YouTube Content Strategy Report (Steps 1–3 Insights)

STEP 1.5 — Dataset Overview & Interpretation Results

Dataset covers 13,018 trending videos (Oct 2023 – Sep 2025) across ~4,000 channels.
- Verified dominate (71%); non-verified must optimize other levers.
- Shorts only 4.5% of trending → treat as separate ecosystem.
- Views are heavily skewed (median ~543K vs mean ~1.9M). Use medians/log scale.
- Long-form sweet spot: 8–15 minutes; Shorts ≤60s rely on completion rate.
- Dataset robust, minimal missingness (except dropped creatorOnRise).

STEP 2 — Temporal Analysis (Posting Times)

Best posting windows (ET):
- Overall: Sat/Sun afternoons (15–16h), Thu 15h reliable; Fri/Sat 6 AM strong but rare cases.
- Long-form: Weekend afternoons and Thu 15h robust.
- Shorts: Early mornings (6 AM, esp. Sunday) best; afternoons oversaturated.
- Verified thrive mornings & evenings; unverified perform better in afternoon slots (Thu/Fri/Sat/Sun 15–16h).

Key takeaways:
- Weekends matter; afternoons safer for unverified.
- Shorts tricky, many flop → best to test early mornings.
- Authority gap: verified pull millions; unverified must target precise slots.

STEP 3.1 — Title & Description Lengths

Trending titles: 6–11 words (~50 chars). Short enough to scan, long enough to explain.
Descriptions: ~170 chars (~2–3 sentences, often truncated at 200 chars). Used for links/keywords.
Strategy: Keep titles concise, fill descriptions with keywords + links.

STEP 3.2 — Punctuation & Symbol Use

~5% titles use '?', ~15% use '!', ~35% use numbers, ~6% use emojis.
- Numbers very effective for lists/challenges.
- '!' adds urgency, '?' adds curiosity, emojis for casual/Shorts content.
Strategy: Use numbers liberally, '!' for high-energy, '?' sparingly, emojis for Shorts niches.

STEP 3.3 — Keywords in Titles & Descriptions

Titles: 'official, new, best, vs, trailer, highlights, season, episode' dominate. Recency, exclusivity, comparisons work well.
Descriptions: mostly links + CTAs (subscribe, follow, merch, free, join).
Strategy: Titles = hooks; Descriptions = functional hubs (links + CTAs + SEO reinforcement).

STEP 3.4 — Sentiment & Tone

Titles: Neutral dominates (~547K median views). Negative ~same, positives weaker. Neutral best for verified, occasional negative hooks effective for unverified.
Descriptions: Slight positive edge but minimal effect; mainly CTAs.
Shorts: sentiment tone irrelevant; performance flat across tone.
Strategy:
- Long-form: Use neutral; test occasional negative hooks ("What went wrong...").
- Shorts: Ignore sentiment tone, optimize timing & thumbnail.
- Descriptions: Slight positive, CTA-focused.