

CHEAT SHEET

Video AI Cheat Sheet

Stills are last year. This is how you direct motion — like a real filmmaker.

The Video Formula

[SUBJECT] + [ACTION] + [CAMERA MOVEMENT] + [SETTING] +
[STYLE/LOOK] + [LIGHTING] + [PACE/MOOD] + [DURATION]

Example →

A skateboarder kickflips over a puddle, slow-motion, camera tracks low beside them, rainy Tokyo alley at night, neon signs, cinematic, cool teal-and-orange grade, 5 seconds

Camera Movements (name them!)

Static	Camera doesn't move. Locked-off. Great for product shots.
Pan	Camera rotates horizontally — like turning your head left/right.
Tilt	Camera rotates vertically — like nodding up/down.
Dolly in / out	Camera physically moves closer / further from subject.
Truck / track	Camera moves sideways alongside the subject.
Crane / boom	Camera lifts up or drops down.
Orbit	Camera circles around the subject.
Handheld	Slight shake, feels raw and real.
Whip pan	Super fast pan — used for transitions.
Zoom	Lens zooms in/out (different from dolly — feels flatter).

Anchors — how to keep AI from going wild

Video AIs drift. To lock things in place, anchor them:

Anchor the subject	"The character stays centered the entire time."
Anchor the background	"Background remains a fixed [LOCATION] throughout."
Anchor identity	Upload a reference image OR describe the same features every prompt.

Anchor motion	“Only the [ARMS] move. Everything else is still.”
Anchor time	“One continuous shot, no cuts.”
Anchor style	“Same color grade and lens throughout.”

Style Looks

Cinematic	35mm film, anamorphic, teal-and-orange grade, letterbox bars
Documentary	Handheld, natural light, no music, real locations
Music video	Fast cuts, strobing lights, saturated colors, slow-mo hero moments
Anime	2D animation, cel-shaded, expressive faces, speed lines
Stop-motion	Choppy 12fps feel, tangible textures, Wes Anderson symmetry
Vintage	8mm home video, VHS grain, 4:3 aspect ratio, warm faded colors
Vertical native	9:16, subject centered, big text-safe zones top/bottom

Pace / Energy

slow-motion 120fps · real-time · time-lapse · hyperlapse · frozen moment · rapid montage · long take · one continuous shot

Look Modifiers

shallow depth of field · bokeh · lens flare · rack focus · golden hour rim light · neon-lit · underwater caustics · dust motes in sunbeam · rain-soaked · foggy · smoky

Ready-to-remix templates

Product reveal (Reels/TikTok)

A [PRODUCT] on a rotating pedestal, camera orbits slowly, studio lighting with soft key from top-left, black gradient background, hero product shot, 9:16, 4 seconds, cinematic

Talking-head B-roll

A teenage entrepreneur typing on a laptop, close-up on hands, shallow depth of field, warm coffee-shop lighting, subtle handheld movement, natural, documentary look, 5 seconds

Brand intro sting

The logo [DESCRIBE] slowly fades in over a slow-motion splash of liquid, camera pushes in, soft studio light, black background, minimalist, 3 seconds, 16:9

Tip — Rule of thumb: 3-5 seconds is the sweet spot. Longer clips = more AI drift. Chain short clips together in CapCut/Descript.