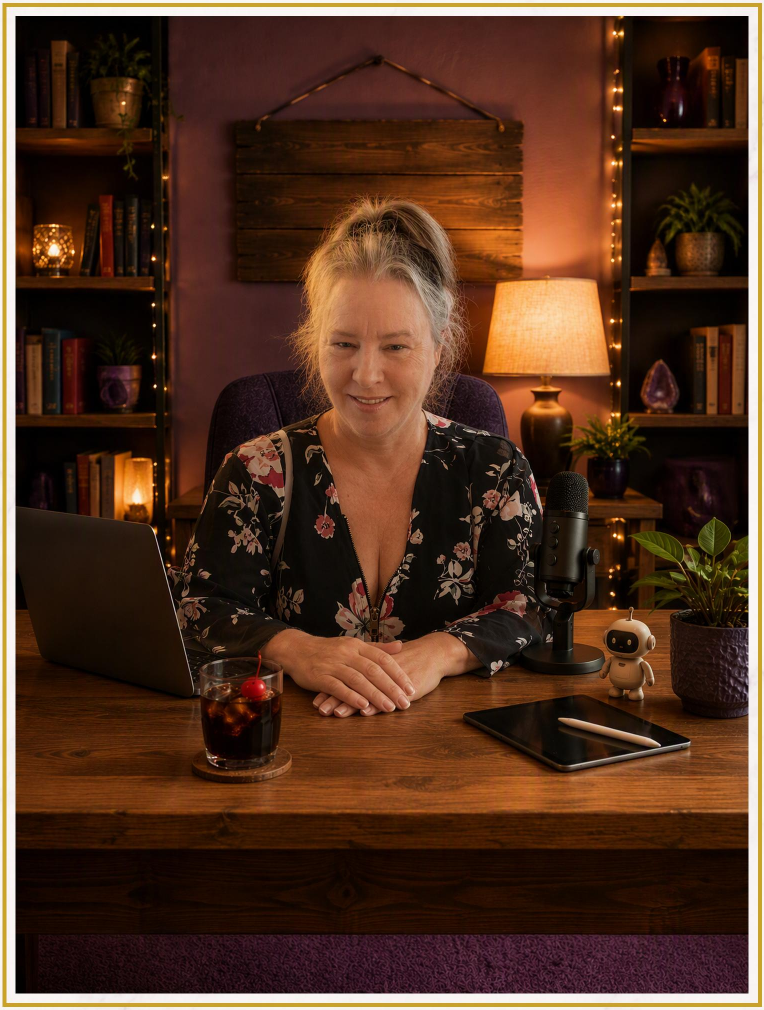
Free Doesn't Mean No Strings



a Gramma's guide to AI video tools

— everything from the video, plus the parts we didn't have time for

WELCOME

Hi honey. This is the deeper version of the video — the parts we just didn't have time for in ten minutes. It's written for someone brand new to all this, so nothing in here is left unexplained.

Every number in this guide was checked against the company's own page, and dated, because 'free' changes without warning — a plan can shrink, a watermark can appear, a free tier can quietly disappear. If a number in here ever looks wrong to you, that's not you being behind. Go check the company's current page yourself, because it may well have changed since we checked it.

THE 5-STEP MAP

Flip back to this page any time you need to find your place.

- **STEP 1 — WRITE IT** — Get your idea and your script down — an AI chatbot can help, if you want it to.

- **STEP 2 — DRAW IT** — Turn your idea into a character picture.

- **STEP 3 — MOVE IT (AND MAYBE TALK)** — Bring the still picture to life — moving, and if you want, talking.

- **STEP 4 — VOICE IT** — Give it a voice — your own, recorded on your phone, or an AI voice reading it for you.

- **STEP 5 — PUT IT TOGETHER** — Stitch the script, the picture, the movement, and the voice into one finished clip.

STEP 1 — WRITING YOUR SCRIPT OR IDEA

- **ChatGPT (free plan)** — Unlimited text chats, subject to normal fair-use limits. Image, voice, deep-research, and memory features are limited on the free plan. It also works before you make an account, and ChatGPT's own note says your chats train its models unless you switch that off. Checked 10 Sep 2026.

- **Gemini (free plan)** — Chat, image generation and editing, Deep Research, Gemini Live, Canvas, Gems, and 15 GB of cloud storage (the shared Gmail/Drive/Photos storage pool every Google Account gets, listed by Google right on Gemini's own free-plan page) — no video generation on the free plan. Google doesn't publish its exact daily limit. Checked 13 Sep 2026.

- **What's a 'fair-use limit'?** — Just a company's polite way of saying don't hammer it nonstop. Most beginners never come close to it — teaching, not a warning.

- **Keep it human** — Let it help you find the words. Don't let it BE the words — it should still sound like you when you read it back and fix what's off.

STEP 2 — MAKING YOUR CHARACTER PICTURE

- **Canva (free plan)** — 20 AI image uses a month, shared across tool types, resets on the 1st. Personal AND commercial use confirmed fine, right on Canva's own FAQ. Checked 10 Sep 2026.

- **Bing Image Creator** — Free, browser-based, signed in with a Microsoft account. Current terms (checked live, updated March 2026) don't restrict your output to personal use — but check the current terms link before you sell anything, because these rules have changed before. Checked 10 Sep 2026.

- **Canva's video tool** — Canva's separate 8-second AI VIDEO clip tool is NOT on the free plan — it needs Pro, Business, Enterprise, or Nonprofit, per Canva's own page. Don't confuse it with the free picture tools above. Checked 13 Sep 2026.

- **The catch** — 20 uses a month disappears fast if you regenerate the same picture even a few times.

STEP 3 — MAKING IT MOVE (AND MAYBE TALK) — PART 1 OF 2

The widest step, with the most tools — so it's split across two pages.

- **Pika (free 'Basic' plan)** — No watermark, commercial use — both confirmed right on Pika's own $0 tier. 480p resolution cap on the free plan. Checked 10 Sep 2026.

- **HeyGen (free plan)** — 3 videos a month, 1 minute cap each, up to 1080p, no card required. Watermark stays on until you pay. 1 custom avatar allowed. A clear, well-lit face in your photo helps the lip-sync land cleanly. Checked 10 Sep 2026.

- **Synthesia (free 'Basic' plan)** — $0, no card, 1,200 credits a month (about 10 minutes of video or 25 assets), 9 stock avatars. No custom avatar on free, and the logo stays on every export. Checked 10 Sep 2026.

- **D-ID** — Not an ongoing free plan — a 14-day trial, 3 minutes total, full-screen watermark, licensed for personal use only until you pay. Making your OWN (non-stock) avatar needs a live webcam consent recording, reading a passcode aloud. Checked 10 Sep 2026.

STEP 3 — MAKING IT MOVE (AND MAYBE TALK) — PART 2 OF 2

- **Kling AI (free 'Basic')** — A free $0 'Basic' tier exists; Kling's own Terms of Paid Service tie commercial use to paid membership and require free (non-member) users to keep Kling's watermark and branding on anything they generate. Checked 13 Sep 2026.

- **PixVerse** — Ongoing free 'Basic' plan (60 starting + 30 daily credits), capped at 540p, watermarked. PixVerse's own Terms of Service restrict outputs to non-commercial use unless separately licensed. Checked 10 Sep 2026.

- **OpenArt** — A free tier exists (confirmed via their Help Center) but isn't shown on their main pricing page. Watermark and commercial-use answers CONTRADICT each other across OpenArt's own pages — said so honestly here rather than picking a side. Checked 10 Sep 2026.

- **Invideo AI** — Ongoing free plan, no card required, watermark on all free exports — both confirmed. Exact weekly credit number isn't published anywhere on Invideo's own site. Checked 10 Sep 2026.

- **Adobe Firefly** — Free daily generations exist and refresh daily rather than monthly; Adobe's own page doesn't clearly separate a true free user from a paid plan without premium access; per-second credit costs rise steeply with resolution; lip-sync is enterprise-only, not free on any tier; watermark policy on free video isn't stated anywhere on Adobe's own help pages. Checked 13 Sep 2026.

STEP 4 — GIVING IT A VOICE

- **Record your own voice** — Free forever, no company terms apply — the option worth leading with. It's not a company's product at all, so no watermark and no commercial restriction, ever.

- **TTSMaker (free plan)** — 20,000 characters a week (some voices unlimited), no watermark. Commercial use confirmed free of charge, right on TTSMaker's own FAQ. No sign-up needed for the basic converter. Checked 10 Sep 2026.

- **ElevenLabs (free plan)** — 10,000 credits a month (roughly 10 minutes). Commercial-use rights are reserved for the paid tier — NOT included on free. Checked 10 Sep 2026.

STEP 5 — PUTTING IT TOGETHER

- **CapCut (free plan)** — No card mentioned on their homepage banner. A plain edit of your own footage exports with no watermark. A watermark can appear if a template includes its own branded ending clip, or an uncredited stock asset. Checked 10 Sep 2026.

- **The export size** — CapCut doesn't state one clean export-resolution ceiling (1080p vs. 720p can depend on region) anywhere on its own site — check your own export settings rather than counting on a specific number.

THE CATCHES — PAGE 1 OF 4

This isn't me warning you off any of these — every single one is worth trying. This is just what to check before you count on one for something that matters.

- **ChatGPT (free)** — Personal/commercial: not stated on the pricing page — check terms. Watermark: not checked. Forever-free. Unpublished limits: exact daily message cap not published. Business-only extras: none noted.

- **Gemini (free)** — Personal/commercial: not checked — check terms. Watermark: not checked. Forever-free. Unpublished limits: exact daily cap not published, only '2x/4x/20x' named for paid tiers. Business-only extras: video generation (paid only).

- **Canva (free AI images)** — Personal/commercial: personal AND commercial confirmed. Watermark: not checked. Forever-free. Unpublished limits: 20 uses/month is a SHARED pool, easy to burn through. Business-only extras: AI Video Clip generator (Pro+ only, confirmed on Canva's own page).

- **Bing Image Creator** — Personal/commercial: check current terms (no restriction found today). Watermark: not checked. Forever-free. Unpublished limits: daily fast-generation number not published. Business-only extras: none noted.

THE CATCHES — PAGE 2 OF 4

- **Pika (free 'Basic')** — Personal/commercial: commercial use included. Watermark: no. Forever-free. Unpublished limits: 480p cap on free. Business-only extras: not checked.

- **HeyGen (free)** — Personal/commercial: not stated for the free plan. Watermark: yes. Forever-free. Unpublished limits: none noted. Business-only extras: watermark removal, more videos/month.

- **Synthesia (free 'Basic')** — Personal/commercial: not stated for the free plan. Watermark: yes (logo). Forever-free. Unpublished limits: none noted. Business-only extras: custom avatar.

- **D-ID** — Personal/commercial: personal use only. Watermark: yes (full-screen). NOT forever-free — a 14-day TRIAL only. Unpublished limits: card requirement to start not stated. Business-only extras: commercial license (Pro+).

THE CATCHES — PAGE 3 OF 4

- **Kling AI (free 'Basic')** — Personal/commercial: NOT included for free (non-member) users, confirmed in Kling's own Terms of Paid Service. Watermark: yes — non-members must keep Kling's watermark/branding, confirmed in Kling's own Terms. Forever-free: appears ongoing. Unpublished limits: exact daily credit number not published. Business-only extras: commercial use and watermark removal (paid membership).

- **PixVerse (free 'Basic')** — Personal/commercial: non-commercial only, per their Terms. Watermark: yes. Forever-free. Unpublished limits: none noted. Business-only extras: watermark-free, higher resolution.

- **OpenArt** — Personal/commercial AND watermark: contradicted across their own pages — said so rather than picking a side. Forever-free: ongoing, hidden from their main pricing page. Unpublished limits: exact free credit count not published. Business-only extras: none noted.

- **Adobe Firefly** — Personal/commercial: not clearly separated by plan. Watermark: not stated on Adobe's own pages. Forever-free: daily refresh, ongoing. Unpublished limits: free video-generation count unclear. Business-only extras: lip-sync (enterprise only).

THE CATCHES — PAGE 4 OF 4

- **Invideo AI** — Personal/commercial: not stated for the free plan. Watermark: yes. Forever-free: ongoing, weekly reset. Unpublished limits: exact weekly credit number not published. Business-only extras: AI avatars/voice clones.

- **ElevenLabs (free)** — Personal/commercial: NOT included on free. Watermark: not checked. Forever-free. Unpublished limits: card requirement not stated. Business-only extras: commercial license (paid).

- **TTSMaker (free)** — Personal/commercial: commercial use included. Watermark: no. Forever-free. Unpublished limits: none noted. Business-only extras: none noted.

- **CapCut (free)** — Personal/commercial: not stated on their own page. Watermark: no, on a plain edit. Forever-free. Unpublished limits: exact export-resolution ceiling not published. Business-only extras: not checked.

IF YOU WANT TO GO FURTHER — HER OWN ROUTE

- **What's VRAM?** — It's your graphics card's own memory — separate from your computer's regular RAM. The bigger AI jobs, like moving a picture on your own computer, need a real gaming-style graphics card with plenty of it, not just any laptop.
- **WanGP + ComfyUI** — Free tools that run on your own computer. WanGP's own project page says it can run on as little as 6 GB of graphics-card memory; my card has 12. Checked 10 Sep 2026.
- **Is this for you?** — If you've already got a gaming PC, this is worth looking into. If you don't, everything in Steps 1 through 5 above works without one — and that's just fine.

THE CHEAT SHEET

The whole CATCHES table, compressed to skim in ten seconds.

- **ChatGPT (free)** — Forever-free. Watermark n/a (text). Commercial: check terms.
- **Gemini (free)** — Forever-free. Watermark n/a (text). Commercial: check terms.
- **Canva (free images)** — Forever-free. No watermark. Commercial: yes.
- **Bing Image Creator** — Forever-free. Watermark not checked. Commercial: check current terms.
- **Pika (free 'Basic')** — Forever-free. No watermark. Commercial: yes.
- **HeyGen (free)** — Forever-free. Watermark: yes. Commercial: not stated.
- **Synthesia (free 'Basic')** — Forever-free. Watermark: yes (logo). Commercial: not stated.
- **D-ID** — 14-day TRIAL only. Watermark: yes (full-screen). Commercial: personal only.
- **Kling AI (free 'Basic')** — Appears ongoing. Watermark: yes, confirmed in Kling's own Terms. Commercial: NOT included for free users, confirmed in Kling's own Terms.
- **PixVerse (free 'Basic')** — Forever-free. Watermark: yes. Commercial: non-commercial only.
- **OpenArt** — Ongoing, hidden tier. Watermark: contradicted on their own pages. Commercial: contradicted — say so.
- **Adobe Firefly** — Ongoing, daily refresh. Watermark not stated on Adobe's own pages. Commercial: not clearly separated — re-check.
- **Invideo AI** — Ongoing, weekly reset. Watermark: yes. Commercial: not stated.
- **ElevenLabs (free)** — Forever-free. Watermark not checked. Commercial: NOT included.
- **TTSMaker (free)** — Forever-free. No watermark. Commercial: yes.
- **CapCut (free)** — Forever-free. No watermark on a plain edit. Commercial: not stated.

WORDS I USE

A plain-grandma glossary — no jargon left unexplained.

- **VRAM** — Your graphics card's own memory. Bigger AI jobs need more of it.
- **Watermark** — A logo or mark stamped on your video or picture, usually removed only on a paid plan.
- **Commercial use** — Using what you made to earn money — selling it, running it in an ad, putting it in a paid product.
- **Credits** — A company's way of counting how much of its free (or paid) allowance you've used up.
- **Avatar** — A picture or character made to move and talk, standing in for a real person on screen.
- **Lip-sync** — Making a picture's mouth move to match recorded words, so it looks like it's really talking.
- **AI disclosure** — Telling your audience plainly that what they're watching was made or altered with AI — the honest, upfront thing to do, and required by some platforms' own rules.

THAT'S THE WHOLE TRICK, HONEY

Write it, draw it, move it, voice it, and put it together. Go make something — I'll be right here when you're ready for the next one.

Thank you for spending this time with me. Subscribe or follow along, and I'll see you in the next lesson.