HandBrake CLI Video transcoder

CONCEPTS

Pick a preset first, then override single options after it; the preset only sets defaults.

Source -i file or disc
↓ -t / -c
Title chapters, tracks
↓ filters, size
Picture crop, scale, deinterlace
↓ -e / -q
Encode video, audio, subs
↓ -f
Output mp4 / mkv / webm

Constant quality (-q) beats a fixed bitrate for most files; lower numbers mean better quality and bigger files.

BASICS

HandBrakeCLI -i *<in>* **-o** *<out>*
Encode a file

-Z *<preset>*
Use a preset by name

-z
List all presets

--preset-import-file *<file.json>*
Import a preset file

-f *<format>*
Set container (av_mp4, av_mkv, av_webm)

-O
Optimize MP4 for web streaming

--json
Print machine-readable progress

SOURCE AND TITLES

-t 0
Scan all titles, then exit

--scan
Scan only the chosen title

-t *<n>*
Encode title number n

--main-feature
Auto-select the main title

-c *<a-b>*
Encode only chapters a to b

--min-duration *<s>*
Ignore titles shorter than s seconds

SOURCE AND TITLES (cont.)

--start-at *<unit:n>* **--stop-at** *<unit:n>*
Encode a time range

VIDEO

-e *<encoder>*
Choose video encoder

-q *<rf>*
Constant quality value

-b *<kbps>*
Average video bitrate

--multi-pass
Use two-pass encoding with -b

--encoder-preset *<name>*
Set speed/efficiency preset

--encoder-tune *<name>*
Tune for content type

-r *<fps>* **--cfr**
Constant frame rate

--vfr
Variable frame rate

PICTURE

-w *<px>* **-l** *<px>*
Set width and height

-X *<px>* **-Y** *<px>*
Limit maximum width and height

--crop-mode *<mode>*
Crop: auto, conservative, none, custom

--crop *<t:b:l:r>*
Crop by pixel amounts

--rotate *<angle>*
Rotate 90, 180 or 270 degrees

FILTERS

--deinterlace
Deinterlace with yadif

--decomb
Deinterlace only combed frames

--hqdn3d *<preset>*
Denoise (ultralight to strong)

AUDIO

-a *<list>*
Select audio tracks (1,2 or none)

-E *<encoder>*
Audio encoder (av_aac, opus, ac3, copy)

AUDIO (cont.)

-B *<kbps>*
Audio bitrate per track

-6 *<mixdown>*
Mixdown: mono, stereo, 5point1

--all-audio
Take all tracks in the language list

--audio-lang-list *<codes>*
Filter audio by language code

SUBTITLES AND CHAPTERS

-s *<list>*
Select subtitle tracks (1,2 or none)

--subtitle-burned[=n]
Burn a subtitle track into the video

--subtitle-default[=n]
Mark a track as default

-F[=n]
Show forced subtitles only

--subtitle-lang-list *<codes>*
Filter subtitles by language

--all-subtitles
Take all subtitles in language list

--srt-file *<file>*
Add an external SRT file

--srt-lang *<code>*
Language of the SRT file

-m
Add chapter markers

RECIPES

Small MKV, HEVC

```
HandBrakeCLI -i movie.mkv -o
small.mkv \
 -e x265 -q 24 --encoder-preset
slow \
 -a 1 -E opus -B 128
```

Batch a folder

```
for f in *.mkv; do
HandBrakeCLI -i "$f" -o
"${f%.mkv}.mp4" \
  -Z "Fast 1080p30" </dev/null
done
```

Upload-ready 720p MP4

```
HandBrakeCLI -i in.mov -o out.mp4
-e x264 -q 23 \
  -X 1280 -Y 720 -O -a 1 -E
av_aac -B 160
```