GOOGLE LABS CREATIVE STUDIO • 2026 PRACTICAL HANDBOOK

Mastering Google Flow

The complete, step-by-step visual guide to planning, generating, directing, and editing cinematic AI films with Veo 3.1, Imagen 4, and Gemini.

Flow Agent Storyboarding | Ingredients Consistency (@Tags) | Start & End Frame Keyframing | Camera & Lens Direction | Native Dialogue & SFX | Scenebuilder Timeline



Three Engines, One Studio

Unifies Gemini Omni Flash, Imagen 4 / Nano Banana, and Veo 3.1 in one browser & mobile workspace.

Built for Continuity

Lock faces, outfits, and props across dozens of shots using Ingredients and Save-Last-Frame anchors.

Zero Experience Needed

Plain-English workflows, visual UI maps, copy-paste prompt formulas, and credit-saving habits.

Inside This Guide & What Google Flow Actually Is

Most AI video tools give you a single text box that produces random 5-second clips. **Google Flow** (`flow.google`) is a complete digital film studio built to tell multi-shot stories with consistent characters, sound, and editing.

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Visualization: The Three-Model Engine Under the Hood

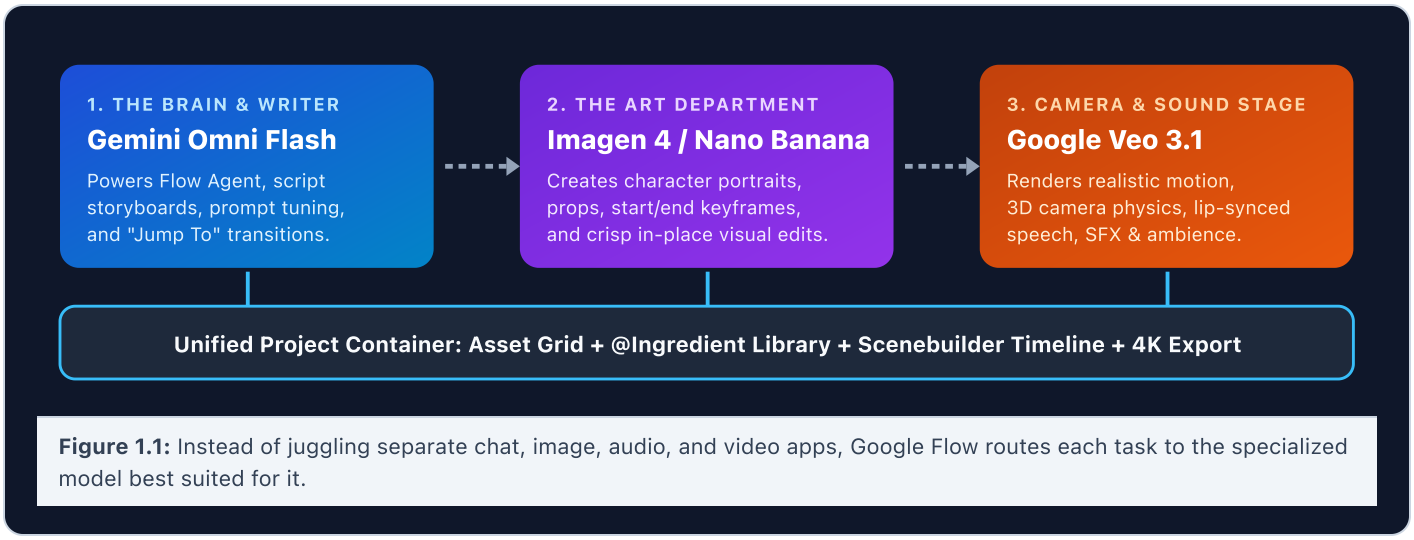


Figure 1.1: Instead of juggling separate chat, image, audio, and video apps, Google Flow routes each task to the specialized model best suited for it.

Why Filmmakers & Creators Use Flow Over Standalone Video Generators

A Standalone Video Prompt Box

- Every prompt invents a brand-new face and outfit.
- Fixing a small mistake requires re-rolling the entire clip.
- Silent clips force you to hunt for external voiceovers and Foley sound effects.

B Google Flow Studio Workflow

- **Ingredients** lock characters, products, and art styles across every scene.
- **Frames-to-Video** anchors exact opening and closing compositions.
- **Native Audio + Scenebuilder** let you direct speech, sound, and cuts in one place.

Getting Started: Account Setup, Plans & Credit Math

You can start experimenting with Google Flow in under two minutes for free, then scale up only if you need longer productions, premium models, or 4K exports.

Step-by-Step First Login

1 Open Flow Studio
Visit `flow.google` (or `labs.google/fx/tools/flow`) in Chrome, Safari, or Edge, or install the **Google Flow** iOS/Android companion app.

2 Sign In (18+)
Sign in with a personal Google Account or qualifying Google Workspace account. Age verification (18+) is required in supported regions.

3 Create a Project
Click **+ New Project**. Every project acts as a dedicated folder holding your chat history, Ingredients, clips, and Scenebuilder timeline.

Subscription Tiers & Credit Allowances (2026 Structure)

Plan Tier	Typical US Price	Credit Allowance	Best For & Unlocked Capabilities
Free Tier Google Account	**$0 / month**	**50 daily credits** Resets midnight PT; no rollover	Learning the interface, generating Imagen reference Ingredients, and testing draft clips daily.
Google AI Plus Entry Creator	**~$4.99 – $9.99/mo**	Daily pool + starter monthly credit bundle	Casual social creators making weekly vertical Reels/Shorts (`9:16`) and custom Flow Tools.
Google AI Pro Standard Production	**~$19.99 / month**	Expanded monthly production credits	Full Veo 3.1 Fast & Quality access, native audio dialogue, Scenebuilder transitions, 1080p masters.
Google AI Ultra Studio / Agency	**~$99.99 – $199.99/mo**	Highest bulk monthly credits + priority queue	Heavy commercial production, highest-tier Veo 3.1 Quality renders, batch takes, and 4K upscaling.

How Credits Are Consumed (And How to Stretch Them 4× Further)

Before every generation, Google Flow displays the exact **credit cost badge** right next to the *Generate* button. Cost scales with four sliders: **Model Tier** (Lite/Fast vs. Quality), **Output Count** (1, 2, or 4 simultaneous takes), **Clip Duration**, and **Resolution** (draft vs. 1080p/4K).

Pro Habit 1: Storyboard in Images First
Generating still frames with **Imagen 4 / Nano Banana** costs a fraction of video credits. Nail your character look, lighting, and composition as stills *before* spending Veo video credits.

Pro Habit 2: Draft on "Fast/Lite", Master on "Quality"
When testing camera movement or dialogue timing, select **Veo 3.1 Fast / Lite** with 1–2 outputs. Switch to **Veo 3.1 Quality** and **4K Upscale** only on the winning prompt.

Good to Know: SynthID Watermarking & Commercial Safety
Every export embeds Google DeepMind's imperceptible **SynthID** digital watermark into its pixels and audio frames—invisible to human viewers, resilient to compression, and built for transparent AI provenance.

The Google Flow Workspace: Annotated Visual Tour

When you open a project in `flow.google`, everything lives inside one dark-mode studio screen. Use the numbered callouts below to orient yourself in seconds.



Numbered Interface Reference

1 **Generation Mode Switcher:** Toggle between *Text to Video*, *Frames to Video* (start/end images), and *Ingredients to Video* (character/prop references).

2 **Prompt Bar & `@` Mentions:** Describe camera, action, and dialogue; type `@` to inject saved characters or props directly into the scene.

3 **Parameter & Cost Strip:** Pick model (Veo 3.1 Fast vs. Quality), aspect ratio (`16:9` or `9:16`), clip length, Audio ON/OFF, and preview exact credit cost.

4 **Flow Agent Sidebar:** Chat with Gemini to brainstorm scripts, break ideas into shot lists, set project-wide style rules, and auto-fill prompts.

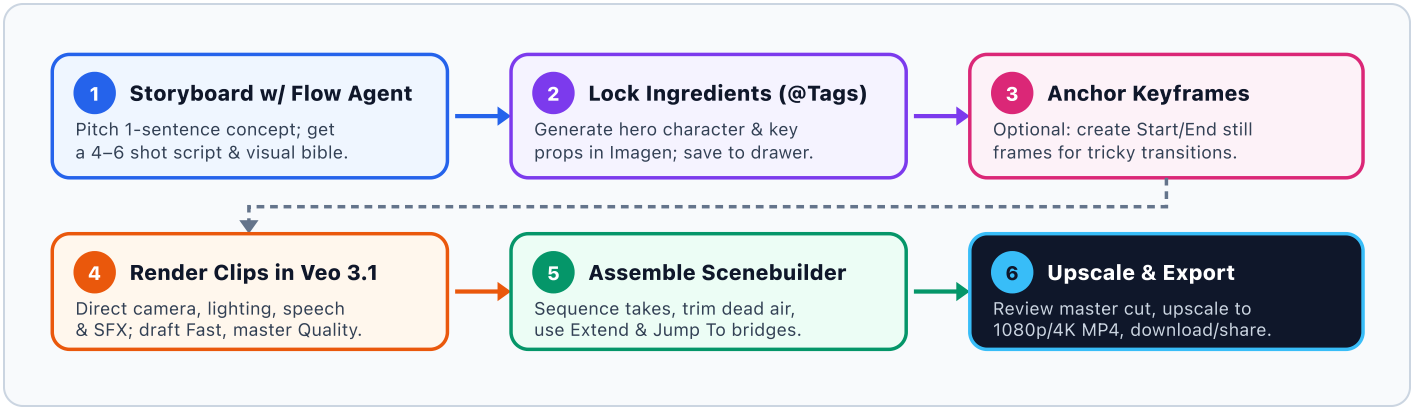
5 **Ingredients Library:** Store uploaded or Imagen-generated characters, objects, and style cards so every shot stays visually consistent.

6 **Shot Canvas & Frame Actions:** Audition multiple takes side-by-side, make in-place fixes, click *Save Last Frame*, or push winners to the timeline.

7 **Scenebuilder Timeline Dock:** Drag clips into story order, trim handles, lengthen clips with *Extend*, or bridge cuts smoothly with AI-powered *Jump To*.

The 6-Step Filmmaking Pipeline (Start to Finish)

Beginners often make the mistake of jumping straight to video generation. Follow this proven 6-step studio order to build a cohesive 30-second short film on your very first try—without wasting credits.



Walkthrough Example: Making *"The Midnight Botanist"* (24 Seconds)

Stage	What You Click & Type in Google Flow	Resulting Output
1. Plan (2 mins)	Open **Flow Agent** and type: *"Create a 3-shot, 24-second atmospheric film about a botanist discovering a glowing fern in a misty redwood forest. 35mm cinema style."*	Flow Agent writes a 3-shot breakdown with suggested camera lenses, lighting notes, and ambient forest audio cues.
2. Ingredients (3 mins)	In the **Ingredients** panel, click *+ Generate*. Create a portrait of Clara (terracotta jacket, round glasses) and a brass plant lantern. Tag them `@clara` and `@lantern`.	Two locked visual reference cards appear in your left sidebar ready to anchor every video shot.
3. Shot 1 (3 mins)	Select **Ingredients to Video**, `16:9`, `8s`, Audio ON. Prompt: *"Wide crane shot descending into misty redwoods at dusk as @clara walks down a mossy trail carrying @lantern..."*	Veo 3.1 renders Clara in her exact jacket holding the exact lantern, complete with footsteps on damp moss and distant owls.
4. Shot 2 (3 mins)	Hover over Shot 1, click **Save Last Frame**, switch to **Frames to Video**, and set it as the Start Frame. Prompt a close-up push-in as she kneels and whispers, *"There you are."*	Shot 2 picks up seamlessly from the exact forest spot and lighting of Shot 1 with lip-synced whispered dialogue.
5. Shot 3 & Edit (4 mins)	Generate a macro shot of the glowing fern, drag all three clips into **Scenebuilder**, trim 0.5s off the ends for snappy pacing, and click **Export (1080p / 4K)**.	A polished, continuous 24-second short film downloaded as a single MP4 with synchronized sound.

Golden Rule of Pacing

Professional films rarely hold a static shot for 10+ seconds unless dramatic tension demands it. Aim for **4 to 6 seconds per cut** in Scenebuilder—trimming the first and last half-second of AI clips immediately makes edits feel human-directed.

Solving "Character Drift" with Flow Agent & Ingredients

The #1 frustration in AI video is watching your main character morph into a stranger from Shot 1 to Shot 2. Google Flow solves this with two paired tools: **Agent Instructions** and **Ingredients to Video**.

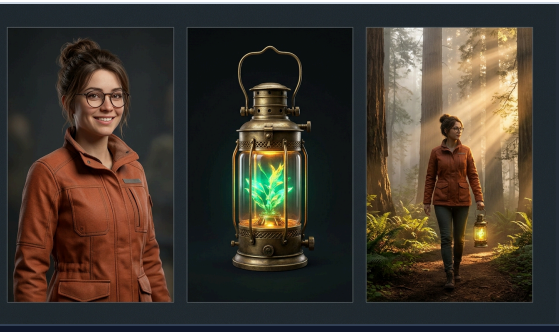
Part A: Setting Persistent "Agent Instructions"

Inside the Flow Agent panel, open **Agent Instructions** (project-level rules). Anything you write here is automatically remembered across every storyboard and prompt Gemini writes for this project:

```
Example Project Agent Instructions:
• Visual Style: Shot on 35mm Kodak Vision3 500T film, subtle grain, natural skin texture, anamorphic bokeh.
• Color Palette: Deep Pacific Northwest forest greens, warm amber lantern light, cool slate shadows.
• Audio Rule: Realistic Foley footsteps and forest wind only; always append "no background music" unless asked.
```

Part B: How "Ingredients to Video" Works

Switch your prompt bar to **Ingredients to Video** to combine **up to 3 visual reference assets** (uploaded photos or Imagen/Nano Banana generations) into one coherent video clip:



Ingredient 1 (@clara): Neutral portrait locks facial structure, glasses & terracotta jacket.

Ingredient 2 (@lantern): Isolated dark-backdrop prop locks brass housing & glowing leaf.

Combined Veo 3.1 Output: Both references merge naturally into golden-hour redwood motion.

4 Best Practices for Bulletproof Ingredients

1 Use Clean, Neutral Reference Cards

Generate or upload character portraits against a plain, softly lit background—not a busy crowd. Clean edges stop background clutter from bleeding into unrelated scenes.

2 Let the Image Describe Appearance

Once `@clara` is attached, don't waste 40 prompt words re-describing her brown hair and glasses. Spend your prompt words on **action, emotion, camera, and sound**.

3 Stick to 2–3 Core Ingredients Per Shot

Combining 1 Character + 1 Hero Prop + 1 Environment/Style card hits the sweet spot. Overloading 5+ conflicting objects confuses spatial composition.

4 Save Multi-Angle Character Sheets

Ask Imagen inside Flow for a *"front and three-quarter profile turnaround sheet"* of your hero so Veo understands how they look when turning their head.

Generation Modes & "Frames to Video" Keyframing

Every shot in Google Flow starts by choosing one of three generation modes. Picking the right mode before typing saves hours of trial-and-error.

Decision Matrix: Which Mode Should You Pick?

Mode	Inputs Required	Ideal Use Case
Text to Video	Text prompt only	Establishing shots, b-roll landscapes, atmospheric weather, abstract transitions, or brainstorming brand-new scenes from scratch.
Ingredients to Video	1–3 reference images (`@tags`) + prompt	Character-driven scenes, product commercials, or branded worlds where the exact face, outfit, or object must appear in new angles.
Frames to Video	Start Frame (and/or End Frame) + prompt	Exact composition control, seamless shot-chaining, dramatic reveals, morphs, and day-to-night or before-and-after transitions.

Visualizing "Frames to Video" (Start + End Keyframe Interpolation)

When you drop an image into the **Start Frame** slot and a second image into the **End Frame** slot, Veo 3.1 calculates realistic intermediate physics, lighting shifts, and camera motion to connect point A to point B:



[00:00 START FRAME] Golden morning bookshop + cyclist —— **Veo 3.1 8s Interpolation →** **[00:08 END FRAME]** Rainy neon twilight & wet cobblestones

Pro Technique: The "Save Last Frame" Continuous-Shot Trick

1 Pause at the End

Play your generated 8-second clip in the Shot Canvas and scrub to the final clean frame (e.g., `0:07.9`).

2 Click "Save Frame"

Click **Save Frame** on the video player. Google Flow instantly adds that exact still image into your project assets.

3 Feed Into Next Shot

Switch to **Frames to Video**, drop that saved frame into **Start Frame**, and direct the next 8 seconds of action!

Why Filmmakers Love Frame-Chaining

By chaining the last frame of Shot A into the first frame of Shot B, you can choreograph unbroken 25-to-40-second "oner" sequences (like walking from a sunny street through a shop door into a dimly lit library) with zero lighting jumps.

The 8-Block Director Prompt Formula

Treat Google Flow's prompt box like a film director's cue sheet—not a search engine. Ordering your prompt from big visual rules down to specific audio cues gives Veo 3.1 crystal-clear instructions.

Color-Coded Master Prompt Anatomy

1. Format & Film Style
2. Subject & Setting
3. Specific Action
4. Camera & Lens
5. Lighting & Texture
6. Quoted Dialogue
7. SFX & Ambience
8. Constraints

Photorealistic 35mm cinema drama, subtle Kodak film grain. Weary spaceship pilot @maya sits inside a cramped, rain-streaked dropship cockpit. She flips two overhead brass toggle switches, glances at the flickering radar screen, and exhales sharply. Slow dolly-in from medium shot to tight close-up, 50mm anamorphic lens with shallow depth of field. Moody cyan instrument glow mixing with pulsing amber warning lights on brushed steel. She says, "We have thirty seconds before atmospheric entry," in a calm, hushed voice. Crisp metallic switch clicks, low turbine hum, heavy rain pelting cockpit glass. One continuous shot; no subtitles; no background music.

Before & After Prompt Makeovers

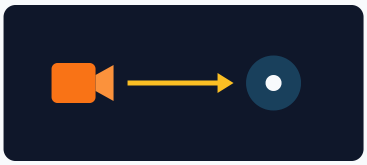
Beginner Vague Prompt	Upgraded Google Flow Director Prompt	Why It Wins
"A cool car driving fast in the desert."	*"1970s matte-black muscle car speeding down a cracked salt-flat highway at golden hour. Low-angle lateral tracking shot at wheel height, 24mm wide lens, dust plume billowing behind tires. Deep V8 engine roar and rushing wind; no music."*	Defines camera height, focal length, time of day, dust physics, and raw engine audio.
"A barista hands coffee to a customer and talks."	*"Warm indie film look. Smiling barista @leo slides a ceramic latte cup across a walnut counter in a sunlit cafe. Over-the-shoulder medium shot, soft morning window light, rising steam. @leo says, 'Careful, the mug is hot,' in a friendly tone. Ceramic clink, espresso machine hiss, quiet cafe chatter; no music."*	Locks speaker attribution, short lip-syncable quote, tactile prop action, and layered room tone.
"Product video of a smartwatch."	*"Commercial studio macro film. Sleek titanium @watch resting on wet black basalt stone as water droplets roll off the sapphire screen. Slow 180-degree orbital arc, 85mm macro lens, crisp rim lighting. Subtle water droplet plinks; no voiceover."*	Combines `@watch` Ingredient with orbital camera motion and tactile surface reflections.

Avoid "Everything Everywhere" Prompts

Do not pack three separate plot twists into one 8-second clip (*"he wakes up, makes breakfast, runs outside, and catches the bus"*). Give each clip **one clear physical beat** and assemble the story in Scenebuilder.

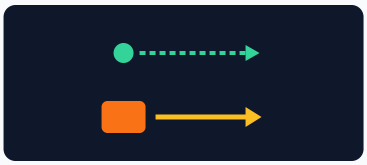
Visual Camera Movement & Lens Cheat Sheet

Avoid generic words like *"moving camera."* Veo 3.1 is trained on real cinematography terminology—use the exact movement phrases below to direct intentional, rock-steady shots.



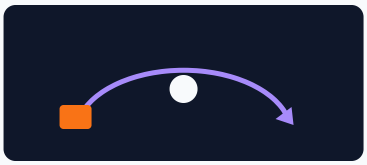
Dolly In / Push-In

Camera physically rolls forward toward subject, building intimacy or tension.
`"Slow dolly-in to close-up"`



Lateral Tracking / Truck

Camera glides sideways alongside a walking or running subject.
`"Side-profile lateral tracking shot"`



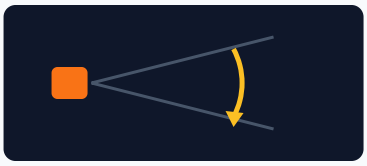
180° Orbit / Arc Shot

Circles smoothly around hero or product while keeping them centered.
`"Smooth orbital arc around subject"`



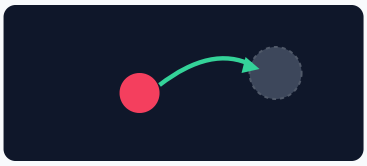
Crane Rise / Boom Up

Sweeps vertically upward to reveal a vast landscape or city skyline.
`"High crane shot rising above trees"`



Tripod Pan / Slow Tilt

Camera stays planted in one spot and rotates left/right or up/down.
`"Locked tripod slow pan right"`



Rack Focus Shift

Shifts sharp focus from a foreground object to a background character.
`"Rack focus from teacup to doorway"`

Eliminating the "Plastic AI Look": Texture, Lenses & Lighting Keywords

Visual Dimension	Copy-Paste Keywords Recognized by Veo 3.1 & Imagen 4
Film Stocks & Era	`35mm Kodak Vision3 500T` · `16mm grainy documentary film` · `IMAX 65mm crisp cinema` · `vintage 1990s VHS camcorder`
Focal Length & Glass	`24mm wide-angle lens` (expansive environments) · `50mm prime natural eye-level` · `85mm portrait shallow bokeh` · `100mm macro`
Lighting Setups	`warm golden-hour backlight` · `overcast soft diffused daylight` · `high-contrast chiaroscuro rim light` · `volumetric fog beams`
Camera Rig Feel	`static locked-off tripod` · `smooth Steadicam glide` · `subtle handheld documentary urgency` · `FPV drone dive`

Aspect Ratio Tip (16:9 vs. 9:16)

Pick your aspect ratio **before** generating Ingredients or keyframes. Lateral tracking shots shine in widescreen `16:9` (YouTube, TV, film), while vertical `9:16` (Shorts, Reels, TikTok) works best with tight medium close-ups, dolly push-ins, and vertical crane tilts.

Directing Synchronized Dialogue, SFX & Ambience

With Audio toggled **ON**, Veo 3.1 generates lip-synced speech, physical Foley sound effects, and room ambience simultaneously with video pixels—no external lip-sync plugin required.



The 4 Golden Rules of Clean AI Dialogue

1 Put Exact Words in Quotation Marks

Attribute the quote directly to the speaker:
Good: `@clara looks up and says, "Follow the river north," in an urgent whisper.`
Bad: `Clara tells them to go north.`

2 Respect the 15-Word Budget

Natural human speech runs ~2.2 words per second. In an 8-second clip, cap dialogue at **10 to 16 words** so the actor finishes speaking naturally before the cut.

3 Direct Vocal Delivery & Emotion

Add a short performance note right after the quote: *"in a warm, raspy voice," "with breathless excitement," "deadpan and monotone,"* or *"through a crackly radio."*

4 Split Two-Person Conversations

Don't cram three back-and-forth lines into one clip (causes lip-sync confusion). Generate **Shot A (Speaker 1)** and **Shot B (Speaker 2 reaction)**, then cut between them in Scenebuilder.

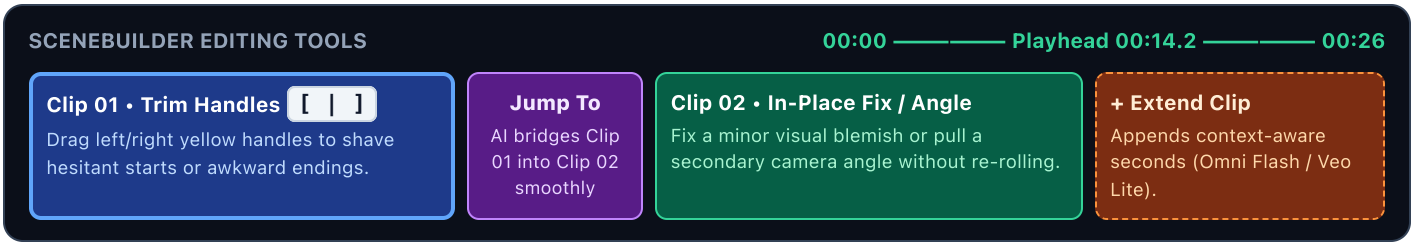
Controlling Background Music vs. Clean Room Tone

Crucial Tip: Always Add `"no background music"` for Multi-Shot Films!

If you leave music unspecified, Veo may invent a different orchestral score on every 8-second clip—which clashes horribly when stitched together in Scenebuilder! Always end narrative prompts with `"quiet room tone, no background music"`, then lay a single unified music track underneath your finished edit (or only ask for music on standalone one-shot posts).

Assembling Your Film in Scenebuilder & Beyond

Once your clips are generated, open **Scenebuilder** at the bottom of the workspace. Unlike rigid storyboards, Scenebuilder is a flexible *"generate, then assemble"* timeline with AI continuity superpowers.



Core Scenebuilder Actions Explained

- **Add & Reorder:** Hover any winning take in your Shot Canvas and click **+ Add to Scene**. Drag clips left or right on the timeline to test alternate story orders.
- **Trim In/Out Handles:** Grab either edge of a clip on the timeline to trim dead air or cut right on physical motion ("cutting on action" makes transitions invisible).
- **Jump To (Smart Continuity Bridge):** Need your character to move from a car interior to standing outside a diner? Select **Jump To**—Gemini and Veo synthesize a context-aware bridge shot linking the two locations.
- **Extend:** Appends extra seconds to a shot that ended slightly too soon (powered by Omni Flash 1.2 / Veo 3.1 Lite continuation workflows—or use the manual *Save Last Frame* method from Page 7 for full Veo Quality control).
- **Export & 4K Upscale:** Preview your assembled cut end-to-end, choose **1080p** or **4K Upscale**, and download a single ready-to-publish MP4.

Bonus Ecosystem Features You Shouldn't Miss

TV Flow TV (Inspiration & Prompt Study)

Click **Flow TV** in the top header to watch curated short films, music videos, and experiments created inside Google Flow. Studying how top creators frame shots and pace cuts is the fastest free film school on the platform.

FX Google Flow Tools & Mobile Sync

Use **Flow Tools** to build reusable no-code mini-apps in plain English (e.g., bespoke aspect-ratio reframers, retro title overlays, or brand color graders), and use the **iOS/Android app** to snap real-world photos directly into your Ingredients drawer.

Troubleshooting Clinic & Creator Cheat Sheet

Keep this final page handy while working in `flow.google`. Almost every frustrating generation has a fast, predictable fix.

Top 7 Common Problems & Instant Fixes

Symptom / Problem	Root Cause & Exact Fix in Google Flow
Character's face or outfit changes between shots	You used plain *Text to Video*. Generate a neutral portrait in Imagen, save it as an **Ingredient** (`@hero`), and use **Ingredients to Video** for every shot.
Spoken line gets cut off at the end of the clip	Too many words for clip duration. Trim dialogue to **≤15 words per 8s clip**, put exact speech inside `"quotes"`, or split into two shots in Scenebuilder.
Clashing music plays under every clip	Veo generated default score per clip. Append `"quiet room tone, no background music"` to your prompts (and Project Agent Instructions).
Visuals look overly glossy, floaty, or "AI-smooth"	Missing lens and texture cues. Add `"35mm film grain, natural skin texture, 50mm lens, overcast natural lighting"`.
Jarring jump when cutting from Shot 1 to Shot 2	Lighting or pose shifted. Use **Save Last Frame** on Shot 1 → drop into **Start Frame** of Shot 2, or trim 0.5s off the cut point in Scenebuilder.
Hands or complex props warp mid-action	Too many simultaneous actions. Isolate complex prop interactions into a dedicated **macro insert shot** using an Ingredient card of the prop.
Running out of credits too quickly	Rendering 4 takes on Veo Quality while still experimenting. Prototype in Imagen stills + **Veo 3.1 Fast/Lite (1–2 takes)**; switch to Quality only for final hero takes.

Pre-Flight Checklist: Check These 6 Boxes Before Clicking "Generate"

- ☐ **1. Right Mode Selected?** (*Text* vs. *Ingredients* vs. *Frames*)
- ☐ **2. Aspect Ratio Set First?** (`16:9` landscape or `9:16` vertical)
- ☐ **3. `@Ingredients` Tagged?** (Hero character & key prop attached)
- ☐ **4. Camera Specified?** (e.g., *dolly-in, lateral track, tripod pan + lens mm*)
- ☐ **5. Audio Scripted Cleanly?** (Short `"quoted line"` + SFX + `no music`)
- ☐ **6. Credit Tier Matched?** (*Fast/Lite* for tests, *Quality* for final take)

Ready to Roll Camera?

Open `https://flow.google`, start a free 50-credit daily session, pitch a 3-shot micro-story to **Flow Agent**, lock one character Ingredient, and assemble your first scene today.