

Social Media / Viral Hooks

Create short, bold text for video thumbnails (YouTube, TikTok, Reels) that earns clicks.

Difficulty: Intermediate

Model: GPT-4 / Claude / Gemini

Use Case: Thumbnails, Click-Through Rate, Video Optimization

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Why This Prompt Exists

Most thumbnails have no text — or text that's too small, too long, or irrelevant.

You get:

- thumbnails that don't earn clicks
- text that's unreadable on mobile
- generic text ("Watch this") that adds nothing
- no curiosity or urgency
- low click-through rates

But thumbnail text is not optional.

It is the difference between a click and a scroll.

- Curiosity: "The one mistake..."
- Result: "How I made \$10k"
- Number: "5 ways to..."
- Question: "Are you making this mistake?"
- Urgency: "Don't wait until..."

Without strong thumbnail text, your video gets ignored.

This framework forces AI to generate thumbnail text that earns clicks.

The Prompt

Assume the role of a thumbnail strategist who writes text that earns clicks.

Your task is to generate thumbnail text options.

Generate:

1. CURIOSITY TEXT OPTIONS (3)
 - Opens a loop
 - "The one mistake..." style
2. RESULT TEXT OPTIONS (3)
 - Specific outcome
 - "How I [achieved X]" style
3. NUMBER TEXT OPTIONS (3)
 - List-based
 - "5 ways to..." style
4. QUESTION TEXT OPTIONS (3)
 - Engages the viewer
 - "Are you making this mistake?" style
5. URGENCY TEXT OPTIONS (3)
 - Time-sensitive
 - "Don't wait until..." style

6. TOP 3 TEXT OPTIONS (ranked)

- With rationale for thumbnail use

INPUTS:

Video Topic:

[WHAT IS THE VIDEO ABOUT?]

Key Outcome or Promise:

[WHAT WILL VIEWERS GET?]

Target Audience:

[WHO ARE THEY?]

Platform:

[YOUTUBE / TIKTOK / INSTAGRAM REELS]

Visual Direction (what's in the thumbnail):

[DESCRIBE]

RULES:

- Text must be readable on mobile (3-5 words max)
- Bold, high contrast colors
- Curiosity: open a loop
- Result: specific outcome
- Number: scannable value
- Question: engages viewer
- Urgency: time-sensitive
- Test different text with A/B testing

How To Use It

- Text must be readable on mobile — 3-5 words max.
- Use bold, high contrast colors (white text with outline, yellow, red).
- Curiosity text: opens a loop they want closed (“The one mistake...”).
- Result text: specific outcome (“How I made \$10k in 30 days”).
- Number text: scannable value (“5 ways to raise your rates”).
- Question text: engages viewer (“Are you making this mistake?”).
- Urgency text: time-sensitive (“Don’t wait until it’s too late”).

Example Input

Video Topic: How to raise freelance rates without losing clients

Key Outcome or Promise: A 3-step script for announcing rate increases

Target Audience: Freelancers earning \$30-80/hour

Platform: YOUTUBE

Visual Direction: Freelancer at desk with confident expression, coffee mug that says “Raise Your Rates”

Why It Works

Most thumbnails don’t earn clicks.

This framework improves outcomes by forcing:

- curiosity text (engagement)
- result text (value promise)
- number text (scannability)
- question text (interaction)
- urgency text (action)

Great thumbnail text doesn't describe — it promises and provokes clicks.

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See also [The Viral Hook Formula Generator](#)