



Community Best Practices

Please note that these best practices are tips to guide you that we have gathered from what has worked previously on the platform, but they are not a guarantee for success.

What we'll learn

1

How to build a safe and engaged community

2

Key tools and tips for community management

3

Community-focused Products that can assist your efforts



Building Your Community

What's the value?

- **Increased fan engagement and loyalty:** If your viewers love what they see and have positive interactions, they'll be more likely to share your videos and recommend them.
- **An accurate representation:** Remember, your online presence should reflect who you are and what you want to be known for - both on and off YouTube. Proper management will help foster a community on YouTube that reflects you and your long-term goals.
- **A source for future content ideas:** Opening a line of communication with your audience is a great way to source future video concepts, along with feedback and suggestions on your previous content!



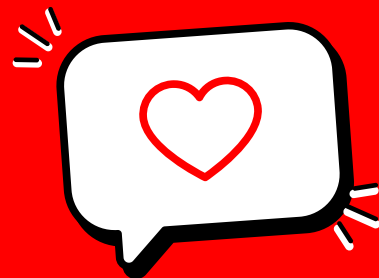
Getting Started

- **Share your story:** Tell your audience about the unique journey that led you to YouTube. Sharing this can be a powerful way for viewers to relate to you and develop connections that run deeper than other topics or channels.
- **Develop traditions:** These can include catchphrases, editing styles, or a nickname for loyal fans. When done right, use of traditions will help your regular viewers feel like insiders, identify with one another, and drive anticipation of key moments within your content.
- **Take the lead:** Consider long-term consequences of sensitive videos and comments. If seen by unintended audiences, could your posts be misunderstood? You may find that not everyone responds positively to your channel so it's important to keep all interactions respectful.



Let's talk about comments

- **Comment replies:** Replying to a viewer's comment or question not only makes them feel special, but incentivizes others to comment in the hopes that they can get a response as well. Try to set aside a period of time (even if it's just 10-20 minutes!) to respond to comments after the launch of a video.
- **Pinning a comment** will send a notification the original commenter, and is a great way to engage with the audience and incentivize fans. Try to pin comments that ask important questions or provide additional context to the content of the video itself.
- **Comment hearts:** Hearting a comment will send a notification to the viewer who wrote it. We've found that viewers who have received a heart on their comment are 3x more likely to click on the notification (than with other types of notifications), making this a great way to lead viewers back to your channel!



3x

**Open
Rate**

Additional Engagement Strategies

- **Marking your milestones:** Whether you're crossing a certain number of subscribers or celebrating a channel accomplishment, think about ways you can integrate community members into the event - even something as simple as heartfelt thank you message goes a long way!
- **Featuring fans:** Consider featuring viewer submitted photos or videos (bonus points if you ask them to wear your merch for a chance at being eligible!) Other creators have built entire video ideas around their fan inputs, including challenges such as "subscribers choose my outfit for the day"
- **Making it a movement:** Think about ways you can turn your YouTube presence into a larger movement - this can help your channel go beyond entertainment and provide a central issue for the community to rally around and support.

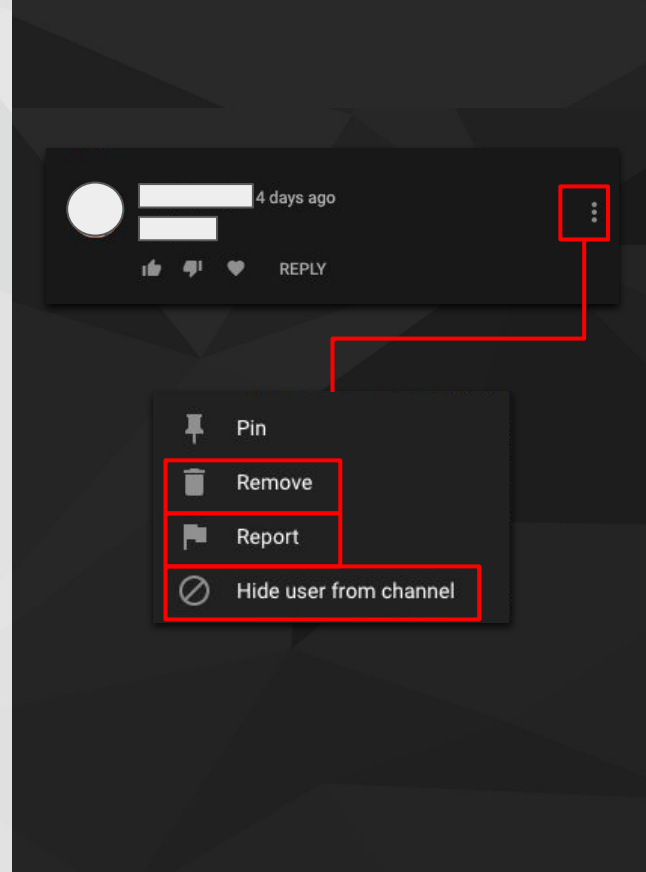




Managing Your Community

Video-level comment management

- **To remove a comment:** Click the three dots next to the comment, and select “Remove”. You can also do this from within YouTube Studio in the “Comments” tab.
- **Flag the comment:** From the same menu, you can also choose to flag the comment to YouTube. If the comment violates [YouTube’s Community Guidelines](#), it will be removed.
- **Hide the user:** You’re also able to hide the user from your channel. This blocks them from posting comments on any of your videos and can be done either via the three dots to the right of the inappropriate comment, or in the “Community” tab in your channel Settings. Users are not alerted when you block them.
- **Automated defaults:** Even if you don’t do any of the above, potentially inappropriate comments default to being held for review by the automatic moderation tool. This tool pre-screens out comments that may be inappropriate, spammy, or harmful.



Channel-level comment management

'Public comments' are those visible to everyone.

Comments can be 'held for review' based on your own settings (ex. blocked words list)

'Likely spam' is where you'll find any comments that our systems have automatically identified and blocked.

The screenshot shows the 'Channel comments' management page. At the top, there are three tabs: 'Public' (selected), 'Held for review 0', and 'Likely spam 0'. Below these are sub-tabs for 'Public', 'Held for review 0', and 'Likely spam 0'. A 'Filter' button is visible. The main content area displays a list of comments with their respective video thumbnails, reply counts, and interaction icons. A search filter dropdown is open, showing options: 'Search', 'Contains questions', 'Subscriber status', 'Channel member status', 'Subscriber count', and 'Response status'. A video thumbnail is highlighted with a red box, and a callout points to it. A three-dot menu is also highlighted with a red box, and a callout points to it. The left sidebar shows navigation options: 'Your channel', 'Dashboard', 'Videos', 'Playlists', 'Analytics', 'Audio library', 'Settings', and 'Send feedback'.

The three-dot menu next to each comment allows you to take channel-level actions not available the video-level.

Selecting the video thumbnail attached to each comment will reveal all comments for that video!

The Comments search filter allows you to sort comments by a variety of criteria including subscriber status or whether you've previously responded to the comment.

Channel-level comment management

The image shows a YouTube channel interface with a sidebar on the left containing navigation options: Dashboard, Videos, Playlists, Analytics, Comments, Subtitles, Monetization, and Audio library. The 'Settings' option is highlighted in red. The main content area displays 'Channel comments' with a 'Public' filter and a list of comments. A 'Settings' modal window is open, showing the 'Community' sub-menu selected. The 'Community' settings include 'Automated Filters' (with 'Yoda TheJedi' and 'Creator Insider' as approved users), 'Hidden users' (with a field to add hidden users), 'Blocked words' (with a field to add blocked words), and a checked 'Block links' option. The 'Settings' modal has 'CANCEL' and 'SAVE' buttons at the bottom right.

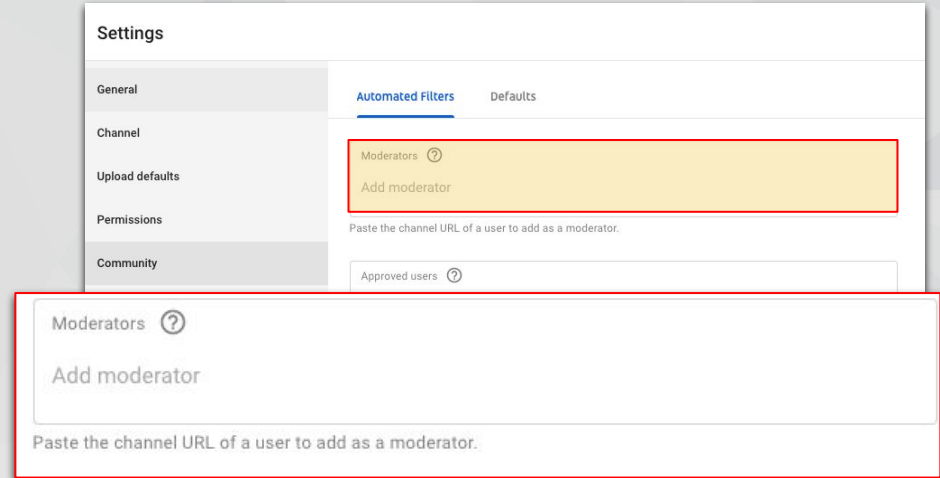
You can edit comment settings by clicking into the 'settings tile' and then selecting 'Community' from the submenu. Here you'll be able to **review comment defaults, set blocked words and/or users, add channel moderators, and turn comments on or off** across your entire channel.

A note on Community Moderators

If possible, it's a good idea to enlist trusted community members to serve as comment and chat moderators on your channel.

Comments they moderate are removed from public visibility and moved to your "Held for review" queue. You can then decide to approve, hide, or report each comment.

To add moderators, navigate to the community settings section shown on the right side of the screen.



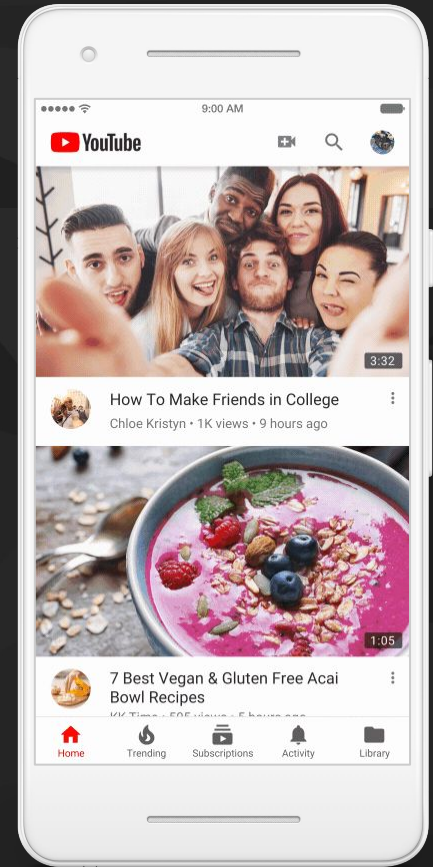


Community Products

Please note that availability of these products may be limited based on location, MFK status, or other eligibility criteria.

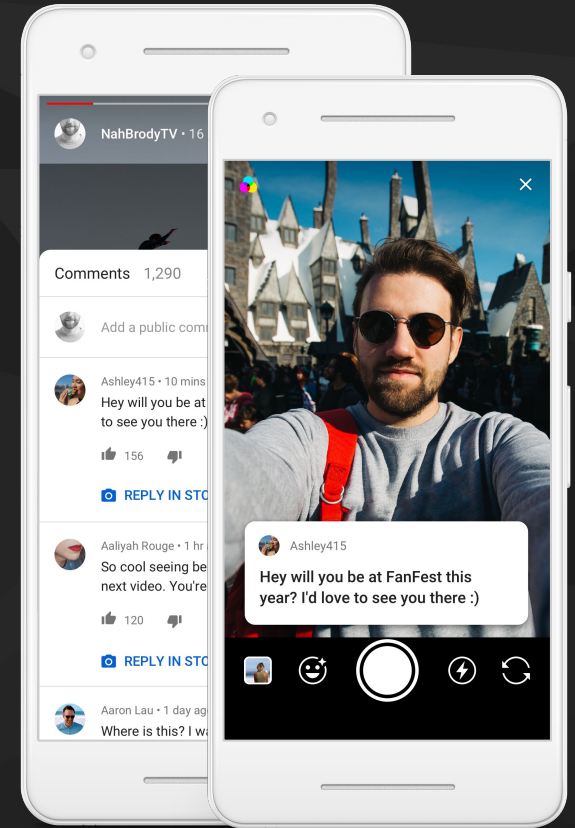
Stories

- **Start a conversation:** Featuring VOD-style comment chains, Stories are a great way to begin and continue a conversation with your audience between your standard uploads!
- **Bring fans on-stage:** Connected to this, Stories also provide a unique feature called “Reply-in-story.” This allows creators to select and feature individual comments in their Stories; this allows fans their “on stage moment” as the creator gives them a shoutout, answers their question, or responds to their comment!
- **Expand your audience:** Surfaced to both subscribers and non-subscribers, Stories aren’t just helping creators connect with their existing fans, but also find new ones. **As of November 2019, Creators that have an active Story can potentially accelerate their weekly new subscriber count by 8.5%** (vs. if they did not have an active Story). So if you normally grow your subs by 1000/week, by investing just a few minutes to create a story, you have the potential to grow by ~1085 subs.



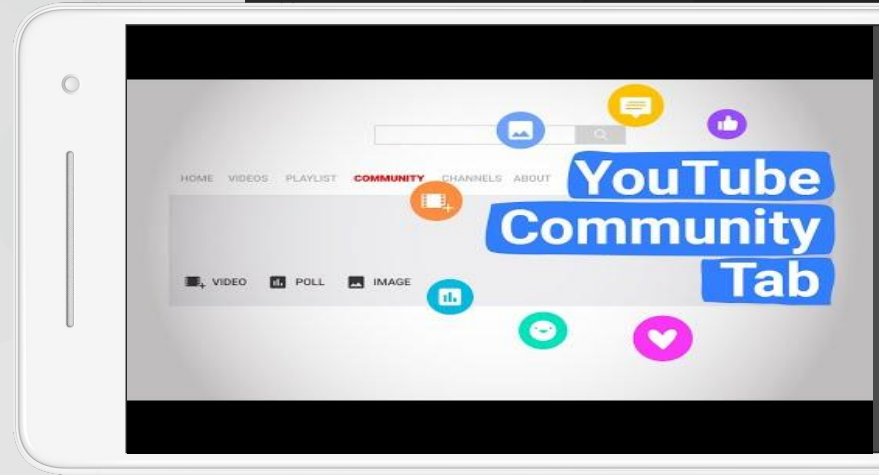
Best Practices

- **Consistency is key:** We recommend creators stay as consistent as possible with their content, posting at least once every 7 days to ensure that there's always something for viewers to find on their story. A great way to do this is leaning into a repeatable format that you can structure your stories around.
- **Keep it fresh:** Reward your most loyal subscribers (and the new audiences you'll reach!) with unique, engaging content that adds value to their engagement with your YouTube presence and keeps them coming back for more!
- **Share more:** Stories is a sandbox for new content and does not currently affect the recommendation or discoverability of your main uploads. With this in mind, we encourage creators to play around with new formats, test new content types, and open themselves up to their audiences in ways they might not be able to in their main uploads.
- **Standalone and Snackable:** Stories is meant to be a snackable, lightweight, experience for both creators and viewers alike. Whether it's self-contained stories like your next roadtrip across the country or behind-the-scene footage of your next video, it's a good idea to keep things self contained and accessible for subscribed and unsubscribed viewers alike!



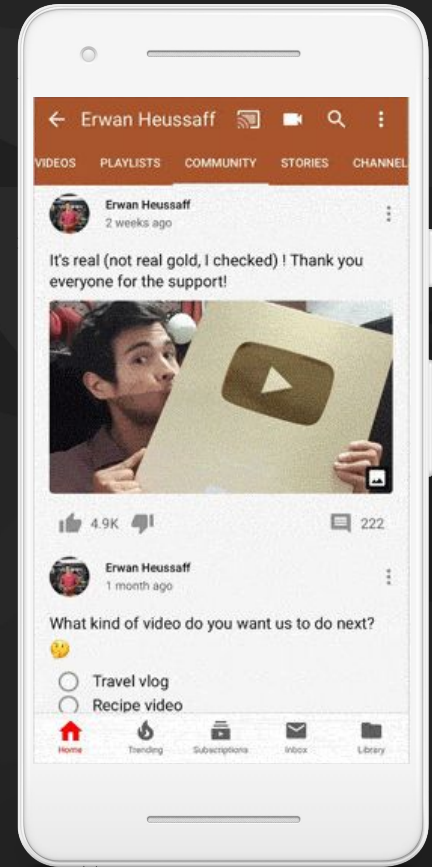
Community Posts

- **A new conversation surface:** Community Posts give you a place to connect with your audience between uploads, allowing you provide channel updates, share behind the scenes photos, or answer fan questions.
- **Unique engagement tools:** Connected to this, Posts offer a wide range of unique tools, including the option to poll your audience, share gifs, or create exclusive content for your Channel Members.
- **Expanded reach:** Surfaced beyond just the tab itself, Posts can appear to both subscribers and non-subscribers in discovery surfaces like the YouTube Home Feed. This makes them a great opportunity to engage with existing fans while also reaching a new audience!



Best Practices

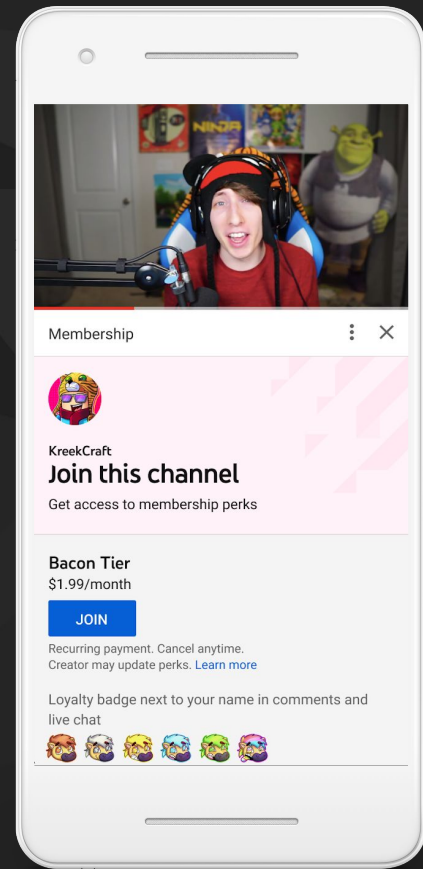
- **Bring your audience backstage:** Posts is a great way to provide a backstage look at the day-to-day of your channel, including behind-the-scenes photos, updates on video status, or teases of upcoming projects or merch!
- **Lean into visuals:** While you're free to create Posts based around text, think about ways to utilize visually appealing photos and gifs to help your content stand out when served both on the Community Tab and on the Home Page.
- **Get direct viewer input:** Consider asking your audience to vote on things like potential collaborators, future video topics, thumbnail options, or more!
- **Recognize and reward:** Think about how you use Posts to recognize and reward superfans, this includes things like regular fan shoutouts, featured comments, or exclusive messages and imagery they can't get anywhere else.
- **A note on video promotion:** Think about how you can use the existing features to share teasers, behind-the-scenes photos, easter eggs, and other unique content that avoids a duplicative experience for viewers already receiving notifications.



Channel Memberships

Channel memberships allow creators to engage more deeply with their biggest fans who make recurring monthly payments in exchange for exclusive perks.

- **Deepen your connection** with your super fans, as you create a unique space for them to engage with you; providing new content ideas, feedback on current content, or simply more intimate conversations between audience and viewer.
- **Create** up to six custom badges that are unique to members and unified by a consistent look and feel.
- Select up to 49 **custom emoji** for members to use in live chat and comments!
- Offer members access to **exclusive content** like rough cuts, members-only live streams, and more!



Best Practices

- **Make it valuable:** High value for your members doesn't have to mean high cost for you - it may just mean it's exclusive
- **Make it scalable:** Getting more members is awesome - but not if it means you can no longer deliver your perks
- **Make them recurring:** Members pay every month and can cancel at any time, so make sure you keep them happy for the long-term
- **Try not to alienate:** Taking anything away from regular viewers can backfire - instead, offer something extra for your members

Building & launching your channel memberships

Finding the why

Different viewers are motivated by different things - you should think carefully about what's most important to your core audience.

Viewers join to...

- **SHOW SUPPORT** and help you keep doing what you're doing. These viewers may not always expect big-time perks - they want to see you succeed.
- **GET CLOSER TO YOU.** They want to see behind the scenes and get regular updates directly from you.
- **GET ACCESS TO EXCLUSIVE PERKS.** They're willing to pay for access to perks they can't get anywhere else.
- **STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD** and show their fandom. They want to be recognized - by you and by other fans.
- **BE PART OF A COMMUNITY.** They want a place to engage more deeply with your channel and each other.

TIME TIP

Invest time in the planning phase rather than rushing in and regretting it later.

1

Plan your offering

2

Pick your prices

3

Design your badges & emoji

Plan your offering

You want to make your members feel really special, and give them value for money. However, it's easy to make the mistake of offering more than you can deliver.

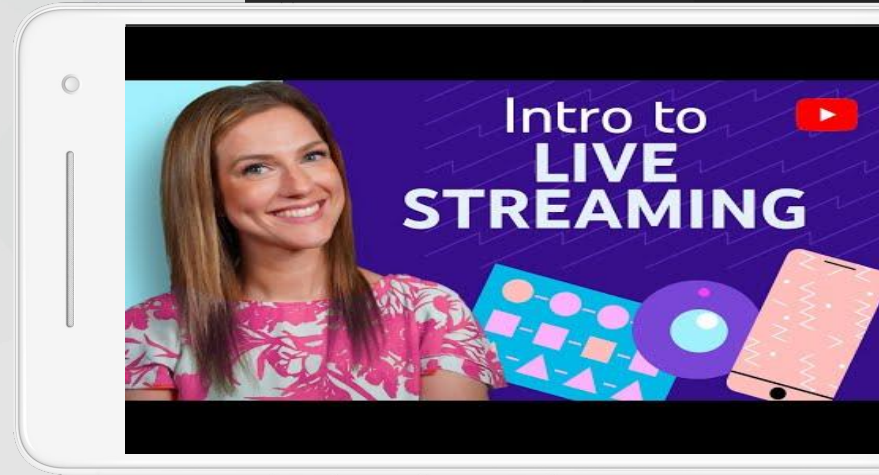
Keep in mind...

1. **Valuable:** High value for your members doesn't have to mean high cost for you - it may just mean it's exclusive!
2. **Scalable:** Getting more members is

YouTube Live

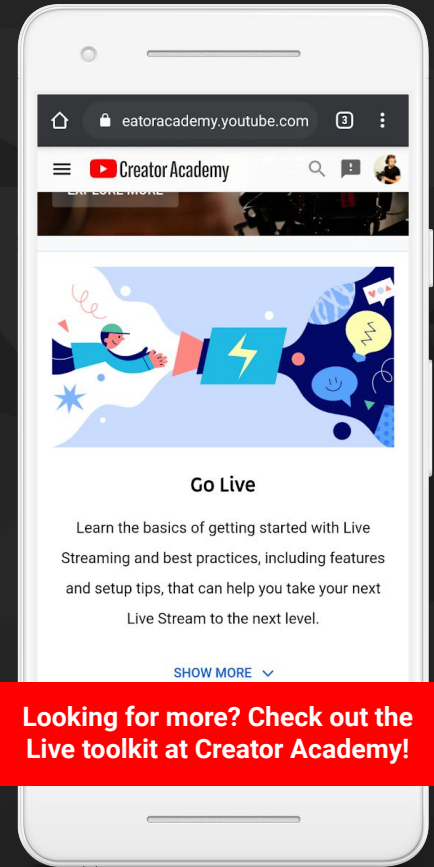
YouTube Live is a great way to connect and engage with your audience via a real-time, in-the-moment experience.

- **Multiple ways to connect:** Live offers a wide range of a tools for both those with more-complex, encoder based setups, or those using simple webcam or mobile phone-based setups as well!
- **Unlock new formats:** Whether you're streaming an event, teaching a class, playing video games, or hosting a Q&A – live unlocks a wide range of new formats for you to creatively experiment with as you deepen connection with your community!
- **Increase engagement with live chat, Super Chat, and Super Stickers:** Live provides creators with the rare opportunity to receive and respond to viewer chats live and in real time. Meanwhile, Super Chat and Super Stickers allow fans to purchase brightly colored, pinned chat messages and stickers that show up at the top of the live chat window.



Best Practices

- **Plan for chat breaks:** Depending on your format, you'll want to plan for how you will interact with your audience. Finding natural breaks will allow you to respond directly to fans while keep viewers engaged during lulls in content!
- **Incorporate interactivity:** Asking questions or letting viewers influence your action in-stream can make them feel more invested in the action. Consider using polls, 3rd party tools, or chat rituals to encourage interactivity.
- **Don't be afraid to improvise:** Unscripted or improvised moments can help keep your stream feeling "organic" and in the moment. Don't be afraid to lean into the bloopers, unexpected moments, or chat memes that might come up midstream!
- **Archive appropriately:** Consider creating playlists for each of your archived streams in a fashion that makes the most sense for your audience - for example, by topic or season. Place these playlists on your channel homepage and promote them in highlight clips from each of the streams



Premieres

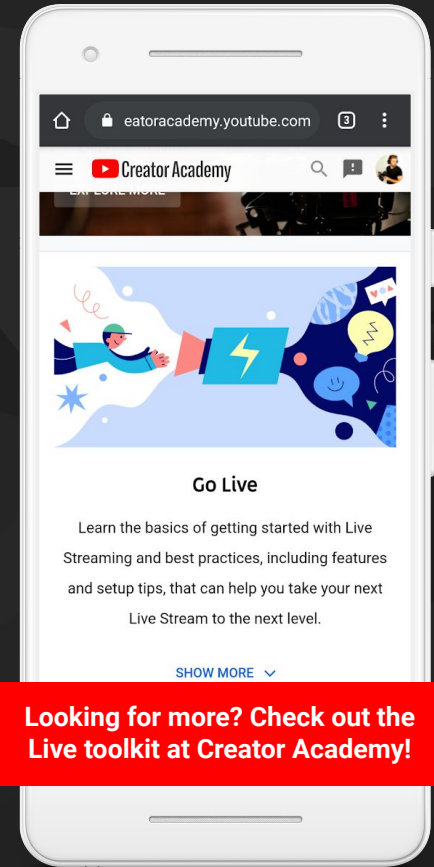
With Premieres, creators can bring together their whole community to watch their newest video in real-time, just like on opening night!

- **Promote effectively:** Each premiere comes with its own pre-release landing page and url, giving you the promotional tools to build hype and encourage engagement at launch.
- **Connect with fans:** Premieres allows creators and fans to live chat before and during the release. Engage with your audience in real-time as you co-watch your premiere with viewers!
- **Unlock new revenue:** Bringing Super Chat and Members-only chat to pre-recorded content, Premieres opens a whole new revenue source for non-live focused creators!



Best Practices

- **Time appropriately:** Viewers can begin engaging with premieres as soon as they've been uploaded. For most creators, we recommend uploading a premiere between 60 minutes to 3 hours before release and it's highly recommended that creators are present in live chat during this release window.
- **Make it special:** Premiere viewers will typically be your most engaged and loyal fans. Think about starting traditions for each premiere and make the event special for viewers via features like Memberships and Super Chat!
- **Be there for fans:** Viewers are coming to share this moment with YOU. Be present for each of your premieres and give fans the connection they crave by engaging via live chat for the duration
- **Add value:** Premieres' live chat is a great way for creators to provide their audience with real time commentary, trivia, and insights on their content in a non-intrusive manner.



Looking for more? Check out the Live toolkit at Creator Academy!

Takeaways

1

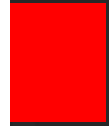
An engaged community can provide a variety of benefits

2

Familiarize yourself with community moderation tools and try to commit to a long-term plan

3

Products like Stories, Live, and Community Posts provide opportunities for increased engagement and subscriber growth!



Thank you!