TL;DR
YouTube states Shorts can be up to 3 minutes long, and that square/vertical videos up to three minutes uploaded after specific dates are categorised as Shorts. Build your workflow around that reality: format, packaging, and the right "link surface".

1 What counts as a Short now (official)

YouTube Help states:

- YouTube Shorts creation tools support **short-form videos up to 3 minutes long**.
- **Videos uploaded after October 15, 2024** with a **square or vertical aspect ratio up to three minutes** are categorised as Shorts.
- **Videos uploaded after December 8, 2025** with a **square or vertical aspect ratio up to three minutes** are categorised as Shorts (with a different monetisation treatment for some rights-holder scenarios).
- In the rights-holder context, YouTube also notes: **Shorts longer than one minute that have an active Content ID claim will be blocked**.

2 The 3-minute Shorts publishing checklist

2.1 Before you edit

- Decide if this is a **Shorts-first story** (one self-contained arc) or a **Shorts-to-longform bridge** (tease   related video).
- Lock the **CTA surface** (end screen, related video link, channel profile link, etc.).

2.2 While you edit (Instavar defaults)

- Keep the message legible on mobile: large type, strong contrast, minimal clutter.
- Design the first frame as a "thumbnail substitute" for Shorts (because Shorts don't accept custom thumbnails the same way long-form does).
- Export multiple hook variants if you plan to test.

2.3 Upload + packaging

- Upload via the **YouTube app or YouTube Studio** (YouTube explicitly supports up-to-3-minute Shorts uploads there).
- If you're driving to long-form, add a **Related video** link for Shorts (this is a native surface built for that flow).

3 Rights/music gotcha: avoid silent failures

If you're using music or third-party audio, treat rights as a first-class constraint. YouTube explicitly calls out that Shorts longer than one minute with an active Content ID claim will be blocked in the rights-holder guidance.

4 Official references

- YouTube Help - Get started creating YouTube Shorts (includes "up to 3 minutes"): https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/10059070?hl=en
- YouTube Help - Understand three-minute YouTube Shorts (dates + classification): https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/15424877?hl=en
- YouTube Help - Manage Shorts as a rights holder (Content ID note): https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/13053317?hl=en