# yt-dlp Video downloader

**START HERE**

`yt-dlp <url>`
Download best quality

`yt-dlp -F <url>`
List formats

`yt-dlp -f <id> <url>`
Pick a format

`yt-dlp -x --audio-format mp3 <url>`
Audio only

`yt-dlp --yes-playlist <url>`
Whole playlist

`yt-dlp -o "%(title)s.%(ext)s" <url>`
Name the file

`yt-dlp --write-subs <url>`
Get subtitles

`yt-dlp -U`
Update yt-dlp

**Extract** read page, list formats → `-f / -S` → **Download** video + audio streams → `ffmpeg` → **Merge** into one container → `-x, --embed-*` → **Post-process** audio, subs, metadata → `-o` → **Output file** named by template

## CONCEPTS

Only download what you may: respect the site's terms of service and copyright.

Merging, audio extraction and embedding need ffmpeg (and ffprobe) on your PATH.

Sites change often; if a download breaks, run yt-dlp -U first.

Quote URLs in shells: & and ? are special characters.

## DOWNLOAD

`yt-dlp <url>`
Download best video and audio

`yt-dlp -a <file>`
Download all URLs listed in a file

`yt-dlp -P <dir> <url>`
Save into a directory

`yt-dlp -s <url>`
Simulate: do not download

`yt-dlp -r 2M <url>`
Limit download speed

`yt-dlp -N 4 <url>`
Download fragments in parallel

`yt-dlp --download-sections "*10:00-12:30" <url>`
Download only a time range
*Needs ffmpeg; * means a time range, otherwise the text matches chapter titles.*

## FORMATS

`yt-dlp -F <url>`
List available formats

`yt-dlp -f <id> <url>`
Download a specific format ID

`yt-dlp -f "bv*+ba/b" <url>`
Best video plus best audio (default)

`yt-dlp -f "bv*[height≤720]+ba/b[height≤720]" <url>`
Cap resolution at 720p

`yt-dlp -S res:1080 <url>`
Prefer up to 1080p when sorting

`yt-dlp -t mp4 <url>`
Prefer widely playable mp4 codecs

## FORMATS (cont.)

`yt-dlp --merge-output-format mkv <url>`
Choose the merged container

`yt-dlp --remux-video mp4 <url>`
Change container without re-encoding

## AUDIO

`yt-dlp -x <url>`
Extract audio, keep source codec

`yt-dlp -x --audio-format mp3 <url>`
Extract audio as mp3

`yt-dlp -t mp3 <url>`
Preset for mp3 audio

`yt-dlp -x --audio-quality 0 <url>`
Best quality (0) to worst (10)

`yt-dlp -f ba <url>`
Download best audio stream only

## PLAYLISTS

`yt-dlp --yes-playlist <url>`
Download the whole playlist

`yt-dlp --no-playlist <url>`
Only the single video from a mixed link

`yt-dlp -I 1:5 <url>`
Items 1 to 5 of a playlist

`yt-dlp --flat-playlist -j <url>`
List entries without resolving each

`yt-dlp --dateafter 20260101 <url>`
Only videos from this date on

`yt-dlp --match-filters "duration>600" <url>`
Filter videos by metadata

`yt-dlp --download-archive <file> <url>`
Skip IDs already recorded in a file

`yt-dlp --break-on-existing <url>`
Stop at the first archived video

## OUTPUT NAMES

`yt-dlp -o "%(title)s.%(ext)s" <url>`
Name the file by title

`yt-dlp -o "%(uploader)s/%(title)s [%(id)s].%(ext)s" <url>`
Folder per uploader

`yt-dlp -o "%(playlist_index)03d - %(title)s.%(ext)s" <url>`
Number playlist items

`yt-dlp --restrict-filenames <url>`
Use only safe ASCII characters

`yt-dlp -O "%(title)s" <url>`
Print a field instead of downloading

`yt-dlp -j <url>`
Dump metadata as JSON

## SUBTITLES

`yt-dlp --list-subs <url>`
List available subtitle languages

`yt-dlp --write-subs --sub-langs en <url>`
Download English subtitles

`yt-dlp --write-auto-subs <url>`
Include auto-generated subtitles

`yt-dlp --embed-subs <url>`
Embed subtitles into the video

`yt-dlp --convert-subs srt <url>`
Convert subtitles to srt

`yt-dlp --skip-download --write-subs <url>`
Subtitles only

## METADATA

`yt-dlp --embed-metadata <url>`
Write title, artist and more into the file

`yt-dlp --embed-thumbnail <url>`
Embed the thumbnail as cover art

`yt-dlp --embed-chapters <url>`
Add chapter markers to the file

## LOGIN AND NETWORK

`yt-dlp --cookies-from-browser firefox <url>`
Use your browser's login cookies
*Also chrome, brave, edge and others; BROWSER:PROFILE picks a profile.*

`yt-dlp --cookies <file> <url>`
Use a Netscape-format cookie file

`yt-dlp --sleep-interval 5 <url>`
Pause between downloads

## TOOL

`yt-dlp -U`
Update to the latest release

`yt-dlp --update-to nightly`
Switch to the nightly channel
*Not available for pip or package-manager installs; update those with their own tool.*

`yt-dlp --version`
Show the installed version

`yt-dlp -v <url>`
Verbose output for bug reports

`yt-dlp -i <url>`
Continue past errors

`yt-dlp --help`
List every option

## RECIPES

**Music from a playlist**

```
yt-dlp -x --audio-format mp3 --
embed-thumbnail --embed-
metadata \
  -o "%(playlist_index)03d -
%(title)s.%(ext)s" <playlist-
url>
```

**Archive a channel incrementally**

```
yt-dlp --download-archive
done.txt \
  -o "%(uploader)s/
%(upload_date)s %(title)s.
%(ext)s" <channel-url>
# rerun later: only new videos
are fetched
```

**720p video with subtitles**

```
yt-dlp -f "bv*[height≤720]+ba/
b[height≤720]" \
  --write-subs --sub-langs en
--embed-subs <url>
```

**Clip a section as audio**

```
yt-dlp --download-sections
"*1:00-2:30" \
  -x --audio-format mp3 <url>
```