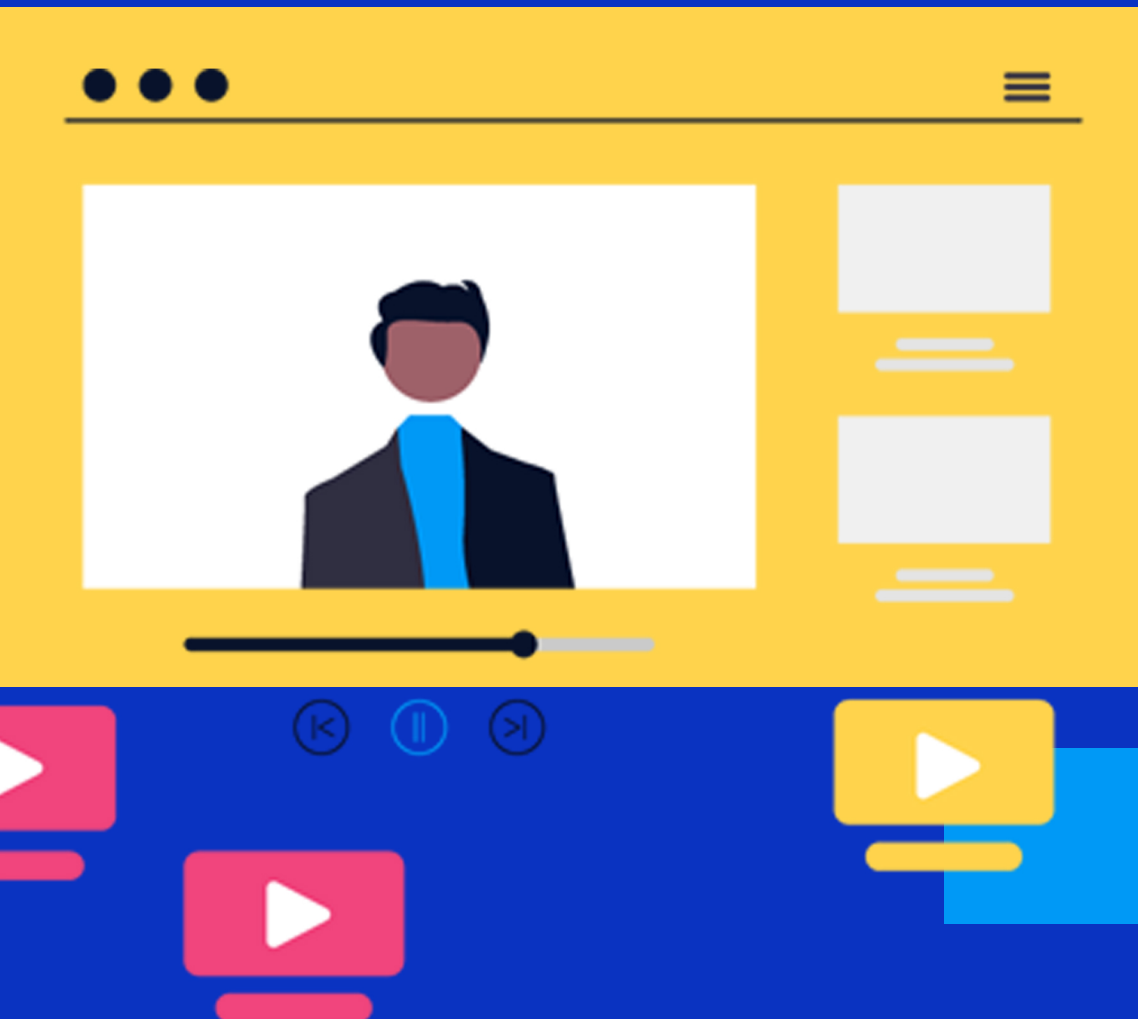


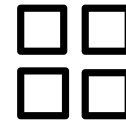
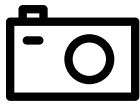
YouTube Design & Inspiration Guide

HOW TO GET CLICKS WITH
ENTICING THUMBNAILS 2022



manypixels

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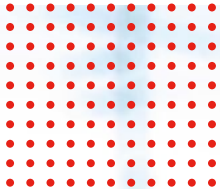
Introduction

As a video content creator on YouTube, you'll probably have some tough competition to beat. But, when the views and likes from loyal fans pour in, you'll see the value of putting some effort into making fun, informative or educational videos.

One way to make sure your videos attract the needed attention is by creating compelling and eye-grabbing thumbnails. Anyone who has spent at least 2 minutes on YouTube, knows how hard it is not to click on a good,

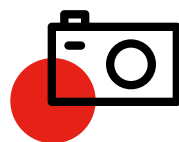
enticing thumbnail. Usually, the best ones are custom made, and there's data to prove it: [90% of top videos have custom thumbnails.](#)¹

With this guide, we'll teach you how to make good thumbnails and inspire you with captivating and attention-grabbing examples.



Chapter 1:

Create captivating visuals using photography



One tested and proven method of creating great thumbnails people will want to click on is using a photo related to the content viewers will find in your video. It can be the amazing location you visit in your travel channel, a mouth-watering recipe you'll teach your viewers to make, or a DIY product you're

making. It can be anything, as long as it's explanatory for the video and looks interesting.

We have a tendency to enjoy all things beautiful and sometimes appreciate a sneak peek. So a photo of what's to come in the video is a recipe for success.

A great example of the photo-as-a-thumbnail method is this thumbnail

for a video aimed to promote a luxury resort in Calistoga, designed for a ManyPixels client.

The blue skies and palm trees, the serenity of the scenery and the natural beauty of the Napa Valley will make even a digital passer-by curious as to what this hotel can offer. The simple and legible typography makes sure that the design isn't oversaturated—it remains classy and perfectly slick.

This method seems to be quite popular with travel channels. It only makes sense, since we do watch the videos because of the scenery and honest travel reviews, after all, so photos are more than welcome as a thumbnail.

One important thing you shouldn't forget is that regular visitors on your channel will expect consistency. All most-watched YouTube chan-

nels have their method in terms of thumbnail creation. If you go for photos, stick to that idea.



Inspiration from the web

The YouTuber Matt Komo² uses the photo + simple typography approach, and the results are wondrous. Komo gives the viewer a sneak peek of the gorgeous scenery, and tries not to fluff anything up by adding text to the thumbnail.



Photos, as we mentioned before, can be the best idea if you have a cooking channel as well. Give the viewers a photo of what they are cooking,

because using the ingredients might scare them off. Seeing the final product, they will be hooked (and hopefully thinking about it). Here's a

good example of this: Tasty's "I Made A Giant 30-Pound Burger" video³.





Chapter 2:

Professional and classy look with collages



If your channel is about education, explanatory videos, reviews, or webinars, one method seems to stick out—collages. A collage for a YouTube thumbnail usually combines a photo of the speaker or subject matter, a unified background, and possibly other design elements, like text and simple illustrations.

Brice Gump⁴ is a digital marketing professional who shares tips and advice for online marketing professionals on his YouTube channel. As a ManyPixels client, our team worked on his channel art, as well as video thumbnails.

Here's why his channel's art and thumbnails work:

- It looks uniform: mostly blue and white colors (that also invoke professionalism and dependability), and no more than two fonts
- It gives a sense of quirk and fun: even though it's an educational video, Brice's smile and approachable posture reassures the viewer that this isn't just another boring marketing explanation video
- Straight to the point: no additional text apart from the title.



Marketing experts really seem to like collages. Jeanette Knutti⁵ at Moxie Marketing also has YouTube thumbnails as one of the regular requests for ManyPixels' designers. Here are some of the products.

A simple photo cutout, combined with a font that you'd use regularly and a pleasant background that will let the collage breathe, is an effective and universal idea.

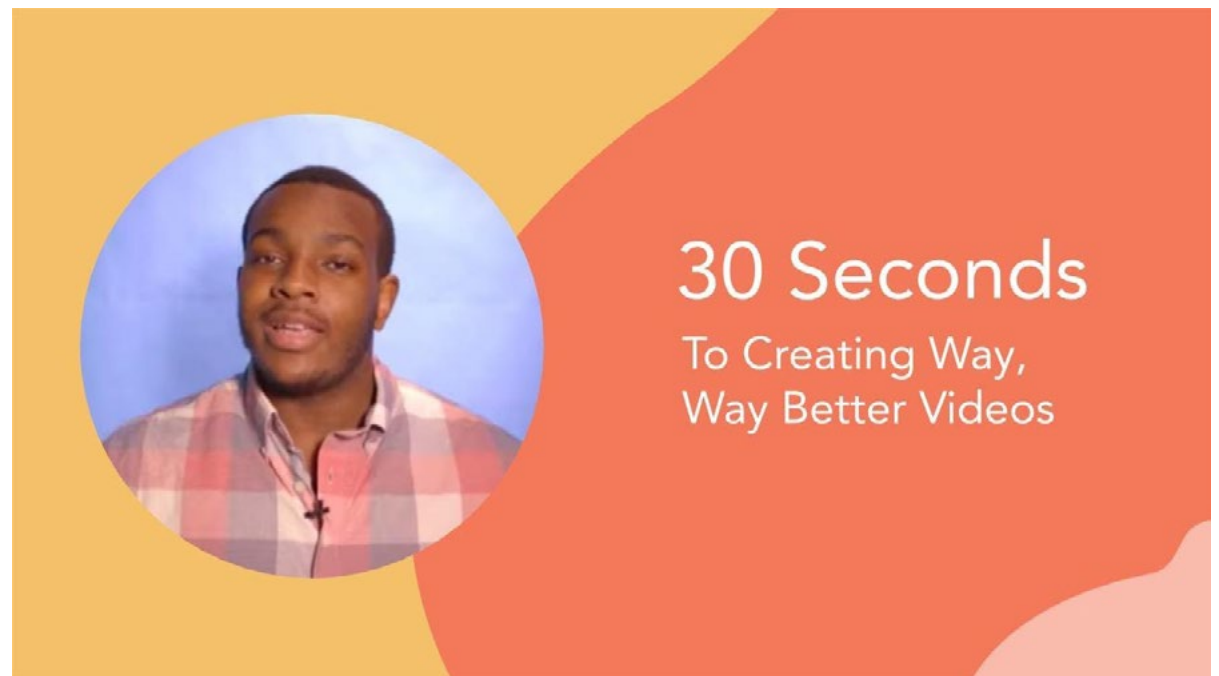
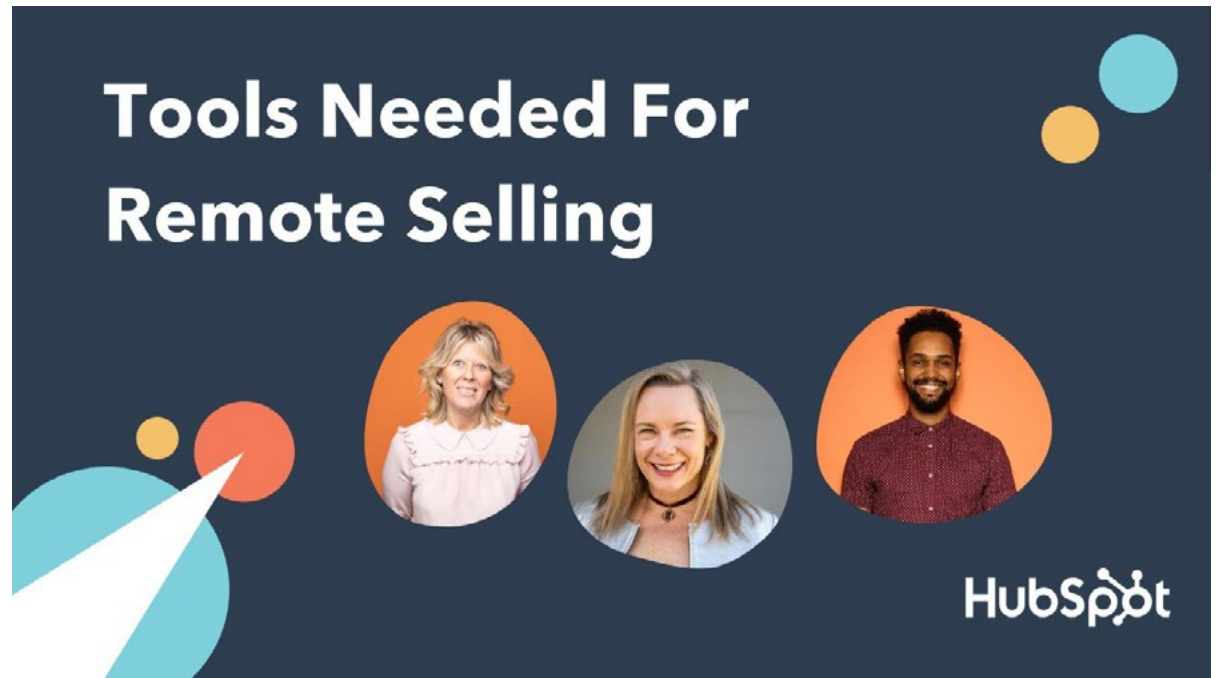


Or, a more colorful and captivating design, with added color to make the collage pop out. If you go for that approach, make sure the photos aren't too colorful themselves and use typography sparingly. Otherwise, you might overdo it.



Inspiration from the web

If you don't trust us, take it from the Bible of marketing and all things digital: Hubspot.⁶ They also use the collage method for their YouTube channel, visited by thousands of marketing experts. The recipe is simple: using their brand colors for uniformity, but playing with the styles and making it dynamic and enticing.



The Futur⁷, an online education platform, use a similar technique, but often makes their thumbnails bolder, brighter and definitely in-your-face.





Chapter 3:

Quirky, cute and unique: tell a story with illustrations



If you can afford more time and plan your videos ahead, custom illustrations are a beautiful, authentic, and oftentimes quirky solution for a YouTube thumbnail. Many popular storytelling and education channels have fully illustrated videos, and use stills and illustrations as their thumbnails.



The illustrations elevate storytelling and give an abstract intro inside the subject matter of videos that dabble in less tangible matters, which are often hard to explain with a photo, for example.

Of course, not all YouTube creators can afford animators for a full video. But an illustration as a thumbnail is possible. Our designers created this cute and simple illustration for Neat A/B testing.⁸

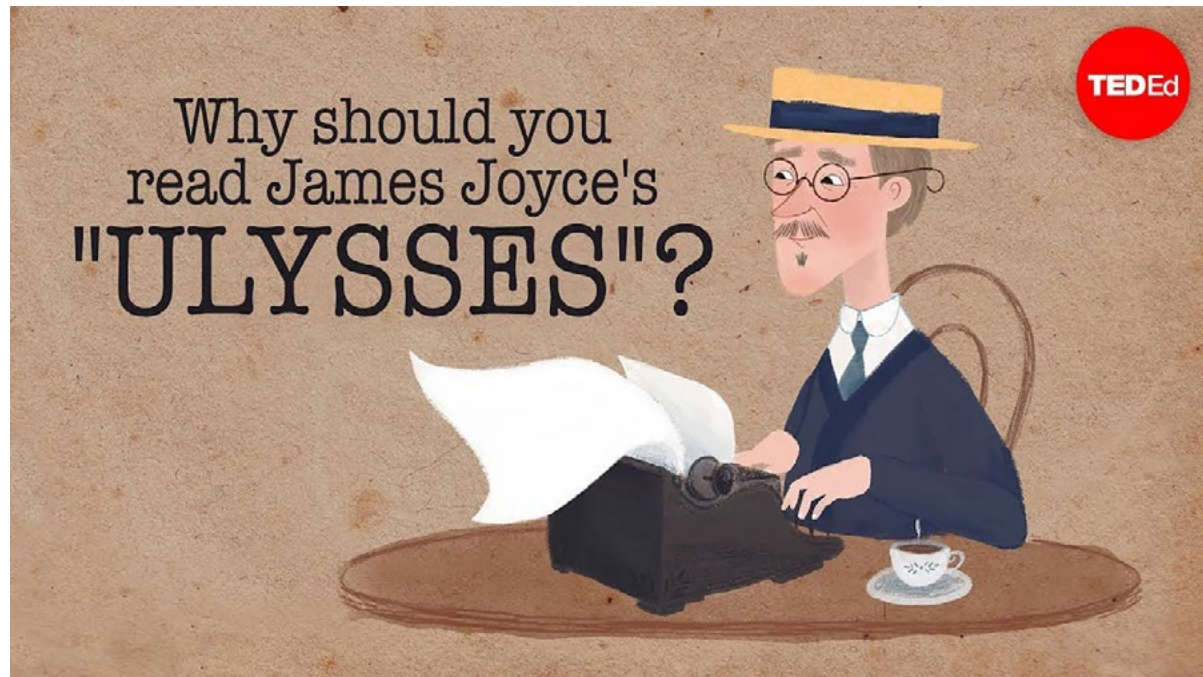
You can even use our [free Illustration gallery](#).

Inspiration from the web

Here are beautifully illustrated thumbnails from Ted-Ed®, a popular educational illustrated channel.



A cartoon series by creator Frame Order¹⁰ also uses illustrations as a thumbnail for their bizarre, darkly comical cartoons.





Chapter 4:

Relay the power of human emotion with screenshots



If you are doing vlogs, skit comedy, or any kind of content that is made unique by the situation or emotions it evokes, a good ol' still from the video material can do wonders.

Mega-popular channels like Cut, Red Bull, and even Jimmy Kimmel's YouTube channel do this to rake in views.

Screenshots as a thumbnail are great for relaying the exact feel and emotion that the video has, and are oftentimes really comical

because of the unique reactions they show. However, you can't predict if you will have the perfect still from your video material, so taking a few photos before starting the shoot as a backup is a good idea.

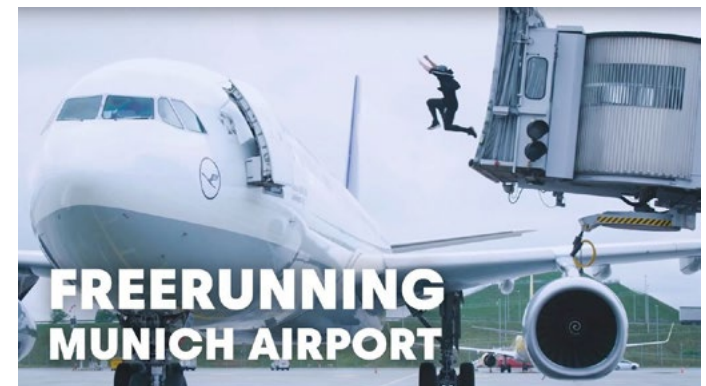
A graphic designer can help you turn your simple screenshot into a beautiful thumbnail with photo editing software and suitable typography.

Inspiration from the web

Cut™'s videos are authentic for the unexpected turns of events in videos like this one, when exes play a game of truth or drink. Human emotions in such situations are very sincere and hard to act out, and that is the selling point of this channel: they offer unfiltered opinions and reactions to certain topics. Hence, opting for a still from a shoot makes for a very clickable thumbnail.

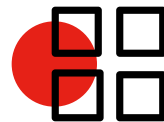
Red Bull, a channel for the lovers of adrenaline and thrill, uses stills from the nearly impossible stunts people make in their videos, like this example from their most-watched video.

And of course, who doesn't love a genuinely shocked reaction from a child that just learned they have no candy left? This is why Jimmy Kimmel's "I told my kids I ate their Halloween candy" videos are Internet gold.



Chapter 5:

Perfect size, perfect result



The creative part is definitely important, but even the best custom-crafted thumbnail won't perform well if you don't make it in the right format and size.

Here is the rundown:

- The best dimensions for a YouTube thumbnail image that will ensure optimal performance on any device or ratio is 1280 x 720 px. If your thumbnail has less than 1280 pixels in width, make sure it's

not less than the recommended minimum width of 640.

- YouTube allows uploading a maximum file size of 2MB per image.
- The aspect ratio ideally should be 16:9, because it allows apps, web players, and devices to display the video optimally.
- YouTube supports four image file formats: PNG, JPG, BMP, and GIF.



**Aspect
Ratio**

16:9

**Recommended YouTube thumbnail size is
1280 x 720 pixels**

**Accepted
formats**



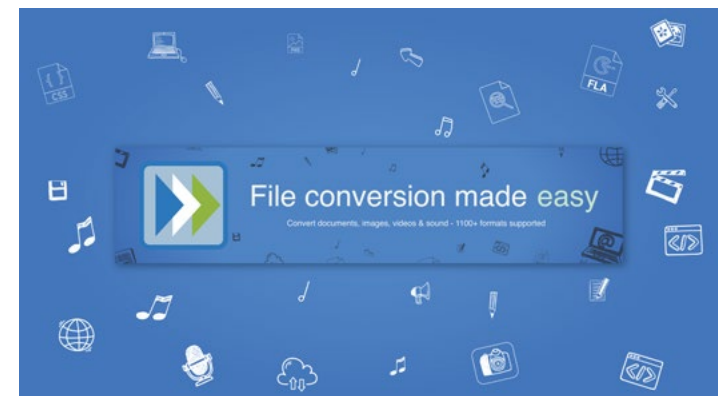
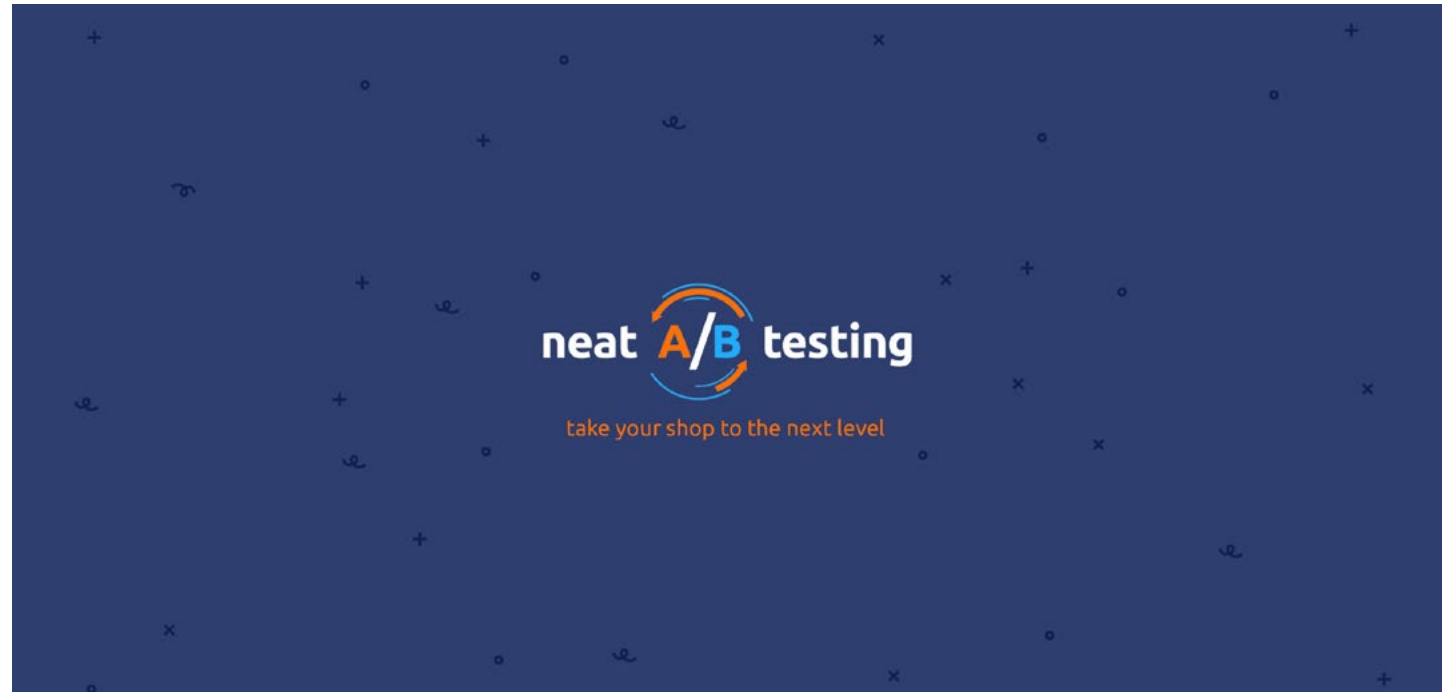
**Maximum
size : 2 MB**

Conclusion

YouTube thumbnails perform much better when they are custom made. There's a few different methods and techniques you might employ when creating the best one for you, but keep a few things in mind:

- Make sure your thumbnails are consistent
- Your thumbnails should be related to the content in the video and never misleading
- Spammy and clickbait is bad
- Don't clutter your designs with too much text
- Although enticing and attractive, your thumbnails should be in the overall style and look of your channel

And don't forget about your channel art too. If you customize the look of your main channel view, viewers will know you take your channel seriously. Here are some done by ManyPixels designers.

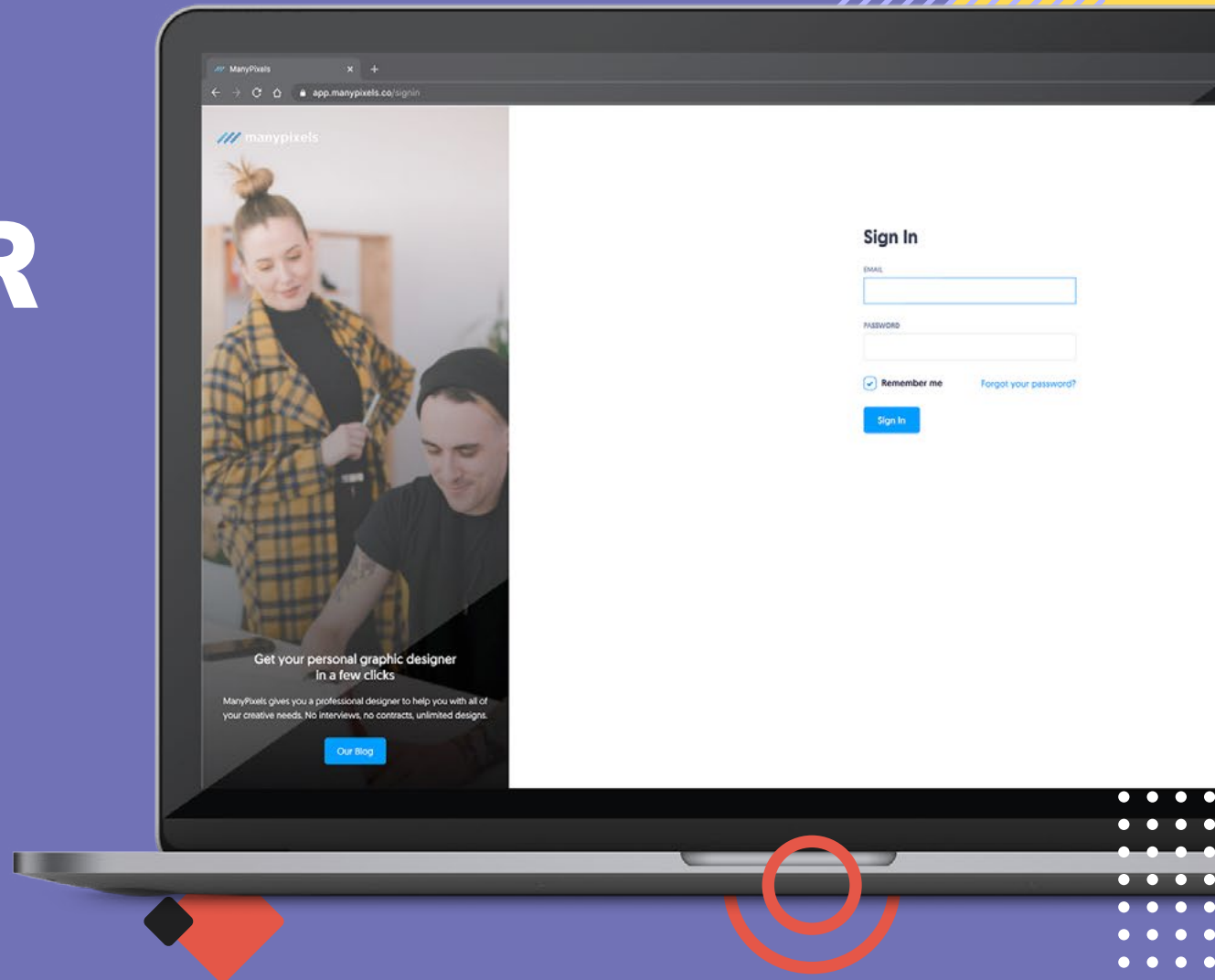


LET'S DESIGN TOGETHER

Now that you've learned the meaning of a good custom YouTube thumbnail and got some inspiration, let us help you make the most eye-grabbing thumbnails for you.

Work with our team of high-quality designers to create an unlimited number of all sorts of graphics you need. Welcome to the ManyPixels family!

[Schedule a Demo](#)



End Notes

1. **YouTube Creator Academy, Get Discovered, chapter “Make effective thumbnails and titles”**, <https://creatoracademy.youtube.com/page/lesson/thumbnails?cid=get-discovered&hl=en>
2. **Matt Komo, YouTube**, <https://www.youtube.com/c/MattKomo/videos>
Videos:
A WEEKEND in CHICAGO - Matt Komo (<https://youtu.be/qF3QDx-apglc>);
EXPLORING PERU - Matt Komo (<https://youtu.be/05VoxY9NFXQ>);
HAWAII - Matt Komo (<https://youtu.be/knvDuQ9FXnQ>)
3. **Tasty, YouTube**, <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJFp8uSYCjX-OMnkUyb3CQ3Q>
I Made A Giant 30-Pound Burger (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z4L2E6_Gmkk)
4. **Brice Gump, YouTube**, <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCo-ChICCI7RIARarO3OtIAqQ>
5. **Jeanette Knutti, YouTube**, <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCj-9Hk0forjgrli5muJ700A>
6. **Hubspot, YouTube**, <https://www.youtube.com/user/HubSpot>
Videos:
30 Seconds to Creating Way Way Better Videos (<https://youtu.be/uPM4USEe2Ng>);
Tools Needed For Remote Selling - Ep. 4: Sell From Anywhere Show (<https://youtu.be/ZU5te-VSnW0>)
7. **The Futur, YouTube**, <https://www.youtube.com/c/thefuturishere/featured>
Videos:
Improve Your Emotional Intelligence (EQ) By Labeling Your Emotions w/ Cynthia Kane (<https://youtu.be/u-eqUeANYqA>);
How To Talk To Clients That Use Abstract & Unclear Language—Client Roleplay (https://youtu.be/-XclqJI_ix0)
8. **Neat A/B Testing, YouTube**, <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8yQJlJaMZWFHFyzpxoa5NA>
9. **Ted-Ed, YouTube**, <https://www.youtube.com/user/TEDEducation>
Videos:
The psychology of narcissism - W. Keith Campbell (<https://youtu.be/arJLy3hX1E8>);
What makes something “Kafkaesque”? - Noah Tavlin (<https://youtu.be/wkPR4Rcf4ww>);
Why should you read James Joyce’s “Ulysses”? - Sam Slote (<https://youtu.be/X7FobPxu27M>)
10. **Frame Order, YouTube**, <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1D-26ByrbZVwuMgjVWmsOuw>
Video:
Frame Order Favourites (part 2) | The BEST of Cartoon Box | Hilarious Cartoon Compilation (<https://youtu.be/FohKE6QTxu8>)
11. **Cut, YouTube**, <https://www.youtube.com/user/watchcut>
Video:
Exes Play Truth or Drink | Truth or Drink | Cut (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pxYpvNMbdXQ>)
12. **Red Bull, YouTube**, <https://www.youtube.com/user/redbull>
Video:
Last Call for Mr. Paul (<https://youtu.be/Mv7J2CLBYBk>)
13. **Jimmy Kimmel Live, YouTube**, <https://www.youtube.com/user/JimmyKimmelLive>
Video:
YouTube Challenge - I Told My Kids I Ate All Their Halloween Candy 2013 (<https://youtu.be/RK-oQfFToVg>)

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