(Approx. 964 words)

YouTube, an Online Video Sharing Service, Parts 1 and 2

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YouTube is an online video-sharing service currently owned by Google. According to the Wikipedia entry for YouTube, it is second only to Google Search as the most visited website. According to wyzow, *YouTube Stats: Everything You Need to Know In 2023!* "An average of 2,500 new videos are uploaded to YouTube every minute," so there is plenty to watch. Content covers the gamut from humor to science; my favorite is the how-to videos. Access is free; anyone with an account (any Google account will work) can have their own "channel" and upload content. As you might expect, this "anyone can upload" policy means the accuracy of the content varies from excellent to what I consider just plain junk. As you should with any Internet content, use caution and common sense when judging the accuracy of YouTube content.

To access YouTube, type YouTube.com into your browser's address box. The opening page shows a variety of videos available for viewing. Keep scrolling down for more and even more possibilities. To narrow the video choices, use the search box at the top of the page. I often search for "how to" videos. For example, I just replaced the weather strip around some doors. I've done this before, but I thought I'd see if I could find any "secrets" of the pros to simplify the job. I viewed several videos, and the creators generally agreed on what to do. Some said to start at the top; others started with the sides, but otherwise, there was agreement.

One tip I picked up was mitering the corners for a better seal. I also learned when and where to install foam wedges.

Want to learn how to cook a particular dish? Type the name into the search box, and you will likely get hundreds of videos to view.

Some content creators post new videos as often as daily. Other channels change infrequently. If you find a channel you want to follow, click the "subscribe" button to begin a list of channels for easy access. This is similar to "favorites" in other applications. You will need to sign in with a Google address to create a subscription list.

**Part 2 – The YouTube Video Player YouTube content: is it treasure or trash?** You make that decision. But, if you view YouTube videos, here is an introduction to some basic controls that you may find helpful. Let's start with the primary playback menu at the video's bottom.



At the far left is the play-pause control. This image appears as an arrow or triangle on its side because the video is paused. Click on the arrow, and the video starts playing. The arrow changes to two parallel bars. These symbols should look familiar since they are used on most audio and video playback devices.

Tapping the space bar, clicking on the video, or pressing the letter "k" will also stop and start playback. The next icon, the arrow with a vertical bar, another icon used on most playback devices, jumps to the end of the current playback and starts a new video.

Next on the control bar is the volume control. Again, the symbol may be similar to other audio-video devices.

Placing the cursor over the "speaker" image brings up a slider control used to increase (slide to the right) or decrease (slide to the left) playback volume. This control differs from the Windows volume control, which affects the entire system. To quickly mute a video, click on the speaker or slide the control left. An "X" will appear over the speaker when playback is muted.

The numbers to the speaker's right indicate the current playback position in minutes and seconds and the total time for the video. For example, this video is at the 2-minute 48-second position of a 15-minute 20-second video. "Nitecore EDC27 is the title of this presentation. The greater than character (>) opens a list of chapters if the video is set up with them.

Skipping to the right, the following control turns Autoplay on or off. In the image above, with the button to the right, Autoplay is on. Moving the slider to the left turns off Autoplay. With Autoplay on, playback will go to a new video and start playing it when the current selection ends.

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Description automatically generatedMoving to the right, the CC icon turns closed, captioning on and off. Generally, it works well, but I have seen some strange words pop up in the caption dialog. Tapping "c" also opens captioning. Not all videos have the closed caption option.

The Settings gear lets you choose Annotations, Playback speed, and Video Quality. A black and white sign

Description automatically generated with medium confidenceNext, click on the open square of the screen. YouTube calls this "Miniplayer." Again, we have a one-key shortcut. This time, it's the "I" key. The shortcut key is a toggle: opening the picture-in-picture with a press, then reverting to the standard view with another touch of the "I" key.

The next icon, an open rectangle, controls "theater" mode. The standard view lists additional videos to the right of the one playing. Theater view toggles this list on and off. The shortcut key "t" does the same.

The four corner brackets that form an "open square" is the "full screen" icon. Click it to enlarge the current video to full screen. Pressing Escape returns to the standard view. The "f" key is a toggle for full screen and returns to the standard view.

We touched on the basic controls for viewing YouTube videos, but the site has many other features, such as sharing, clipping, saving, and transcripts. I encourage you to explore these features if you are a YouTube regular or just an occasional user.