Easy Captioning of Videos
Dustin Blakey

Adding captions to videos can be very easy if YouTube is among your destinations for the final product. YouTube contains an auto-captioning service that is fairly accurate in capturing your spoken content. With some minor editing you can have transcripts ready with little effort!

How long will take? Expect captioning to take just a little longer than the video itself is in length if you are a native speaker with clear diction and few background noise distractions. It will be longer if you have a strong accent or there are background noises such as wind, traffic, or equipment interfering.

Step 1: If your video is otherwise finished, upload it to YouTube. During upload make sure you select the video's language. In this case it's English. This option is under the "Advanced Settings" tab. The classic uploader is shown below. You can make the video unlisted or private until you are ready to make it public after finishing captions.
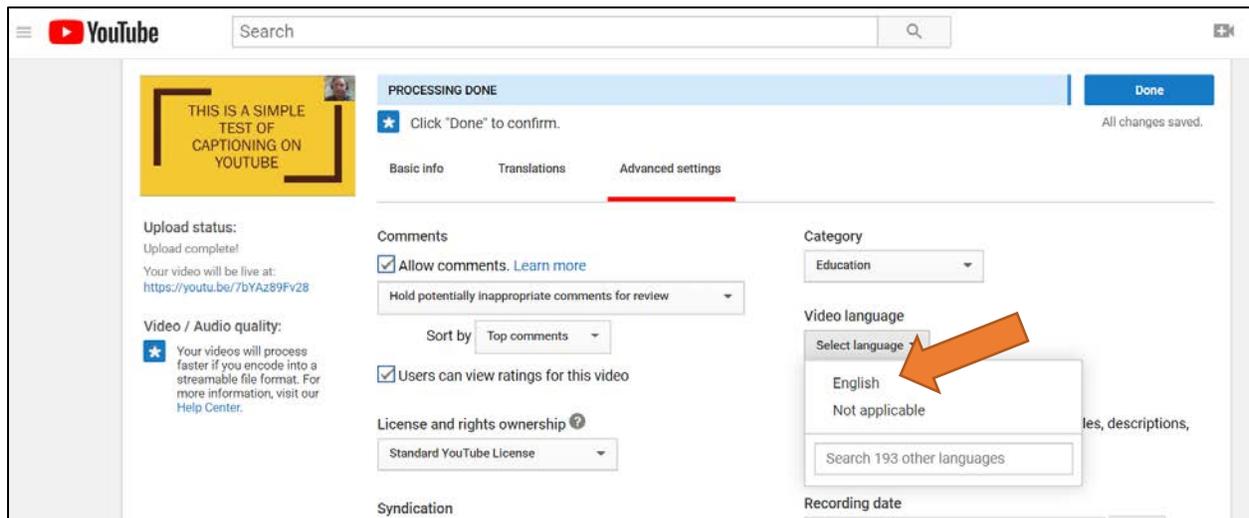
If you plan to do any editing *inside* YouTube (trimming, adding ending screen, etc.) do it now before proceeding further. This process is faster if a finished video is uploaded.

Step 2: Open YouTube Studio. Either go to studio.youtube.com or access it from your account icon in the upper right corner. It will open in your Dashboard. Go to Videos. The icon looks like this: .

Open the video by clicking on the title. Then open the "Advanced" tab. This is where you can access your captioning script. Note: if you edited the video within YouTube, this will not be updated immediately. It could take hours. It's best to only upload finished videos.

Note: Depending on your video's length and YouTube's traffic, the automatically generated transcript may not be immediately available. Come back later if it is not.

Step 3: Obtain the auto-generated captioning file. This will only happen for the language the video is uploaded in. (I've only tried it in English.)

Click where you see "English by YouTube (automatic)." You can then download the captioning script. It is in a *.sbv* format that other caption programs use as well if you will be using this outside YouTube's environment. Stay on this page.

See the below.
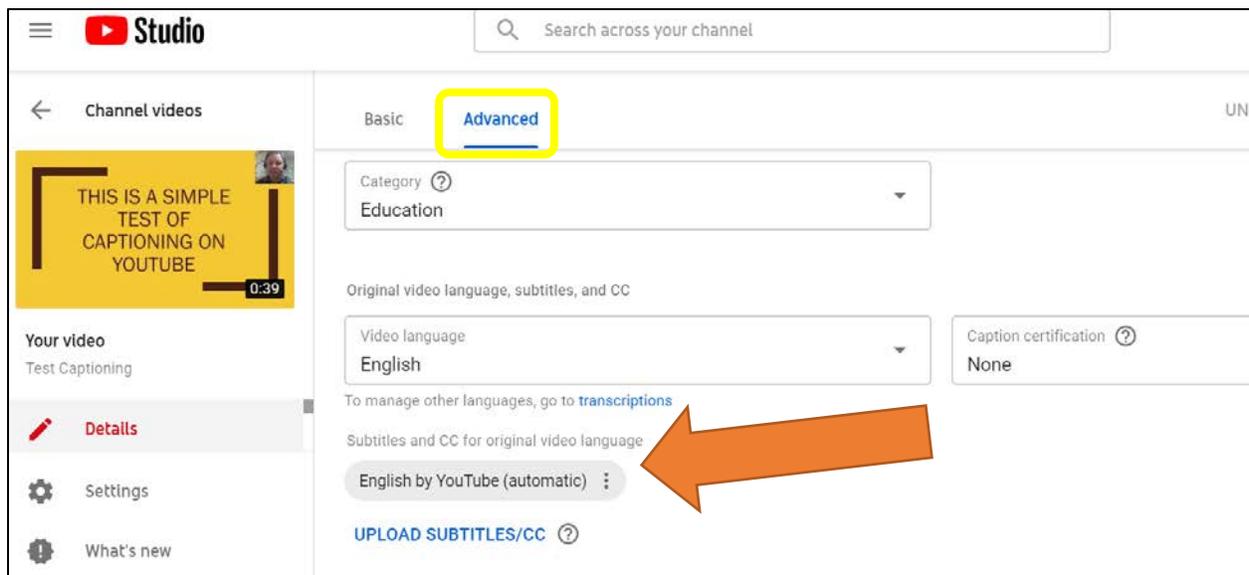
Step 4: Edit the transcript. This is easy in any text browser. The file will be saved as a caption.sbv. (Make your editor can see the file. You may have to change file type to open as "All Files *.*" to see it.)

Each line will have a time stamp. Do not edit those unless you know what you're doing. Instead change the text. If you are clear, it will get more than 95% of the words correct. The biggest changes needed will be for punctuation and proper nouns. If you have quirky pronunciation, you may need to do more editing, for example if you say *cookin'* but mean *cooking*, it may transcribe that as *cook in*.

Read through the transcript and correct obvious transcription errors and spelling. Then watch the video from the beginning reading your transcript while listening. Fix any errors you find.

See the example on the next page for a corrected transcript.

Save the corrected transcript. Make sure it is saved as *.sbv* file and not *.txt*.

Transcript Example from Step 4

Original Automatic Transcript	Your Corrected Transcript
0:00:11.219,0:00:19.200 this is a simple test to demonstrate how	0:00:11.219,0:00:19.200 This is a simple test to demonstrate how
0:00:15.490,0:00:21.789 you can do closed caption on YouTube	0:00:15.490,0:00:21.789 you can do closed captioning on YouTube.
0:00:19.200,0:00:24.519 I'm not really going to do much of	0:00:19.200,0:00:24.519 I'm not really going to do much of
0:00:21.789,0:00:26.949 anything on this video but I am going to	0:00:21.789,0:00:26.949 anything on this video, but I am going to
0:00:24.519,0:00:31.800 caption it using YouTube's built-in	0:00:24.519,0:00:31.800 caption it using YouTube's built-in
0:00:26.949,0:00:31.800 closed captioning mechanism	0:00:26.949,0:00:31.800 closed captioning mechanism.

Step 5: Make sure the "Advanced" tab is open on your video. (Should still be from Step 3.) Click on the upload button to upload the new transcript. UPLOAD SUBTITLES/CC ⓘ

Choose "With Timing." Save the changes to make them permanent. Currently the button to save changes is at the top of the page. This is subject to change.

In most cases "Caption Certification" will be set to *None* if you are providing a transcript.

Step 6: Watch your video! (Be sure to turn on CC to make sure it's visible to you.) Make video public if you are posting on your YouTube channel.

> *If you plan on having someone else such as UC ANR publish the final video, or you wish to provide a transcript for peer-review, submit the corrected .sbv file along with the final video. Leaving a video as unlisted or private is a good way to share the video itself for review instead of sending a DVD or thumb drive. See* Video Content Guidelines *for more information.*

Alternative Editing Method: YouTube has a built-in editor for subtitles that allows you to change timings or create captions (such as in another language) from scratch. After Step 2, open the transcriptions page. The icon looks like this: 文A .

From there you can review the transcription. There is an edit button at the top of the page to make changes. While this allows full editing and downloading in many formats, I find the process listed above faster for English subtitles.