make your videos the appropriate length depending on the content.

Understand your reach

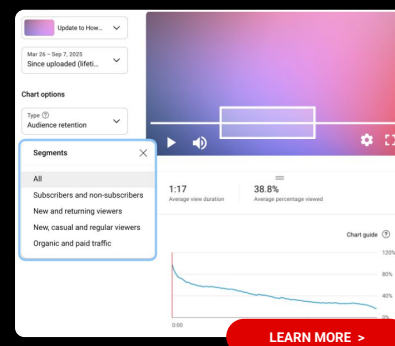


Dive into the traffic sources report

It shows you where your viewers are coming from and how viewers are discovering your content – whether it's from the Shorts Feed, search, external websites or suggested videos.

You can view the split of traffic sources by format with the Content tab. You can also look into traffic sources by video.

Dive deep into engagement



Audience retention

The audience retention insights can show you which moments held viewers' attention and which led to a drop-off.

By analysing these, you can learn how to improve your storytelling, editing and pacing. **Dive deeper by clicking the 'See more' button and filtering by segments to see how new and returning viewers engage differently with your content.**

Analysis across formats

Compare apples to apples

If you produce multiple content formats, comparing videos of the same type is key. Audience behaviour is different across formats and analysing performance for a Short is different from analysing performance for a long-form video or a live stream. Remember that in the **Content tab** you can use the chips to filter your data and see how your different formats perform.

Remember: As you begin to dissect your performance, consider your expectations and how individual formats are meant to support your channel goals. It's unlikely that every piece of content will have meaningful community depth AND broad viewer reach. As a creator, you want a mix of content that achieves both of these goals.

Advanced features

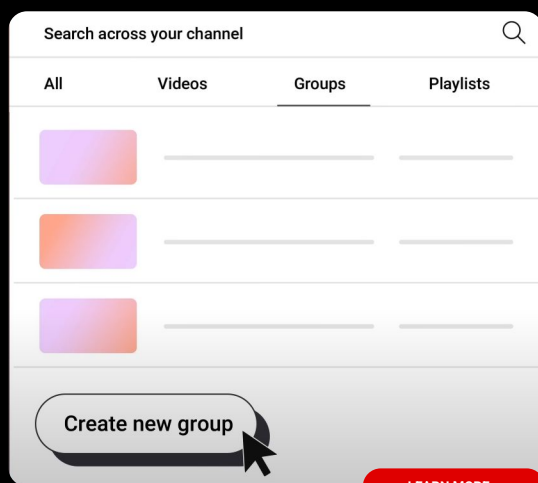
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Familiarising yourself with the more advanced analytics features can be an excellent way to pull additional insights from your performance.

Advanced mode: Clicking the 'See more' option in any report will take you to Advanced mode. Here, you can get an in-depth look at all your channel and content metrics, with access to a variety of tools.



Tip: With Advanced mode, you can also [save your reports](#). For instance, you could save a custom report with a period-on-period comparison to measure growth over time or you can save a custom view with all your go-to filters and dimensions. Saving reports lets you quickly check your progress with a single click each month.



[LEARN MORE >](#)

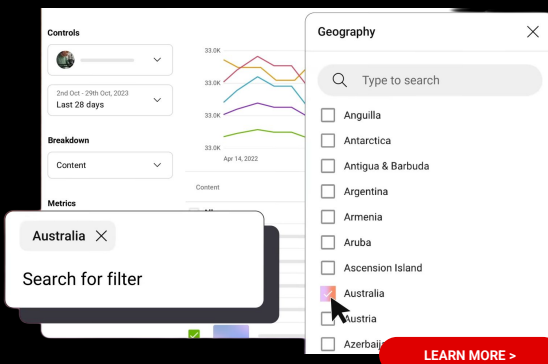
Create groups

You can organise your content into custom groups to analyse a set of videos collectively. This is a powerful way to evaluate your content pillars, themes or formats as a whole.

For example:

- **Group across content pillars:** See how all your videos on 'DIY projects' perform against all your videos on 'Unboxing' content.
- **Group across content style:** Group videos that use a specific editing style or tone to see how that affects engagement.
- **Group across various lengths:** Group and compare all your videos under 5 minutes to those over 10 minutes.

Groups are different from playlists: Groups are a private, internal tool for analysing your content, while playlists are a public feature that you use to organise your videos for viewers. Your audience can't see the groups that you create for analysis. [Learn more.](#)



[LEARN MORE >](#)

Use filters

Filters allow you to narrow down your data for deeper insights. You can segment your audience and video performance by criteria like geography, device and more. You can also use the 'title' filter to find certain videos.

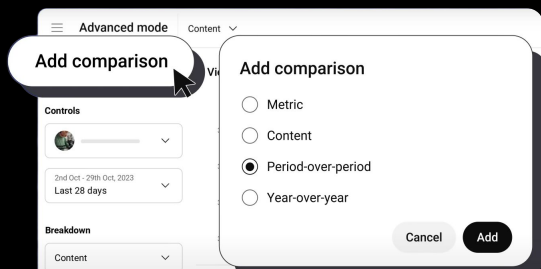
For example:

- **Filter by format:** Understand how your Shorts are performing by applying the 'content type' filter.
- **Filter by traffic source:** Apply a 'traffic source' filter for 'external traffic' to identify which videos are most successful at bringing in that type of audience.
- **Filter by audio track:** If you have multiple audio tracks on your videos, use this filter to track performance across different language usage.

Note: A filter name may be crossed out if it's not compatible with the current view or if your video doesn't have enough traffic.

Use comparisons

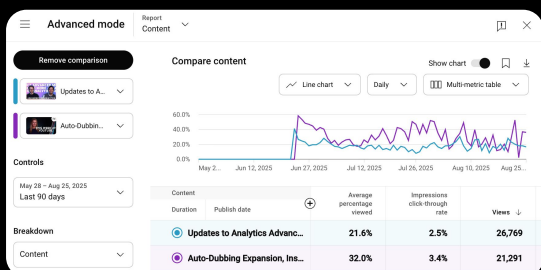
Advanced mode also lets you compare data from different content, date ranges and metrics by clicking 'Add comparison'. Examples of how you can use comparisons include:



Comparison across periods

Comparisons can be great for understanding how your channel's performance has shifted over time. They can help you identify seasonal trends, see the impact of a recent content strategy change or simply track your overall growth.

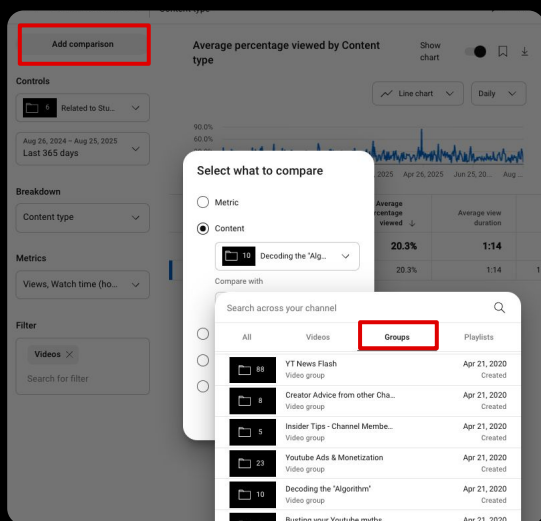
- **Compare a top-performing video with a bottom-performing video from the same content series.** This enables you to analyse the difference in CTR, audience retention and traffic sources to identify what made one video more successful.
- **Compare two videos with similar topics or formats** to see which one was more effective at converting viewers into subscribers, thus helping you refine your calls to action for future uploads.



Comparison of two videos

You can directly compare two individual videos to understand why one performed better than the other.

- **Year-on-year** can be helpful to understand and account for seasonality. Use it to answer questions like: *'Are my channel's recent dips in views normal or is this a new trend?'*, *'Is my channel growing compared to last year's performance at this time?'* or *'Did my festive-themed content perform better this year than last year?'*
- **Period-on-period** can be helpful to measure the immediate impact of a change that you've made. Use it to answer questions like: *'Did the new video format that I started using two weeks ago lead to an immediate increase in watch time?'* or *'How did my audience's engagement change after I started posting more frequently?'*



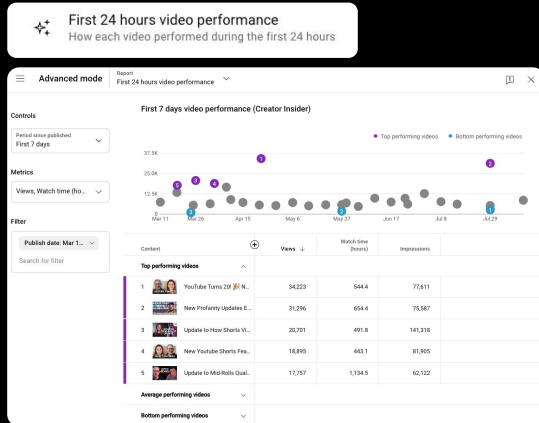
Comparison of two groups or playlists

You can compare the collective performance of two groups or playlists to see which content pillar or format is performing best.

- **Example 1:** If you'd like to see if a new on-camera host is effectively engaging the audience > Create a group for all videos featuring that host and compare the group's average view duration to the channel's overall averages.
- **Example 2:** If you are experimenting with a new editing style > Create a group for videos with the new style and compare the audience retention of that group against videos with the old editing style to see how the change is impacting watch time.
- **Example 3:** If you want to understand which type of video is most effective at converting viewers into subscribers > Create groups for 'tutorial videos' and 'vlogs' and compare the subscriber gain metric for each group.

Use comparisons

Advanced mode also lets you compare data from different content, date ranges and metrics by clicking 'Add comparison'. Examples of how you can use comparisons include:



Analysing your data fairly (24-hour or 7-day comparisons)

This report is effective because it shows you the performance of your videos over the exact same time frame, allowing you to **compare content fairly**. Instead of comparing a video that's been live for three months to one that you have just published, you can look at how all your videos performed during the same part of their lifespan.

- **Example 1:** A creator is testing a new thumbnail strategy and wants to know if a recent thumbnail redesign is more effective. The 'first 24 hours' report can be helpful in comparing the average CTR of videos with the new thumbnail style against those with the old one.
- **Example 2:** A creator who covers fast-moving topics like news or trends can compare the first 24 hours of a new video to their channel's average.
- **Example 3:** A channel that makes both tutorials and commentary videos can compare the first seven days of watch time for both types of content to see which pillar is gaining more initial momentum.

Best practices



Connect the dots across reports

Look at the big picture by connecting your reports. Relying on a single metric can be misleading. For example, a video might attract a lot of new viewers, but if those people don't return, you're not building a lasting community. A holistic view gives you a more accurate understanding of what's working.



Learn from all outcomes

There's just as much to learn from a video that underperformed as there is from one that went viral. By analysing content across the performance spectrum, you can better understand what to refine in your content strategy.



Prioritise your wellbeing

While it's important to analyse your channel's performance, remember to prioritise your own wellbeing. Take time away to rest and recharge. A long-term creative career demands a creator who is inspired and healthy. Stepping away to recharge provides a fresh perspective, so it's one of the best things that you can do for your channel's future.



Sort and rank for key insights

To uncover key insights, try sorting your content by different metrics. You can sort by impressions to see a video's potential reach or by average view duration to understand what keeps your viewers engaged.



Hunt for patterns

As you review your sorted reports, look for common threads. Do your top-performing videos share similar themes, editing styles or thumbnail designs? Or do your low-performing videos have something in common that you can improve or avoid in the future?