

LESSON 3.

YOUTUBE SHORTS ALGORITHMS: how to get recommended and keep your audience

You can create 100 great videos, but the ones who actually see them are not you or your friends—it's YouTube's algorithm.

It decides who and how many people will be shown each Short. If it “loves” your video, you'll get thousands or even tens of thousands of views for free. If it doesn't, even the most brilliant idea will only get a handful of views.

Why Shorts Algorithms Are the Key to Reach

YouTube doesn't judge your camera or studio — it looks at how viewers react: whether they stop scrolling, watch the video until the end, like/comment, or share with friends.

In other words: you don't need cinema-quality gear — you need to create videos that make the algorithm want to share them with others.

A Simple Analogy

Imagine YouTube as a huge market, and Shorts as a kiosk with thousands of small stalls. Your goal is to get the market manager (the algorithm) to place your stall at the entrance, where a crowd can see it. How does the manager decide?

Based on two things:

1. Will people visit and stay (watch-through)?
2. Will they recommend your stall to friends (likes/shares/comments)?

If yes — your stall is placed front and center.
If not—you're left deep inside the market.

What This Means for Affiliates

- 1. Organic traffic without budget.** One successful Short series can drive thousands of clicks to your offer.
- 2. Fast hypothesis testing.** You can test 10–20 ideas in a week and see what works.
- 3. Scalability.** Once a video “hits,” you can clone the format for other offers and GEOs.



Important: The algorithm isn't magic. It's a set of rules and metrics: CTR on the first seconds, retention (watch-through), engagement. Understand them—get reach.

WHAT NOT TO EXPECT AND WHAT TO REMEMBER

1. Don't expect "millions" from your first video. The algorithm gives a chance, but usually success comes after multiple tests.
2. Don't promise earnings in your description — use neutral phrasing and disclaimers for finance/crypto content.
3. The main thing is systematics: test → analyze → tweak → test.

Shorts algorithms are a filter that turns quality content into reach. Shoot fast, make a strong hook, monitor retention, test a lot—then the algorithm will work for you.

How the YouTube Shorts Algorithm Works

Shorts are a separate "smart feed" on YouTube. The platform doesn't care what camera you use — it looks at how viewers respond. If people stop, watch the full video, like, and share — the algorithm broadens the audience. Everything else depends on these signals.

WHAT THE ALGORITHM LOOKS AT (3 MAIN SIGNALS)

1. CTR — Click-through / Stops on the preview and start

This isn't just a "click" like for regular videos: for Shorts, it's whether users stop and watch the first seconds or scroll past. If the thumbnail/first frames catch attention, more people will watch.

2. Retention (watch time / % watched / average view duration)

The main currency. The algorithm calculates what percentage of the video people watch on average and how much total watch time is accumulated. The longer and more often it's watched, the more it's shown.

3. Engagement (likes, comments, shares, saves)

A strong additional signal: videos with lots of comments and shares are clearly interesting. Comments are especially valued if they spark discussions.

Example: a 25-second Short watched on average at 90%, actively commented on and shared — YouTube will show it to many users, even if the creator has zero subscribers.

HOW YOUTUBE “TESTS” A NEW SHORT (SIMPLE MODEL)

1. You publish a video → the algorithm shows it to a small test group.
2. It measures signals: how many stopped (CTR), how many watched through (retention), how many liked/commented/shared.
3. If signals are good — the audience expands (snowball). If they are weak, the reach is quickly cut.
4. Sometimes a video “wakes up” days or weeks later — algorithm periodically looks for new niche audiences.

Takeaway: first minutes/hours and first days are critical. Adjust fast and keep testing.

PRACTICAL TIPS: HOW TO IMPROVE EACH SIGNAL



Improving CTR (stops on first frames)

1. Hook in 1–3 seconds. Options: shock/number, intriguing question, unusual action.

Hook examples:

- “I lost \$500 in 1 hour—here’s why.”
- “Don’t do this when trading!”
- “Want a free bonus? Watch this.”

2. First frame = mini-thumbnail. Use clear, high-contrast text on screen in the first seconds.

3. Title and first lines of description. The short description’s first line should strengthen the hook.

4. Thumbnail/frame: if the platform shows a cover image, keep it simple and readable.



Improving Retention (watch time)

1. Promise at the start and deliver. Say “I’ll show 3 steps”—people wait and watch.

2. Editing dynamics. Change shots every 1–3 seconds, add on-screen text, speed-ups, close-ups.

3. Use a “three points” structure (or “before/after”): concise and to the point.

4. **Add small intrigues/cliffhangers:** “Wait till the end—there’s a bonus.” But don’t overuse it.
5. **Optimal length:** 15–30 seconds often works better (easier to watch fully and increases repeat views).
6. **Use quick visual cues:** arrows, highlights, numbers—to hold attention.



Improving Engagement (comments/likes/shares)

1. **Ask questions.** “Have you experienced this?” encourages comments.
2. **Request specific actions:** “Send 1 if you agree” works better than generic “like this.”
3. **Pin a comment with CTA** — duplicate link/call to action so people can quickly access it.
4. **Make content sharable:** memes, provocative opinions, short useful checklists—people share with friends.

HOW TO READ THE RETENTION GRAPH – AND WHAT TO FIX

The retention graph shows which seconds viewers drop off or rewatch.

- 1. Big drop at 0–3 seconds:** weak hook → reshoot the intro with a strong teaser/question.
- 2. Drop in the middle:** boring middle → shorten, speed up, add visual callbacks, move key point earlier.
- 3. Drop near the end:** weak finish/CTA → add a cliffhanger or clearer call to action.
- 4. Peak in rewatching:** viewers rewatch — excellent. It means fast content viewers need to review again, or a puzzle/trick. Think how to boost this effect.

Example fix: *a 30-second video with retention dip at 5–7 seconds means the first scene doesn't hold interest —move the most valuable insight to 2–4 seconds or start with a more intriguing opening.*

Tricks to Increase Rewatches (Watch Loops)

1. Make videos viewers need to “rewatch to understand.”
Fast demos with details people may miss on the first view.
2. Use a “visual trick”: flickering details → viewers rewatch to catch them.
3. Short length (10–20 seconds) increases the chance of looping/repeat plays.

Testing Plan: Simple A/B Approach

1. **Choose one variable:** hook / thumbnail / length / CTA.
2. **Make 5 versions** (changing only this variable).
3. **Post consecutively** (within 3–7 days) — don't change anything else.
4. **Gather metrics:** CTR, average view duration, engagement, CTR on description (link clicks).
5. **Choose a winner** and scale it — make variations of the winning format.

Common Newbie Mistakes & How to Avoid Them

1. Long boring start → fix: move the main idea to the beginning.
2. Changing many variables at once → fix: test one thing at a time.
3. Expecting instant millions → fix: create a series, iterative testing brings results.
4. Ignoring retention graph → fix: analyze and adjust by seconds.

Now you have a full picture of how YouTube thinks when deciding to give your Short 100 or 100,000 views.

Remember the simple formula:

👉 Hook (CTR) + Retention (watch time) + Engagement (likes/comments/shares) = Reach and Recommendations.

The algorithm isn't your enemy but a filter. Its job is to show viewers what they will watch fully and share.

Your task is to "befriend" it: make videos that are interesting to watch, easy to comment on, and worth sharing with friends.



The most important thing: **don't create "for yourself," create so that viewers stay.** This determines how much traffic you'll get.