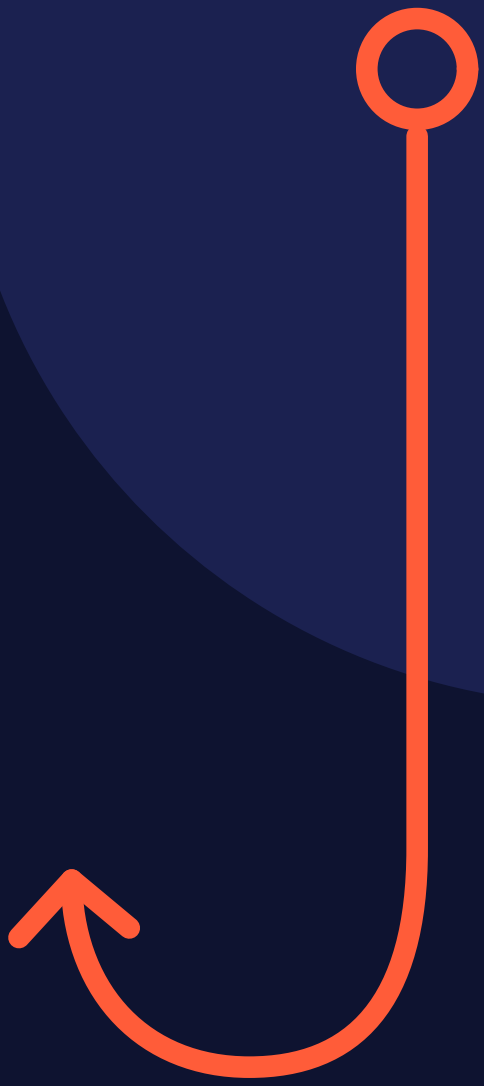
FREE GUIDE



The Hooks Guide

How to create hooks to make your videos perform better

By **Artem Kordikov**

Topic Clarity

Curiosity

Overall Vibe

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01
Introduction

Today we're talking about hooks and how to create hooks to make your videos perform better.

Either you create content for Social Platforms (META|TikTok|X|Linkedin|YouTube) or run ads, you should know one uncomfortable truth. You can have the best script, the premium editing, the best product page, and the best offer in your niche, but none of it matters if your videos won't earn the viewer attention in the first three seconds. When you look at a typical retention chart for short- or long-form videos, it looks like an exponential decay curve with a sharp drop-off in the first three seconds. Almost 80% of viewers disappear after about 3-5 seconds. That’s how important the first seconds are.

META was even given an A/B test in Ads Manager, where you can upload three different video hooks with the same body (main part), it’s made to pinpoint which hook holds attention better. Social media platforms haven't implemented native hook testing for organic creators yet. But YouTube provides the "Test & Compare" feature for thumbnails, it's likely only a matter of time when video hook A/B testing reaches creators.

Those initial first seconds moments make or break your videos. That’s why I’ve studied tons of information about hooks: for the most part in YouTube videos, but include here also my own experience as a video editor and creator.

In this guide we detailed explore: What Is a Hook? How to make hooks work every time? What are Common Hooks Mistakes? What are the main ingredients of hooks? What is the psychology of hooks?

02
What Is a Hook?

First of all let's define what “Hooks” actually means. The term “hooks” usually refers to the first 3 seconds of a video. A *“Hook”* has exactly these tasks: **stop the scroll** and make viewers **sincerely know** what happens next in the video. Famous creator Kallaway highlighted two key elements that a *“winning hook” needs* include: ***Topic Clarity and Curiosity.*** I'd add to *“winning hooks”* key elements an ***Overall Vibe*** **(but** In the chapter on hook ingredients, I'll include more of them).

Topic clarity

Topic clarity — the viewer should instantly understand what the video is about. And every hook needs a crystal clear **subject**. It can be a person, an object, a mission, a place and so on. Critically important is that the way you say your hook can only be interpreted one way. Simple words, no clever word play, no vague setups. If the viewer has to think for even half a second what you mean, the thumb is going right back down and they're swiping away. *Unclarity* is not worth their time in a sea of clarity. We’ll talk about this in more detail later but in a nutshell you should have brilliant copywriting skills and I devoted a separate chapter to this.

Curiosity

Curiosity — the viewer should believe the topic of a video, holds value and outcome for them. The viewer must have a reason to care in order to make them freeze watching. If you want your hook to feel more relevant for your viewer, all you have to do is agitate a pain point that they already have and actually, it's all about psychology, and we'll go into more detail on this in the chapter on Psychology Of Hooks, so that you can tee up a solution that is for them.

Overall Vibe

I'd say the *overall Vibe* is so, so, so critical in hooks. I’d say this a lot, I cannot overstate the importance, because *overall Vibe* is probably 100 times more powerful than the information you're giving. In short: “overall vibe” is how you come across on camera, your appearance, the atmosphere around you, the image quality, the sound of your voice, and so on. All of this comes together to create a single visual impression. And that’s incredibly important.

So, if you improve these things: *Topic Clarity*, *Curiosity* and *Overall Vibe* in your hooks, the viewer amount increases almost every time. Tactically, when you're writing hooks, typically the topic ***clarity*** comes in the first sentence, and then you set up that ***curiosity*** in the following one to two sentences. And the final ingridient ***Overall Vibe*** creates the impression.

Ultimately all your hook has to do is ask and answer these two questions in the viewer's brain: "*What is the video about, and what will I get if I keep watching?*" Literally subject and outcome. And a clear answer to those two questions is really all you need to hook someone. *In this guide real sauce how to do it and it's not frameworks, it's specific tactical actions.*

03
Psychology Of Hooks (Interrupt Theory)

Let's go deeper into the psychology behind these ingredients and the tactics for best performance. What can you do specifically in your hooks to make the thumb lift off the screen every single time? There is a *psychological* formula of how to interrupt the scroll that makes your hooks scientifically impossible to skip. And to do that, you have to understand what's going on in someone's brain when they scroll social media. Think of the social feeds like a highway. Their thumb is moving, their eyes are glazed over. Swipe, swipe, swipe, swipe. It's an absolute dopamine circus in their brain. Now knowing all that, we have to find a way to force their thumb off the screen and get them to pause for even 1 second. It's called the *freeze point*. Essentially, it's like yanking the emergency brake and forcing them to an immediate stop. Now to do this psychologically, we have to trigger what's called an *orienting response* in the brain, an *involuntary reaction* to a new stimulus. It's kind of: *"Wait, what **was that?**" if you were to look up and saw a wolf walking through your backyard"*. *And* there's a pretty predictable formula for making this *freeze point* happen on demand. I would highlight these aspects: let's explore them in more detail.

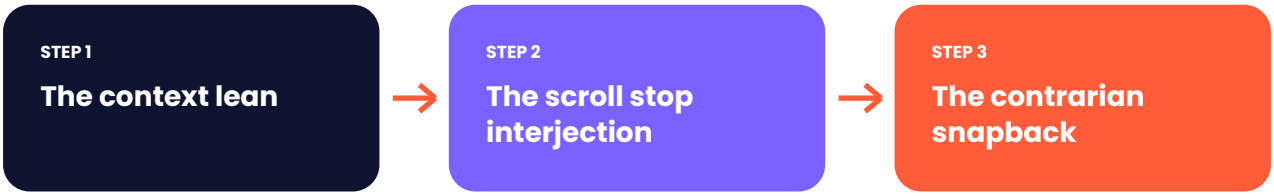
Hook Trend

Hook formats are just the grammatical structure of how the sentence is sequenced and laid out, after they go out through your mouth. What you need is to understand the psychology behind why those hooks worked and then the tactics for how to use that psychology in your own stuff. There are about a dozen different hook formats that we typically see outperform for short-form video. Things like question hook, tutorial hook, problem-solution hook, things like that (insert screenshots). Within each hook format, there are hundreds of different tiny little combinations and possibilities for how people have constructed hook format sentences for their niche. Good news, you don't need to memorize them. We have a *topic* with some of these types of winning hooks, of course trends always change and we try to add new trends in the topic, but most importantly it's just study how it works and it's just examples, you should find your hook trend by yourself as rules. After you found your Hook Trend that you think will be blown up, you only need one method, and it's called *format remixing* and it works in three steps: *First*, find the hooks that are already working. That first part of hooks format works because a format that has performed for other creators triggers the same viewer psychology, so it's likely to perform for you too. In fact, that means that you should find viral videos in your niche and look how they built hook. *Second*, extract their variables to see the underlying format. *Third*, remix that format for your own topic. What you really want to do if you want to write new hooks that consistently crush, is you want to find formats and twist them and then combine the twisted versions together.

These are going to be the best ways to improve your hooks immediately.

Curiosity Loop in Hooks

Let's imagine how you look at social media. You walk past 100 stalls without looking. Then one smell or sound makes you stop mid-step, you stopped, turned around, and came back to this exact stall. That's a hook. So how do you get to do that in your hooks? The way is by building a curiosity loop in your hooks. And this is one of the base commandments in storytelling. If you want to tell a great story, you need the viewer to watch the first line and feel so compelled that they can't dream of doing anything else than watching the second line and the third line up to the end of the video. This is the curiosity loop, the domino effect, and the deeper the loop, the more curious you are, the more you hooked viewers. How do that in just three or four sentences in your hooks? And the answer is there is a *three steps formula* that does it every single time.



Step 1: The context lean

The first step is context lean. In the first line or two, I need to do two things. *First*, I need to be super clear about what the video is actually about, topic clarity. And this is so you as the viewer can self-select in or out based on your interest. If I'm talking about investing and you don't care about investing, I actually don't want to trick you into watching the video because you're not my target viewer. But if you do care about investing, I want to signal this to you as soon as possible, so I need to give you immediate context about the topic. *The second* thing I need to do is get you leaning in context. The more you lean in, the more curious you are. These are the easiest ways to get somebody to lean in: establish common ground, reference a benefit or pain point they may have, use a metaphor to simplify a complex idea, or tell something so interesting that blows viewers mind. You need to be connected with viewers and feel like what you're talking about relates to them in some way.

Let's go through an example, this is the video that got 8 million views. View the first two lines: *"The tech in the Vegas sphere is insane, biggest screen ever built, 20 times bigger than an IMAX."* Right away topic clarity, you know exactly what the context of the video is, the sphere and the tech inside. And I'm getting you to *lean in* by talking about the screen, showing it, and referencing how much bigger it is than an IMAX, something you may have known, like the show to you something interesting to blow your mind. Not everyone is going to be interested in this video, but if you heard about the sphere or care about tech, you're going to be leaning in.

Step 2: The scroll-stop interjection (unexpected)

This is a single line meant to act like a stun gun. Creator goals need you to start leaning in and then immediately *stop scrolling* and be able to move forward. And the best way to do this in practice is by using a contrasting word. I like to use the word "but," but you could use things like "however," "yet," "although," "therefore," "on the other hand," things like that. Now back in the sphere example, let's watch both the context lean and the scroll stop interjection together. "The tech in the Vegas sphere is insane, the biggest screen ever built, 20 times bigger than an IMAX, but get this: the screen is actually the least impressive part of the whole thing." Here first established context and got you leaning in about how interesting the sphere is, talking about the tech and the screen, but then it stunned you and told you the screen is actually not impressive at all. At this point you're like, *"what could possibly be coming next? The screen looks huge, I can see it in the visuals."* And this is the curiosity loop that is building — you wondering what is coming next is replacing any thought that could be distracting you and send you anywhere else.

Step 3: The contrarian snapback

The *contrarian snapback* is a sentence that goes in the opposite direction of the initial lean. This is the haymaker. It's still on topic, but it snaps the viewer back on a different path. And the bigger the shock, the bigger the snap, the better the effect. "The tech in the Vegas sphere is insane, biggest screen ever built, 20 times bigger than an IMAX, but get this: the screen is actually the least impressive part of the whole thing, because the most impressive part is the audio. This is going to blow your mind." At this point, the creator has the viewer hook, line, and sinker. Context is established immediately, and the viewer is leaning in, in case they were interested in something about the screen or something new they hadn't seen before. Then the creator stuns them and plays the Uno reverse card, snapping them back in a different direction. Instead of talking about the screen, the video now talks about the audio. That is the snapback. At this point, the viewer is fully hooked and fully curious about what comes next. They can't dream of doing anything else other than learning how this audio is more impressive than the biggest screen ever built. That's it!

This formula applies everywhere. Now it turns out if you go back and analyze best performing content from any creator across any medium, a lot of it follows the same formula. And it doesn't necessarily have to be content in the form of videos covering entertainment news. If you're making content as a real estate agent, and purely looking to drive leads to real estate practice, pure B2C, I could say something like this. *"There are three massive mistakes people are making with their mortgage. The average person pays an extra $122,000 per year. Now most people think it's because of high interest rates, but it turns out it has nothing to do with that, because the biggest waste of money is actually coming from..."* I don't know anything about real estate, I don't know what the right answer to that is, but just that hook setup, even without me knowing any context, I can get you leaning one way and then the other. And if you're a real estate agent and you make content in that format, I guarantee that would drive so many leads, it would build you as an authority in your category. That hook format works in every category, every space, every niche.

So when I say, *"hey, if you want to achieve X, don't do Y, do Z,"* and if you want to achieve X, you're going to listen, it works every time. The key though is that you need Z to actually be compelling, which in this case I think it is. But if you just do this game, but then you don't actually have anything at the end of the rainbow, people would just churn and you're a fraud. This formula works in all types of videos, it's not just short-form, long-form, and it works everywhere else, anytime of content, in conversation, in life. This is base psychology:

context lean, scroll stop interjection, contrarian snapback. implementing this in every different video and every different use case, that's what takes reps in practice, that is not easy.

Now that we walk through the base psychology and the formula, which is really important to cover first, let me go through some extra psychological things that will really help you sauce up your hooks on top of that **foundation**.

Cult hopping

Let's start with Cult Hopping. When people hear something that they've heard before, it unlocks a comfort in their subconscious. And the opposite is true, it sounds weird, but if you hear a bunch of stuff you've never heard before, you start to feel dumb and you don't like that feeling, so you bounce away. This is why if you tried to listen to an advanced physics lecture and you've never taken a physics class, you would likely feel super dumb and not want to listen to it. So when you're making videos about complex or niche topics, you need to find a way to wrap the unknown idea in something that is known, some common layer. And one way to do this is called hopping. This is taking a known brand or a celebrity or a movement or some cultural reference and using it as a metaphor or a comparison around your point. For example, if you make videos about complex tax planning, maybe you talk about how a famous celebrity's financial advisor would plan her estate around the earnings she just made. Or maybe you just reference her in a group of celebrities when you talk about the elite level of wealth that you serve. Using these references is a really easy way to establish that common ground, and it's subconscious, but it creates comfort for the viewer. And you don't need to make your full piece of content around that celebrity or brand, but this will help you draft off the credibility and the popularity of something that already exists when you're still smaller and growing.

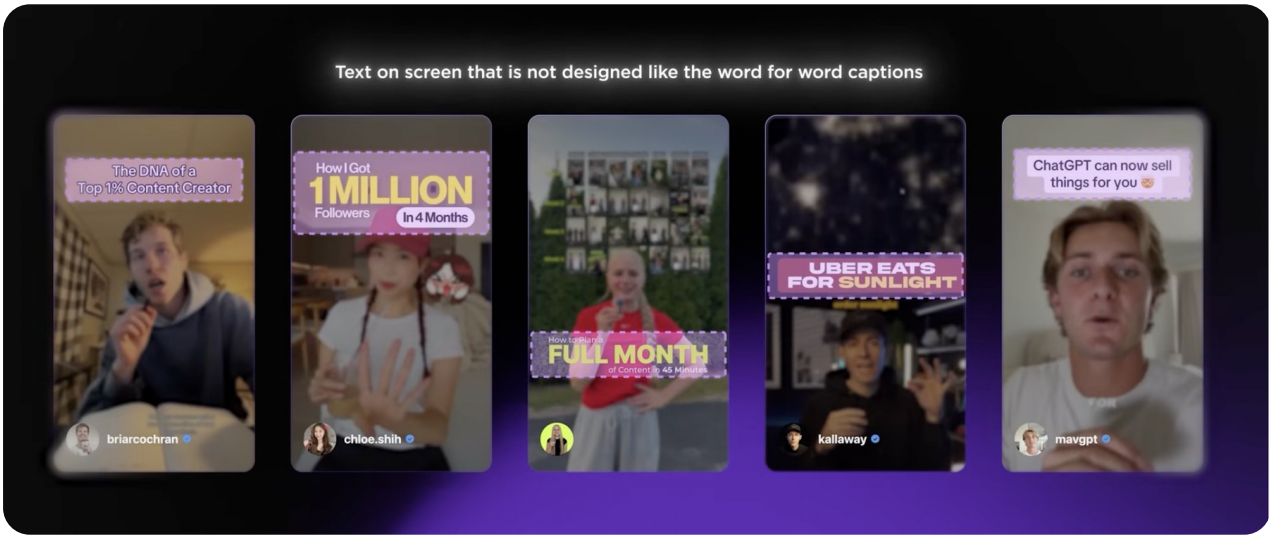
So, that is the nuts and bolts of the psychology of hooks. *I think if you apply everything from this, it will work.*

04
Hooks Ingredients

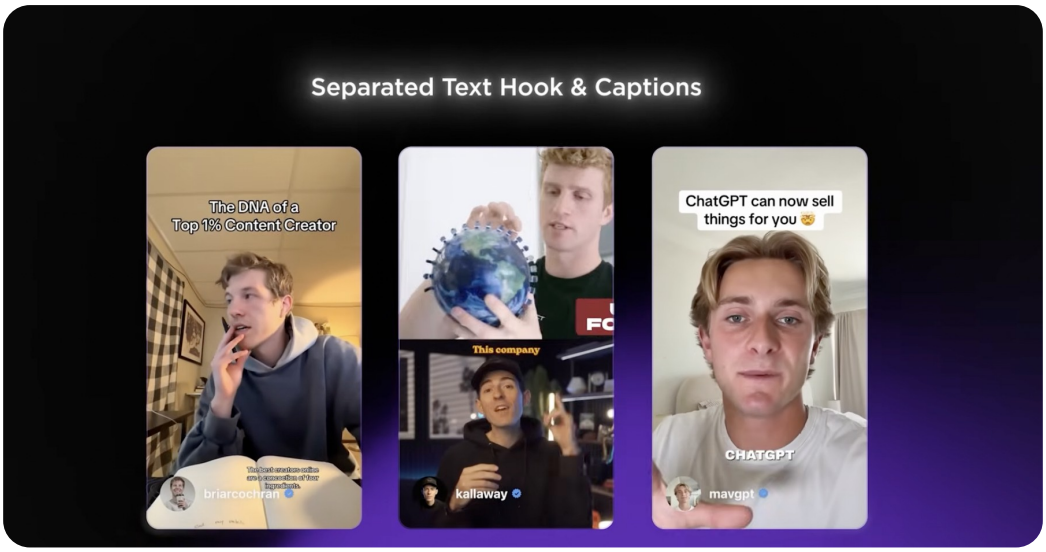
In this chapter are the building blocks of hooks and if you miss even one of these, your hooks are less likely to become *"winning hooks"*. Let's go through each of those hooks ingredients and all the tactics. Everything I have I'm going to put on the table right here. Let's explore these ingredients deeply.

Text Overlays

Text overlays are the words on the screen, not the captions. Look at these examples and where it's highlighted. It's the text on screen that is not designed like the word-for-word captions. Text, it turns out, is actually a very important hook component by far. Because the viewers' eyes hunt for the text and can identify power phrases and keywords faster than they can visually comprehend the image.



Sometimes the text hook is separate from the actual captions. You can see how we have the text hook at the top and then the captions are kind of smaller, more less conspicuous at the bottom.



Other times, the text hook is the word for word spoken hook of what's being said, but it's not designed like captions. You can see in Chloe's and Ava's example, they're kind of designing it with a more luxury font aesthetic, but it's exactly the words they're saying.



So, it can be separate from what you're saying or it can be the exact word for word. It can be designed simple like the system font or it can be designed more aesthetically.

The point is you have options on the placement, the aesthetics and the typography based on the signature style you want to build. When it comes to the actual design of the text hook, the typography and the layout, it's hard to say what's going to work every single time. But either way, making it very clear to read both in the font and the comprehension is the most important thing. I would also recommend you place this at the top of the visual about a third down from the top or closer to the middle depending on how you've composed the frame. It should be wherever the eyes go quickest, but you don't want it to block anything. **If your face is taking up most of the frame, put it above your head.** Don't block your eyes or mouth.

Typically what you see with text hooks, is that when you use the system font, it's typically separated from the word for word captions. But if you use the premium, it can be the word for word caption. That's usually the delineation.

The easiest way to figure out how you want to design your text hook is to look at the top 15 to 20 creators in your space and just look across the landscape at what seems to be working best for them. Not just to copy them, but get a lay of the land so that you can remix aesthetically how you want to treat it.

Visual On-Screen Text Hook: Put a bold, high-contrast headline overlay on the screen that mirrors or sharpens your spoken hook so users can read it instantly without audio. Put three to five words on the screen in a big bold font that helps build that context lean. If you can speak it in one to two sentences, can you write three to five words and distill that message down? A good example of this is the video about life-size floor plans.



This video got like 15 million views, check this out: “These are called life-size floor plans.” The text "future of home design" and "life-sized floor plans" with arrows to quickly establish the context. Here it used "future of home designs" instead of "life-size floor plans" at the beginning because "life-size floor plans" is kind of the name of the thing and you didn't want to risk misunderstanding. That is how critical and in detail you should get with text, that's how important they are. If you just put title text, your videos will do so much better.

Quick Rules of the Text Overlays

It is very important to understand the technical part of how to correctly make Title. Here a main rules:

#1. Your title text should never be more than two lines on the screen.

If you're using the raw system font, like the Brier and Mav example, two lines are absolutely hard cut off, no way you're going to three lines. The line break for where you cut off lines one and two should be intuitive based on the way you would read the phrasing of the sentence. So, if you were to read this sentence on a text hook, "ChatGPT just pioneered the future of work." "The future of work" is a phrase that you read together. It's not one word, but it feels like a combined phrase. That means the break point should look like this, "ChatGPT just pioneered" next line "the future of work." If you do premium typography on the title text, you can get away with three lines. You'll see a couple examples of Ava's as well as Chloe's, but you can tell one line is heavily emphasized with big font, the other ones are more accent. You can't have all three lines with equal typography sizing, otherwise they can't read it.

#2. Never include punctuation in title text other than quotation marks or parentheses.

#3. Never include compound or transition words *and* or *that*, *but*, *therefore*. You're not writing a sentence. You're trying to write punchy trigger power words that will get someone to buy in and understand quickly what you're talking about. Take the 30 to 50 options that you curated, write down the actual title text, feed it into Claude, have it find the pattern and then build a skill so that anytime you feed in a topic, it will give you three to five title text examples using the winners that it has already diagnosed.

#4. The timing in the title text. Leave it on the screen long enough so that the viewer can actually read it. Typically, a viewer plays the video, looks you in the eye if you're in the center of the frame, looks up, tries to read the title text, notices a few keywords, looks down to take in all the visual information, looks up again, perhaps rereads the text, and then decides: *"Should I keep watching?"*

You need to leave the title text on the screen long enough for all of this to happen. That's about 3 seconds. If you remove it before 3 seconds have passed, it will lose its impact.

Brilliant Copywriting

More important than the text overlays is the brilliant skills in **copywriting**. The actual words you're using for that text. And that's really what I want to double click on here. Understanding this one thing, how to copyright on the title text, is the highest leverage lever you could pull in improving your content. Here are some core tenets for how to approach writing the text hook, but of course it is more deeply theme, here just quick main tips. What should the text hook actually include? Let's include a Subject Repeater, a Pain Point Reminder, Specificity, a Desired Outcome Teaser, Power Words and so on. What are those things?

Subject repeater

Is just the name of the core subject or the proper noun, the technical term, the actual jargon describing the name of the thing. Names and terms are like attention magnets for people, especially if you capitalize them, that's right where their eyes go.

Pain point reminder

It is just reminding someone of the pain point that you're planning to solve in the video. So, for example, if you say in the title *"how to avoid hook mistakes"*, hook mistakes are the pain you're avoiding, so if you say that, it'll remind them of it.

People like hearing things that they're already interested in, but they're open to hearing new perspectives on it if they think that new perspective will unlock a benefit or solve a pain point that they have in the category. So if you make a video about magnesium as a supplement, an average way to write that hook would be something like, "You should be taking magnesium because it's one of 21 core building block minerals." It's kind of decent, but it requires a previous understanding about magnesium and doesn't really talk about a benefit or pain point. A better context benefit here would be something like, *"If you want better sleep, you need to be taking magnesium."* This leads with the benefit of talking about better sleep and then introduces magnesium as a potential solution. Even if someone is against supplements or against magnesium, they will likely wait and hear you out because their desire to solve the pain of not sleeping well is so strong. When you're writing hooks, you always want to think about what the benefit or pain point is to solve the target viewer.

Desired outcome teaser

is obviously teasing the dream outcome that you're going to solve in the video. This could be something like, "Make your hooks unskippable." The dream outcome is hooks that can't be skipped.

When you make a piece of content, you should feel like you have a timer counting down in your head before that content explodes and no one pays attention to it. For short-form, that timer is about 4 seconds. For YouTube videos, that timer is maybe 1 to 2 minutes. So you need to find a way to compress the time to demonstrate initial value before that explosion line, and that applies to any type of content, either educational or entertainment content. The best way to do this is to give a little hit of value right at the front, either in the

hook or right after the hook, because you don't want to bury your best stuff. Think of it like this: anything you make after they click off might as well be a black screen cuz they're not going to see it. You should frontload the value as much as possible. You're not going for full completion, your super fans will watch the full video. You want to frontload the value as much as possible to eke out an extra 30 seconds at a time. Now I find that as long as that first hit of value is unique and helpful, they will typically stay around long enough to give you a chance to show your second hit of value. That same logic that we apply with a curiosity loop should apply to this value loop. Give context, immediate value, give context, immediate value, frontload that as much as possible. Ideally you can inject that first hit of value within the hook, that's when you're really masterful. But if you can't do it in the hook, do it right after the hook to keep them.

Staccato sentences (Compress speed to value)

Make your hook sentences staccato. And if you don't know what staccato means, staccato is a type of note in music that is short. It's good to vary the length of your sentences to create a diverse rhythm, and that is true for the whole video. But in hooks, it's highly important to compress short sentences as much as you can. And the reason why you do this is because shorter sentences force you to achieve max clarity. It increases the density of value per word at the beginning. And when time is at a premium at the beginning of the video, you want to increase density value per word as much as you can. Go shorter initially and then expand to medium and longer as the video extends.

Expected Value

is just indicating that something has happened in the field that will change the future of how it works. It could be something like, "New storytelling method for modern virality." Some new method is changing how virality works in the future.

So, you should frame your hooks around their expected value. For example, *"these are three common trends in skincare."* So, learning about trends in skincare is *nice* to have. But the second example: *"if you're struggling with acne, try this thing."* And this way solving acne problems is a ***need*** to have.

If you're making entertainment content, well then the curiosity are some interesting-inducing scenarios. Like: *What's going to happen to that character? Why is the ball bouncing on her head? Will Mr. Beast outshoot Ronaldo in this soccer challenge?* In entertainment content, it can really be any scenario, but the key is you have to make the viewer want to care.

If you're on the educational side, curiosity is just the outcome that the viewer wants. Like: *more views*, *more skills*, *more money*, *more customers*, *more time back with their family*.

If you know what outcome actually wants people in your topic of content (either entertainment, education, travel or documentary), it's very easy to get them to care about curiosity. Curiosity really just comes from some knowledge gap. What you know today, the outcome you want tomorrow, the gap to fill it is curiosity-inducing. Viewers should wonder: *"I want to fill the gap, so I'm curious to hear more."*

Specificity

Use specificity as much as you can. So, specific numbers like 22 days are better than a few weeks. Specific dollars like $2,700 is better than a few thousand. *"I made $97,000 in 13 days on Instagram"* is much better than *"I made several thousand dollars in a few weeks."*

Power Words

What you're really looking for if you want to write new hooks that crush a lot are power words. So now, how to create Power words. Power words are just phrases or clusters of words that amplify the outcome or the *pain point*. How does it find them? The best approach is simply to find successful titles for other niches and adapt them to your niche.

For example, “this is how you turn Claude into a social media machine” in this title Power Words is “Social media machine”. The word *machine* has extra juice on it. Something about the psychology of that phrase causes a lot of viewers to engage in a positive way. But you have a double enhancement of this phrase that is already a guaranteed banger. The lazy creators will just try to repeat this phrase. Literally, a bunch of people will just say "Social media machine" over and over. But what the real best creators do, they remix off that phrase. How else could you frame that and keep the psychology the same but twist the words? If you're in another niche, you could take that to say "email marketing machine," "LinkedIn machine," "YouTube machine," "sales machine."

You can just keep twisting and substituting words in to keep the same meaning but shift it slightly. This exercise is called *remixing* the power words. If you don't want to come up with these power words yourself or you don't really like the exercise of copywriting, you could just export all hooks with the actual word for words, drop it into Claude and say, *“Hey, this is what a power word is. I want you to find all the power words, list them for me, and then remix them with five alternatives, and then mash them back together in the hook formats.”* You could do that as well and build a skill to do that. You're not copy-pasting what's already worked. That's corny and lame.

When you're framing pain points or desired outcomes in the text hook, you want to use power words and power phrases as much as possible. Power words or power phrases are like one to three word bundles of words that are heat-seeking missiles for attention. Like that right there: *heat-seeking missiles*, that's a power word. We could have just said, "They're really good for attention," but it doesn't have the same bravado. Heat-seeking missiles attract your eye in a way because it's atypical, but amplifies whatever message you're saying.

So, you can pick the subject repeater and then one of the options above to combine. For example, this hook by Kat EBT, one of her most viral ever, is a subject repeater plus the pain point reminder. And she says, *“People-pleasing.”* And that's why this did so well. It's both a subject, but it's also reminding of pain she's avoiding in that she's not going to go out of her way for people-pleasing.

It's just quick advice about brilliant copywriting. Ideally, you want whatever you write in the text to have some curiosity baked in. All that means is that it includes teasing an outcome, a pain point, there are many more ways to do this.

Vibe

The vibe is everything the viewer feels in the first moment they land on your video, before you've said anything smart. It's the combination of the lighting in your studio, the atmosphere, and who and how you are. Let's break it down into four parts.

How you look

The very first thing people notice is you: your face, your physique, whether you're in shape or not, basically your genetics. And yes, unfortunately, this is unfair. You can't choose how you were born. But it's the truth: people judge your appearance within a split second, and it decides whether they keep watching or not. That's a fact.

The good news is that this factor is not fixed, and you should work on it. Take care of yourself, get in shape, and upgrade your surroundings. Build a cool studio or set up your apartment so it looks amazing on camera, and it will pull attention toward you. This is not the key to a great video by any means, but it matters a lot, and it grabs attention fast.

How you sound

How you speak is just as important. You want to be convincing, with a clear voice that feels comfortable for the viewer to listen to. A confident, pleasant voice adds to the overall vibe, and a mumbling or harsh one pushes people away. Clean audio matters here too, so a decent microphone is one of the cheapest upgrades you can make.

How the picture looks

Then there's the image itself. If it looks like it was shot on a brick Nokia, nobody will enjoy watching it today. People are used to great-looking video, so squeeze the maximum quality out of the equipment you already have. And if you can, rent a proper camera and shoot with it. This is, first of all, your business, so it's worth investing in.

How it moves

I will say visual hooks can come off a little bit gimmicky in the beginning if you don't really know what you're doing. Like people try to do these crazy things. You don't need to overdo it. I would focus most attention on text hooks and brilliant copywriting, and then just add something little: a little lean in (move physically towards the camera in the first frame - it’s already enough), some little arm movement, pull your hair up, something like that. It doesn't have to be crazy. Just some visual switch or some adjustment visually to stun the viewer. I think that's all you need to do at the beginning. Over time, you can engineer more movement if you need to, but you probably won't. And even sometimes it has to add some *Visual Context:* bring out a physical prop or show the end result immediately. Most importantly you need visual movements that are as captivating as possible to hold attention. It's like an office worker who overhears the words "free pizza in the kitchen" in the hallway. He might pretend to be writing an important report, but deep down, he's already put down his mouse, stood up, and set his sights on his goal. You need to achieve the same effect with visual motion. But remember, too much motion and you're going to overwhelm viewers and they'll miss the context. Too little motion and you're going to bore them and they may churn. You need just enough motion.

For example, this famous Colin and Samir video about the Ray-Ban Metas has 60 million views. The reason this went so viral, in my opinion, is because the initial clip has the perfect amount of rapid motion, and then him in the mirror: that motion holds and allows them to talk about the point, which eventually convinces people that the Ray-Ban Metas are cool. So motion is critical in the visual hook. The combo of text on screen plus the motion in the video plus the power word is way more powerful than just brilliant copywriting.

So, look into the lens and show real energy in the very first second, because a face that feels alive holds attention. And make sure everything matches your topic and your hook: your look, your voice, your picture, and your movement should all tell the same story.

Video Editing

Video editing is everything the viewer sees and hears outside of the words themselves. Remember people scroll with their eyes open, but often with their sound off or delayed. You can win big with just text hooks and spoken hooks if they're dialed in, but a picture is worth a thousand words. When you use video and images in your hook and align them with your speech and text, the viewer understands much more in much less time. If your visual framing in the first 1-2 seconds is static, poorly lit, with unreadable captions, visually boring or visual-script mismatch (when what appears on screen contradicts or confuses what you're saying) the viewer will swipe away before your spoken script even hits line one. You just failed to grab the viewer's eyes before their brain even processes your audio. If the brain has to work to make sense of a dull or chaotic frame, it creates cognitive friction and the brain chooses the path of least resistance: swiping down.

Your editing style in hooks shouldn't just support the hook, it should be a standalone silent hook on its own. Essentially, the best hooks show, they don't tell. I've actually found that by changing some aspects of the visual in hooks, this actually tends to have a bigger impact on performance than the text overlay hook or the verbal hook.

Here are the components i'd recommend to keep in mind if you want to improve your hooks:

- **Motion design:** graphics and animated text placed on top of your footage guide the viewer's eyes to what matters.
- **B-roll and visual selection:** switching the visuals from you to something else works like a stun gun. Choose a high-impact shot that visually proves your topic within one second, and it creates the freeze effect.
- **Movement:** you moving in or out of the frame, or a quick push-in or zoom, adds energy and resets the viewer's attention.
- **VFX and transitions:** effects like explosions or a bold transition make something happen on screen and stop the scroll.
- **Color correction:** clean, rich color makes the frame look professional and gives the eye contrast to latch onto.
- **Captions:** they keep the video understandable with the sound off and hold the viewer's eyes on the screen.
- **AI integration:** AI tools help you generate visuals, fix footage, and edit faster, so you can test more hook variations.

Sound

- **Music:** it sets the mood and the tempo from the very first second.
- **SFX:** sound effects underline cuts and movements and make the hook feel alive.
- **Sound correction:** a good voiceover is important, so please buy a good mic. Clean audio keeps the viewer listening.

The reality is there are so many ways to combine these ingredients that, again, it's kind of hard to codify a rule set for exactly what to do. In principle, you want some motion, some color, and some contrast visually, and you want whatever you do visually to be aligned, as I always say, with the text and the spoken hooks. The easiest way to get better at visual hooks is to watch a bunch of examples from top creators, either in your niche or

outside of it, like on Pinterest.

Want to go deeper? We have a full article about video editing, and you can apply all of it in hooks too.

Putting it all together

Every ingredient we've covered has one job: to interrupt the scroll, hijack the viewer's attention, and aim it straight at what you're about to talk about. There's even a fourth, quieter hook: the first line of your caption above the fold. It subliminally influences whether someone sticks with the video or not.

But the most important rule is that these hooks must be aligned. You can have the absolute best individual components in the world, but if they don't match each other, the viewer gets confused, and a confused viewer scrolls away. Plenty of creators polish the spoken hook and never align all three, and that's exactly why their videos fail.

Here's a simple test. Watch your visual hook without the words or the text. You should be able to guess roughly what they will be, and the same works in reverse. Then ask yourself three questions:

- Does the visual support the text and what's being said?
- Does the text support the visuals and what's being said?
- Does the spoken hook support the visuals and the text?

If even one answer is no, fix it before you publish.

This is the true hook structure: everything that happens in the first 3 seconds, working together as one. Once you understand it, it feels like insider knowledge.

05
Hooks Mistakes

Let's return to the key elements of hooks. How can you consistently create hooks that spark both clarity and curiosity? The key is to avoid common mistakes. Popular content strategist Kallaway highlights several major mistakes (Delay, Confusion, Irrelevance *(Insignificant Values)*, Disinterest).

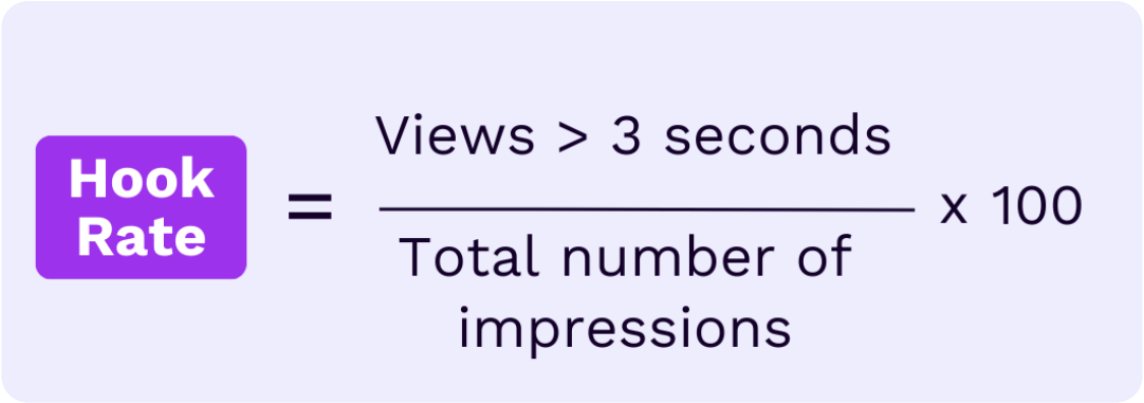
Delay

Delay in hooks is the most common hook mistake, and thankfully, the easiest to fix. **Hooks Delay obviously means that** the context of what the video is about shows up too late. If you mapped out a typical script line by line, delay is when the actual topic appears only in line three, four or five. Meaning the first few lines are pure fluff like bla, bla, bla: *"Guys, this is one of the craziest things I've ever seen, and when you see it, you're never going to believe it."* That sentence is a hook plenty of beginner creators still use — and it fails completely. In theory it's like a curiosity hook, you might hear that and wonder, *"What did the creator see? I have to stick around to find out"*, but in millions of creators' practice it gives zero engagement. A *"crazy thing"* could be anything. There're no reasons in the first second for the viewer to evaluate and they can't understand what the video is even about, so there's nothing pulling them forward and a large portion of viewers are probably gone.

To fix Delay in your hooks just increase your speed to value, move your actual topic to the first sentence. Stop spending more time on introduction and the clarity of the context on the video. Use that first sentence in as few words as possible to give the context that the viewer needs to have to decide whether or not to opt in. Compare the line above to this: *"Here are three simple ways to improve your gut health."* Here there is no delay, no fluff. The viewer knows exactly what's coming and decides instantly whether it's worth their time.

But, certain highly charismatic creators with Delay hooks are able to get some people to stay. But the people that are staying are only staying because of how the creator looks, the emotion on the creator's face, or the text animation hook that they're putting on the screen. Especially if you look at TikTok, it feels like these types of Delay open-ended hooks work a lot.

So, it's not that these types of open-ended delayed hooks can't ever work, it's just that they work way less often and if you delete this fluff you'll only win. Especially for anyone running paid social — this single change alone is often the difference between a 20% and a 45% hook rate on the same offer.



You need to deliver the subject and the stakes in as few words as possible. Now, this doesn't mean talking overly fast. If you rush the delivery and the brain can't absorb the words fast enough, an unabsorbed hook is just as bad as no hook. Think of speed like compression, not just velocity. And to help this make sense for why this is so important, the brain can only hold so many words as it tries to discern meaning in a sentence. Think of it like Pac-Man eating little dots. It can only eat so many dots before it's full. If your hook is 8 words versus 28, it's just way easier to remember all eight and contextually map the sentence. Keep it short and keep it fast.

Confusion

Mistake number two is confusion. It's great that you've eliminated the delay in your scripts, but if the viewer is just not understanding or comprehending what you're saying — it *confuses* the viewer. The viewer can't assess whether the video is actually for them because they're only understanding like half the words you say in the first seconds.

Here's an example to illustrate exactly what I mean by lack of clarity and confusion. *"I made $30 million in the construction business, and now I'm going to tell you how to cook a turkey and stop the war in 3 days."* Maybe Donald Trump says it and will think that it's normal, but actually if an ordinary person talks like that, you get the point of how difficult and confusing it was to actually parse through what was said. If you hear just that, you can kind of gather the video is going to be about a turkey and maybe something to do with business, but you're really struggling to put the pieces together clearly because of the way the sentence is framed.

For the same idea, you could write the hook like this. *"These guys built a $30 million empire and here are their top 5 secrets for earning money. Spoiler: it's not his father."* Your hit rate for comprehension goes up and then confusion goes down.

To be more comprehensive in your hooks you should be the best writer. Just try to apply these simple tactics:

1. Use fewer and simpler words, but enough that the viewer can't misunderstand you. Just take the hook you've written and drop it into ChatGPT or Claude with this prompt: *"I've written a hook for a short form video about X topic. I need help increasing the clarity and the framing of the sentences I used. I want the meaning to be the exact same, but can you rewrite this in a sixth grade reading level so that there's no misunderstanding from the viewer?"*
2. Use direct active voice instead of passive voice on the sentences so they're easier to understand. *''The dog jumped Vs the jump of the dog.''*
3. The last tip for clarity proofing your hooks would be to do this. When you read just the hook, those one to two sentences in isolation without anything else, ask yourself these questions: *"Is it possible for the viewer*

to misunderstand what I'm saying in the wrong way? Is there more than one way these sentences could be interpreted?" If so, rewrite the hook and eliminate alternative understanding paths and should there's only the one that you want.

Irrelevance (Insignificant Values)

Mistake number three is ***irrelevance.*** Irrelavance means that the viewer is not confident that what's coming next in the video after the hook is going to be valuable enough to help them solve any of their problems.

There's an easy way to solve this problem is to say the word **you** or **your** instead of the words **me** or **I** when you're delivering the hook. If the viewer doesn't see themself in the creator for a number of different reasons, they're going to put less value in the incoming solution, and they'll stop watching. So instead of saying, *"I've struggled with skin problems my whole life,"* you can say, *"If you've struggled with skin problems your whole life..."* When you do this there's no possible question or misunderstanding because you're saying it's for you and for your problems.

- Just read reviews about your products with paint points.

Disinterest

The last hook problem is disinterest. At this point, the viewer is clear on the topic from the first second (no delay), he understands what you said (no confusion) and he's believing there is some value incoming for them (no irrelevance), you make a good job. But the hook still can't grab the viewer enough to keep watching.

First of all, you should spend as much time on research topics for your video as you can.

To solve the disinterest problem in hooks, very effective is to build a curiosity loop. A curiosity loop is when the viewer sees something, asks a hypothetical question in their mind, gets some additional context to answer it, but that spurs a new question, more context and so on. It works not only in hooks; the viewer keeps curiosity loops throughout the entire video.

Your job in the hook is to open that initial curiosity loop and start the spiral for the entire video. So, how do you always drive curiosity and build that curiosity loop every single time, no matter what type of video you're making? And the way to do this is setting up *contrast&comparison* in the hook.

Contrast is simply the distance between the current common belief of the viewer and some contrarian or alternative perspective that you offer. For example, if I say in the hook, *"this one trick will clear up all your acne in 45 minutes without any side effects"*. Here was a comparison in your mind to the current baseline. The common point of view comparison is *"you have to wait 6 months, take Accutane, go through all these side effects"* versus my contrast offer *"45 minutes, no side effects, quick solution"*. Essentially that comparison acts as a reflection of that pain point which gets them curious because they want to solve it or at least view what you suggest.

To simplify all this, it's A versus B. **A** is what people already believe. **B** is some alternative that you're suggesting that makes their pain point solved faster, better, or cheaper. Creating this contrast with words is really the secret to driving curiosity whenever you want. Honestly it's the secret to storytelling at a macro level and it really does differ for every scenario.

There are two types of contrast: Implied contrast and stated contrast. *Stated* contrast is when you verbally share both A and B explicitly.*"Most people solve their acne with Accutane, but I have an herbal remedy that does it three times faster.''* You're *stating* the Accutane versus herbal remedy, so it's impossible to miss what that contrast is. You can go stated, which is way more blunt and impossible to misunderstand.

And in the *implied* case, you say what the contrarian alternative is, but you don't reference the base because it's implied, which is a little bit more savvy and you don't really call it out specifically. *"Most people solve their acne wrong, I have an herbal remedy that does it three times faster.''*

Of course there exist so many ways to kill disinterest. So, it all depends on your fantasy and experience in storytelling.

Ad pattern

The last non-negotiable mistake, your hook can't look like an ad. The viewer's brain isn't just scanning for "interesting or not," it's also scanning for "is someone selling me something." And the moment it detects an ad pattern, you don't get the *freeze point*, you get the opposite reflex: an accelerated swipe. So the hook has to disguise itself as organic content, not a sales pitch.

06
Micro-hooks

Truth be told, hooks it's just the first part of your success. Modern videos are essentially a continuous chain of hooks. I would divide hooks into two types **Classic Hook and Micro-hooks**:

1. Classic Hook (Stop-Scroll) – the first 1-3 seconds of a video. We speak about them in this guide.

3. Micro-hooks (Grab Retention) - with "micro-hooks" we ensure the viewer doesn't let go and watches to the very end. We achieve it through dynamic editing, great story lines, curiosity loops, sound effects, music, well-placed words and so on — all these are also tools for maintaining attention, I call it "micro-hooks". These little hooks are scattered throughout the video.

In fact, video today is like fishing. The first, most important hook at the beginning is needed to get the viewer hooked via a "classic hook".

An example of such a hook is the pattern interruption: a technique in which the image, sound, or tempo of speech changes every 3-5 seconds. The human brain quickly adapts to monotony and becomes bored. As soon as you add a flash or zoom in on the camera, the brain "resets" and refocuses on the video.

So, in big cinemas the same mechanics are used, but they use more "expensive" and atmospheric micro-hooks. Instead of garish animations with emojis, they feature: a smooth transition to beautiful B-roll (a cutaway shot), a sudden silence after intense music just before the narrator delivers an important message, a plot mystery, or an open-ended question that keeps you watching until the end. When it comes, most people focus on it.

2. Lock In

Obviously, that's what this is about, the first three to five seconds. But almost nobody talks about what comes right after the hook. Call it the next five to 10 seconds after. And it's the lock-in zone.

And the reason I'm talking about this in this video is because the psychology of the lock-in zone, you could argue, is actually more important than the psychology of the hook itself. If you think about it, the hook is just meant to interrupt the scroll, freeze the viewer, and get them to give you a chance at the video. But, the lock-in zone, the next two to four sentences, is really where you earn the viewers attention and get them to stay for the rest of it. This actually is the most important part of the script. If the hook's just the appetizer, this is really the thing that makes them stay for the whole meal.

There are many more permutations of what can work in the lock-in zone beyond just the few that work for hooks. It'd be too hard for me to map every combination for how to actually approach the lock-in zone. But, psychologically, there are only two things that happen during the lock-in zone, and this happens every time. Number one is confirming the hook claim, and number two is rapid trust evaluation.

Just like on long-form YouTube, where you need to confirm the click from the title and thumbnail in the intro, in short-form, you need to confirm the hook in the lock-in zone. And this is just to help ensure the viewer they're not getting bait-and-switched. You didn't hook them on one topic and you're switching to something else.

Secondly, and most importantly, is the rapid trust evaluation. And if there is one contrarian idea that I could hang my hat on when it comes to scriptwriting, it would be this. Given the current state of the internet with all these fake gurus, making a strong claim on the hook is not enough to get someone to lock in. They also have to trust that you as the messenger are not going to waste their time and will actually give them the outcome that you've promised.

This lock-in zone, the two to four sentences right after the hook, is really like a trial run to see if they should stay for the rest of the video. Your job as the creator during this phase, this extra part after the hook, is to earn their trust and get them to lock in.

Four ways to earn lock-in

These are kind of like the four elements. If you can manipulate these to be stronger, lock-in will happen more often.

Number one is how you look. Simply put, the hotter you are, the more people will lock in. And it's not fair, it just is what it is. Girls and guys are thirsty on both sides of the aisle. The hotter the messenger, especially if it suits your credibility given the topic, the better. So, if you have the potential to be hot, you should. People don't really talk about this, but if you can get hotter in the videos, get hotter because this works to lock people in.

Now, the second thing that gets people to lock in is increasing the quality of the packaging in your videos. And on long-form, packaging is title thumbnail, but short-form packaging means something different. When I say packaging, I mean the quality of the visuals, the set, the framing, the camera angles, the lighting, the audio quality, the visuals, it's everything that goes into the overall vibe and aesthetic, the production quality of the video. Now, don't think this means you have to have a crazy set in order to exude production quality. I think of someone like Jesse Jean, she's a yapper, she yaps in her house, she doesn't have a crazy set, but her videos exude quality. So, it's not about a crazy expensive set, but it's about a level of polish and care. And the reason why, just like the hot thing, is that if you have a high quality of packaging, it exudes that you care, and care equals trust.

The third way to get someone to lock in is the relatability of the messenger. Specifically, how similar does the messenger of the content seem to the viewer? The demographics, the look, the vibe of the messenger is being assessed by the viewer to evaluate fit. People tend to trust others that seem like them or that seem like the character they expected faster than others. This is why Gen Z consumers of AI prefer a Gen Z creator. This is why if I'm going to pick an accounting creator, I want an old guy with glasses, a button-down shirt who writes on a yellow legal pad. This level of relatability plays a big factor in the lock-in period.

Now, the fourth and last way you can get someone to lock in during this period, which is the most important by far, is proof or trust anchor. If you're making educational content, having concrete proof in this lock-in phase to prove that what you're claiming is true, whether it's a study, a case study, some third-party reference, some screenshot of proof, that helps a ton.

If you look trustworthy, you have premium packaging, and you signal proof, you have a much higher chance during this lock-in phase of someone actually settling in and wanting to continue watching. And if you don't have any of these things, even if you have a good hook, it'll be hard to get them to lock in.

07
Conclusion

I think becoming a master at hooks is the single biggest lever you can pull if you're trying to get your content to perform better, imho hooks are the 80% in the content flow, especially in short form content and ads.

As a recap, we covered the four main hook mistakes that you're making and are preventing your videos from outperforming. Those mistakes are delay, confusion, irrelevance, and disinterest.

In other words, if there's a "hook," then the viewer is the fish, the compelling opening is the bait, and the micro-hooks throughout the video represent the skill of the fisherman, who carefully reels in the line so the catch doesn't get away until he lands it.

After you improve hooks, you should improve the storytelling script skills for your videos.

Do you agree with my points? Actually hooks is a very big theme, I'll sometimes in my article update some points and most importantly I'll add sometimes in my website new tested viral hooks. I know it was a long one, but I wanted to go all the way down the rabbit hole as deep as I could on hooks for you. Every blogger just repeated the same information, so I tried just combining all of them in one free guide - because people read faster than they can hear or that they can visually comprehend, after watching this video I think you don't understand all of it at once.