

FROM A VIRAL REFERENCE TO A FINISHED VIDEO

COPY THE LOOK OF A YOUTUBE VIDEO

The exact steps we followed to rebuild a 4.1M views explainer from its link.



A cartoon explainer from a channel with **54.5k subscribers** reached **4.1 million views in 11 days**. We rebuilt its first minute from the YouTube link alone. The first style Calliope extracted was wrong, so this guide also shows how we caught it and fixed it. Every number below was measured on our run.

2 min

to extract the style from the link

Free

to test the style first, 3 a day

563 cr

to generate 34 scenes, 67 seconds

328 cr

to animate 17 of those scenes

01 · PASTE THE LINK

02 · FIX THE EXTRACTION

03 · TEST THE STYLE

04 · GENERATE

05 · ANIMATE

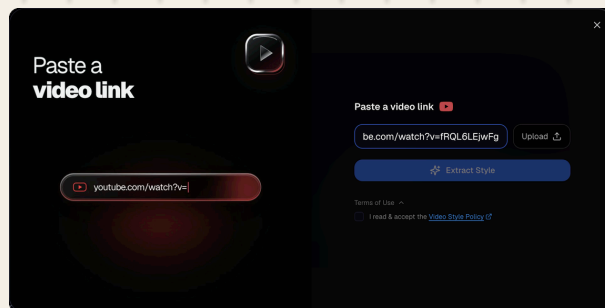
06 · RENDER

WHAT YOU NEED

- A Calliope account on a paid plan, at calliopelabs.co. Extract Style and Test Style open the pricing page on the free plan
- The YouTube link of the video whose look you want. Ours: youtube.com/watch?v=fRQL6LEjwFg
- The narration of the part you want to copy, **900 characters or more**. Ours was 1,003
- Credits: the price shows before anything is charged

1 · PASTE THE LINK AND EXTRACT THE STYLE

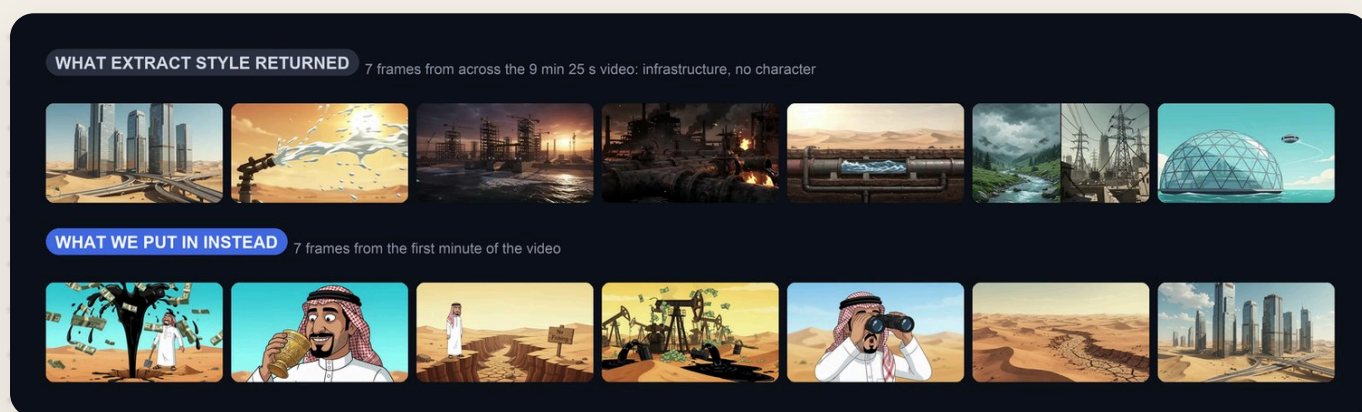
In the Visuals Lab, click **Extract Style**, paste the YouTube link and tick the Video Style Policy box. It took about **2 minutes** for a video of 9 min 25 s and it did not cost credits. You get a Visual Style of 1,572 characters, a Video Style of 987 and **7 reference images**. Do not generate yet.



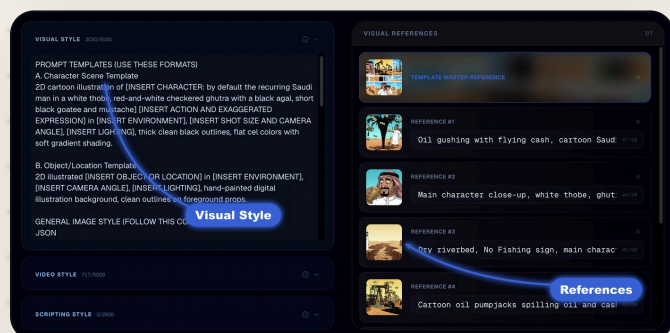
THE EXTRACT STYLE DIALOG WITH OUR LINK PASTED · youtube.com/watch?v=fRQL6LEjwFg

2 · COMPARE IT WITH THE REAL OPENING AND FIX IT

Extract Style looked at the whole video, so its 7 frames came from all over it: skyscrapers, a sprinkler, a coastal plant, pipes, a biodome. None showed the cartoon man of the opening, the minute we wanted. Its Visual Style said **3D digital CGI animation** and listed **No visible human faces, characters** as a constraint. The first time, we skipped this check and paid for a full video in the wrong look.



TOP: WHAT EXTRACT STYLE RETURNED · BOTTOM: THE 7 FRAMES OF THE FIRST MINUTE WE PUT IN INSTEAD



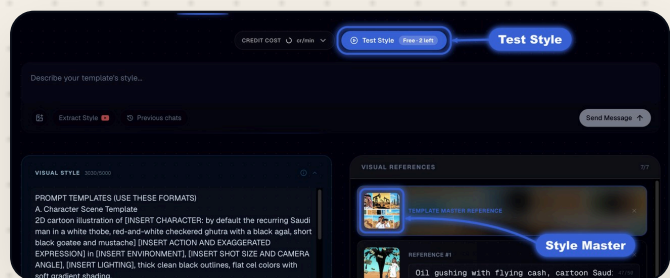
THE FIXED TEMPLATE · VISUAL STYLE LEFT, REFERENCES RIGHT

The fix took three edits

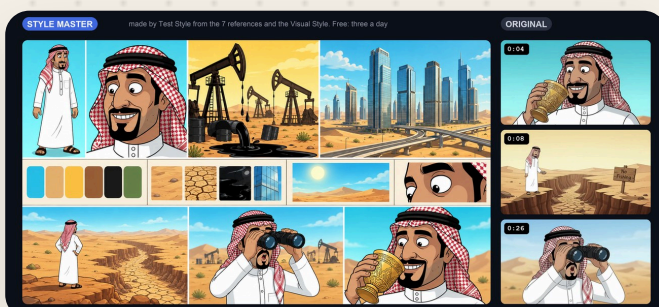
- 1 Rewrite the Visual Style: 2D cartoon, thick clean outlines, one recurring main character, an explicit ban on 3D CGI and photorealism
- 2 Rewrite the Video Style to match: 2D cartoon motion, a locked camera
- 3 Replace the 7 references with frames of the first minute (0:02, 0:04, 0:14, 0:18, 0:26, 0:48, 1:00) and label each one

3 · TEST THE STYLE FOR FREE

Click **Test Style**. In about a minute Calliope builds the **Style Master**: one sheet with the character, a palette, textures and sample shots, made from your references and your Visual Style. Three a day are free on a paid plan. Put it next to frames of the original. Ours read as the same family, so we went ahead. If yours does not, go back to step 2.



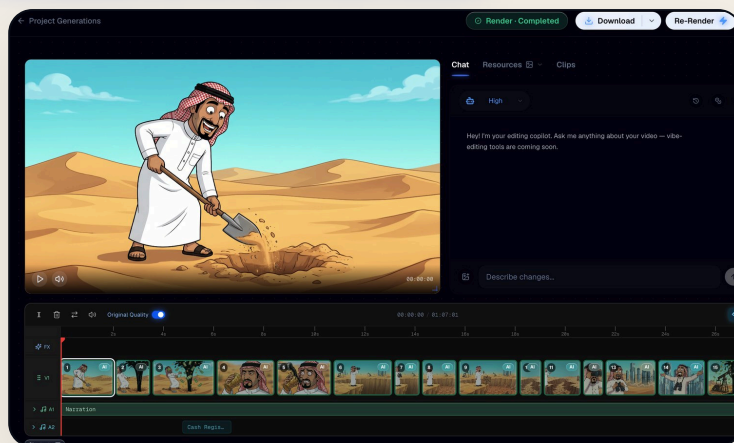
TEST STYLE: FREE, 2 LEFT AFTER OUR FIRST TEST



OUR STYLE MASTER NEXT TO THE ORIGINAL AT 0:04, 0:08, 0:26

4 • PASTE THE NARRATION AND GENERATE IN EXTRA HIGH

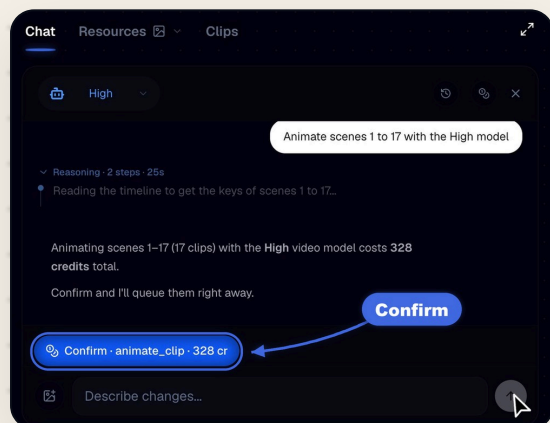
For a fair test we pasted the original narration: the first 64 seconds, **1,003 characters**, taken from the audio with speech to text, not from YouTube's captions, which add tags such as [music]. For a video you will publish, write your own script. Quality **Extra High**, animation off, narrator on. Calliope quoted **563 credits** and finished in under 20 minutes: 34 scenes in 67 seconds.



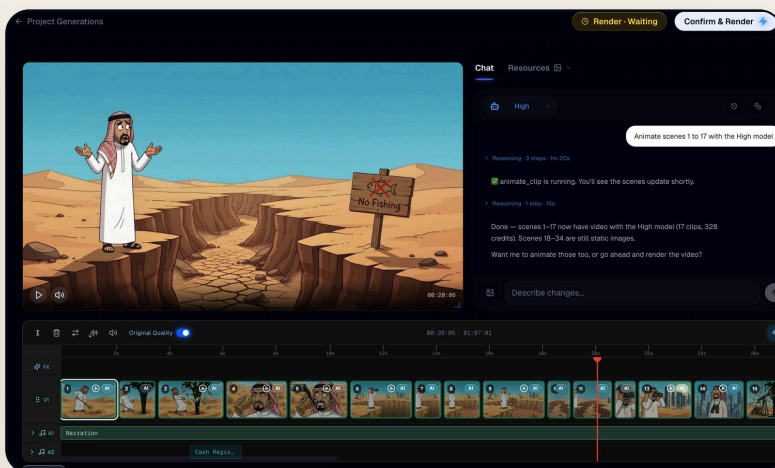
THE FINISHED JOB IN THE EDITOR • RENDER COMPLETED • 34 SCENES, 1:07

5 • ANIMATE THE FIRST HALF FROM THE COPILOT

In the editor chat we sent one message: **Animate scenes 1 to 17 with the High model**. The copilot read the timeline and quoted **17 clips for 328 credits** with a Confirm button. Nothing is spent until you press it. After Confirm, all 17 clips were back in about 30 seconds. Scenes 18 to 34 stay as still images.



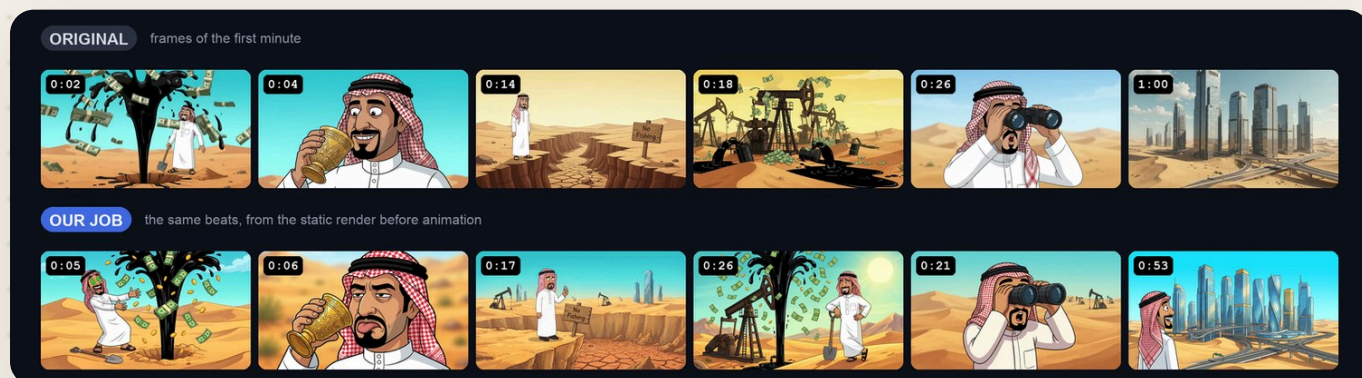
THE COPILOT QUOTES THE PRICE BEFORE IT SPENDS ANYTHING



DONE: 17 CLIPS, 328 CREDITS • SCENES 18 TO 34 STAY STATIC

6 • RENDER AND EXPORT

Calliope rendered the video by itself when generation finished: **Render • Completed**, with **Download** and **Re-Render** in the header (see step 4). After the animation the header reads **Render • Waiting**, because the video needs a new render to include the 17 moving scenes. **Confirm & Render** does that. We stopped there on this run, so we cannot tell you what that render costs or how long it takes. Turn on **Original Quality** to preview at full quality, and look at every scene before you render: in ours the man keeps the same design from the first scene to the last.



THE SAME BEATS: THE ORIGINAL ON TOP, OUR JOB BELOW AS STILL SCENES BEFORE THE ANIMATION

PASTE THESE INTO YOUR TEMPLATE

They describe the look of one video, so change the character and the places for yours. Take your own frames from the part you want to copy and label each one for what it shows.

VISUAL STYLE

IMAGE STYLE · COPY AS IS

PROMPT TEMPLATES (USE THESE FORMATS)

A. Character Scene Template

2D cartoon illustration of [INSERT CHARACTER: by default the recurring Saudi man in a white thobe, red-and-white checkered ghutra with a black agal, short black goatee and mustache] [INSERT ACTION AND EXAGGERATED EXPRESSION] in [INSERT ENVIRONMENT], [INSERT SHOT SIZE AND CAMERA ANGLE], [INSERT LIGHTING], thick clean black outlines, flat cel colors with soft gradient shading.

B. Object/Location Template

2D illustrated [INSERT OBJECT OR LOCATION] in [INSERT ENVIRONMENT], [INSERT CAMERA ANGLE], [INSERT LIGHTING], hand-painted digital illustration background, clean outlines on foreground props.

GENERAL IMAGE STYLE (FOLLOW THIS CONSTRAINTS)

JSON

```
{
  "channel_visual_style": {
    "medium": "2D digital cartoon illustration in the look of a modern adult animated sitcom: thick clean black outlines, flat cel colors, simple soft gradient shading; backgrounds are detailed hand-painted digital illustrations. Never 3D CGI, never photographic.",
    "aesthetic": "Humorous faceless explainer documentary: an exaggerated, expressive cartoon character and literal visual gags for every line (oil gushing up with flying dollar bills, a wooden 'No Fishing' sign on a cracked dry riverbed, a tap pouring into an empty glass).",
    "palette": "Saturated turquoise and cyan skies, warm sand ochres and golden yellows, glossy crude-oil black, dollar-bill greens and gold coins, bright white thobe, red-and-white checkered headdress."
  }
}
```

"lighting": "Bright midday desert sun and warm golden-hour glows, soft painted atmospheric haze, simple cel shadows on characters.",

"composition": "16:9 wide desert vistas, medium shots and expressive close-ups of the character, centered readable subjects, clear silhouettes, uncluttered frames.",

"subject_treatment": "Recurring main character: a Saudi man in a white thobe and red-and-white checkered ghutra with a black agal, short black goatee and mustache, big expressive cartoon eyes, exaggerated comedic reactions, consistent design and proportions in every scene. Props and machines (pumpjacks, taps, glasses, binoculars, money, pipes) are clean cartoon objects with bold outlines.",

"environment_treatment": "Endless sand dunes, cracked dry riverbeds, oil fields, ornate Arabian palaces, modern glass skyscrapers and highway interchanges rising from the sand; painted with soft texture and depth, always clearly illustrated, never photoreal.",

"render_notes": "Crisp line art, flat fills with gentle gradients, painterly backgrounds with light texture, saturated but clean colors."

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}
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OTHER CONSTRAINTS

Every image is a 2D cartoon illustration: no 3D CGI, no architectural or engineering render look, no photorealism. People are cartoon characters, never realistic humans. Keep the main character's design identical whenever he appears. No captions, labels, watermarks or logos; short in-world signs drawn in the scene are fine.

No split-screen panels, multi-frame layouts, or cinematic letterbox bars.

VIDEO STYLE

HOW CLIPS MOVE · COPY AS IS

2D cartoon animation that matches the reference images: thick clean outlines, flat cel colors and painted backgrounds, never 3D or photoreal. Maintain a static, rock-steady locked-off camera position with zero handheld shake, drift, or jitter. Characters move with measured, expressive cartoon poses and exaggerated comedic reactions, keeping their design identical.

Fluid elements such as dripping oil, flowing water, flying dollar bills or erupting bursts animate with snappy, looping arcs and distinct droplets. Environmental movement is restrained: stylized puffs of dust, heat shimmer, drifting clouds. Keep crisp graphical clarity throughout the shot, avoiding motion blur, lens distortion, or camera breathing.

REFERENCE LABELS

THE 7 FRAMES, IN THIS ORDER

- 1 Oil gushing with flying cash, cartoon Saudi man
- 2 Main character close-up, white thobe, ghutra
- 3 Dry riverbed, No Fishing sign, main character
- 4 Cartoon oil pumpjacks spilling oil and cash
- 5 Main character with binoculars, skyline behind
- 6 Painted desert dunes with a cracked dry channel
- 7 Glass skyscrapers and highways rising from sand

MAKE YOUR OWN

Same steps for any video you want to learn from: paste the link, fix what it extracted, test the style, then generate.

calliopolabs.co