

Rendering Movies

How do I render movies in Media Encoder

Rendering an After Effects project is the equivalent of "printing" or "publishing" your Photoshop or InDesign project. During rendering, your After Effects movie is converted into pixels and compressed into a small enough file that can be efficiently viewed on computers or burned onto DVDs and played back.

Although professionals have to deal with many different factors when rendering, students will only need to publish their files to Youtube or Vimeo for Internet streaming. This narrows down the choices and settings you have to deal with to only 3 options:

1. size = 1280 x 720 px (this is also known as 720p HD video)
2. codec = H.264 (this is the most popular compression format in use today)
3. bitrate = 5 to 16 Mbps (this results in a high quality image with a reasonable file size)

Unless otherwise instructed, your compositions should always be in widescreen 16:9 format. This is the standard aspect ratio in use today. Although professionals may work on projects at 1080p HD (1920 x 1080 px or Blu-Ray resolution), students only need to work at 720p HD (1280 x 720 px).

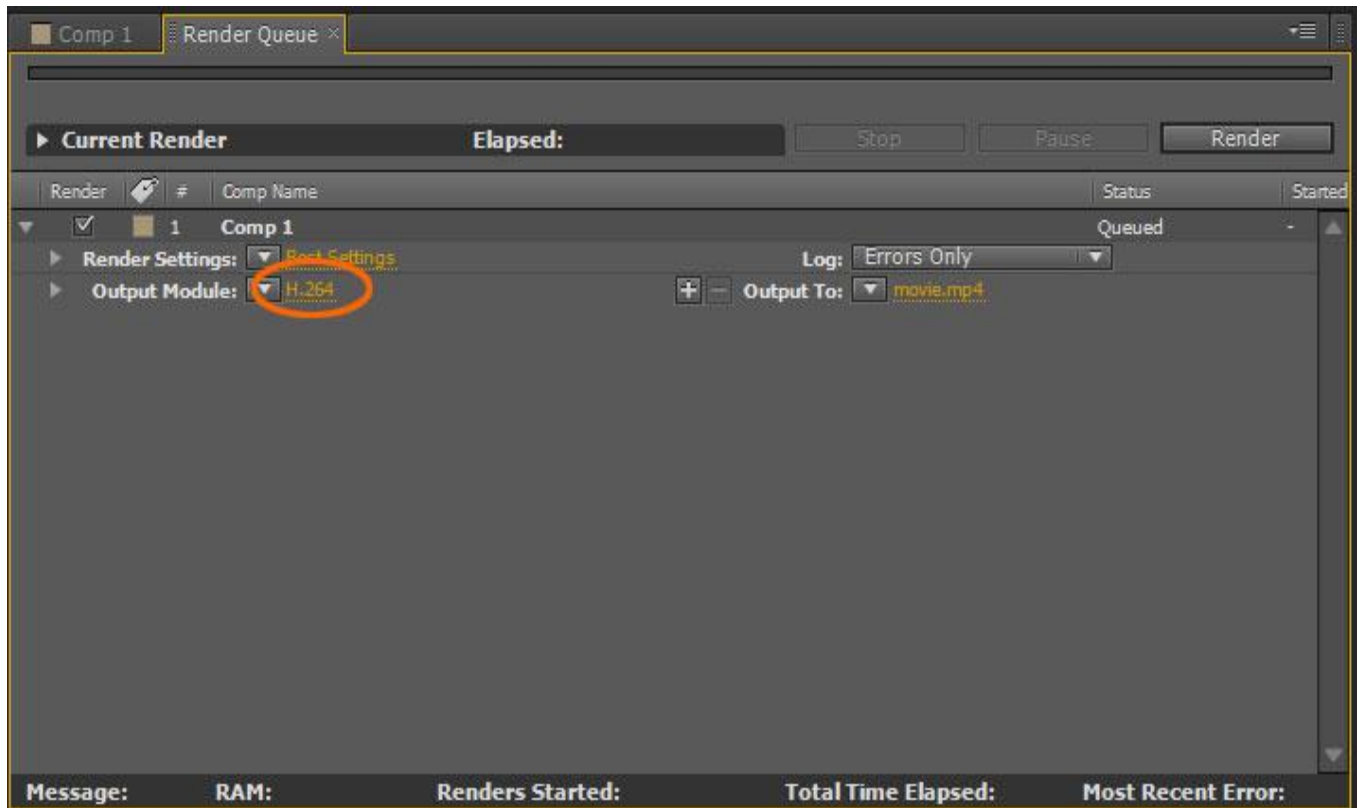
Rendering has been streamlined for you with Adobe's Media Encoder which has the most current presets ready for you to use. You can jump to Media Encoder from After Effects by selecting your composition and then choosing COMPOSITION > ADD TO ADOBE MEDIA ENCODER QUEUE (or RMB). From there, the two best choices are:

- YouTube 480p SD wide (draft renders)
- YouTube 720p HD (final renders)

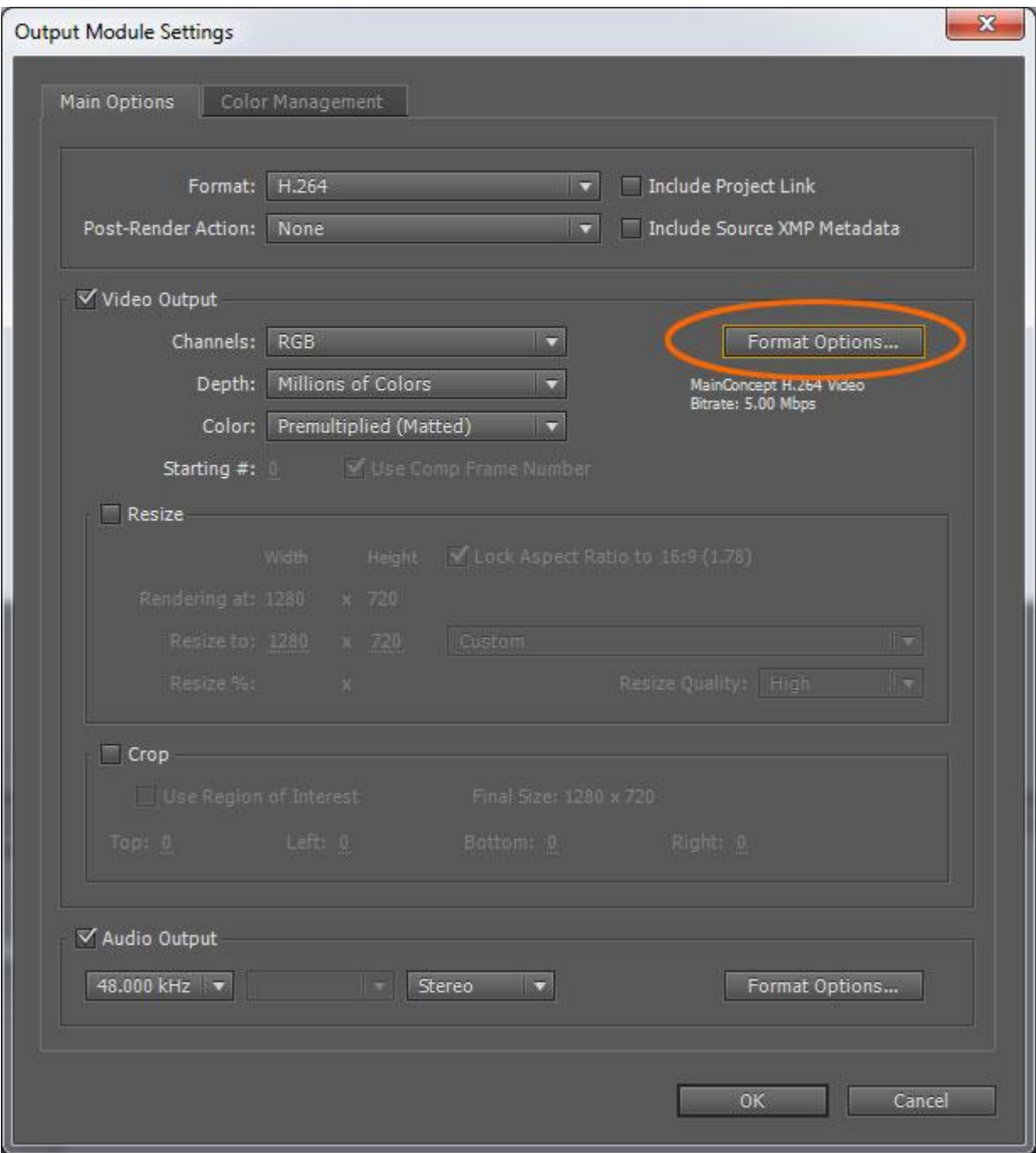
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If you need to customize your renders, here are the basic steps for After Effects:

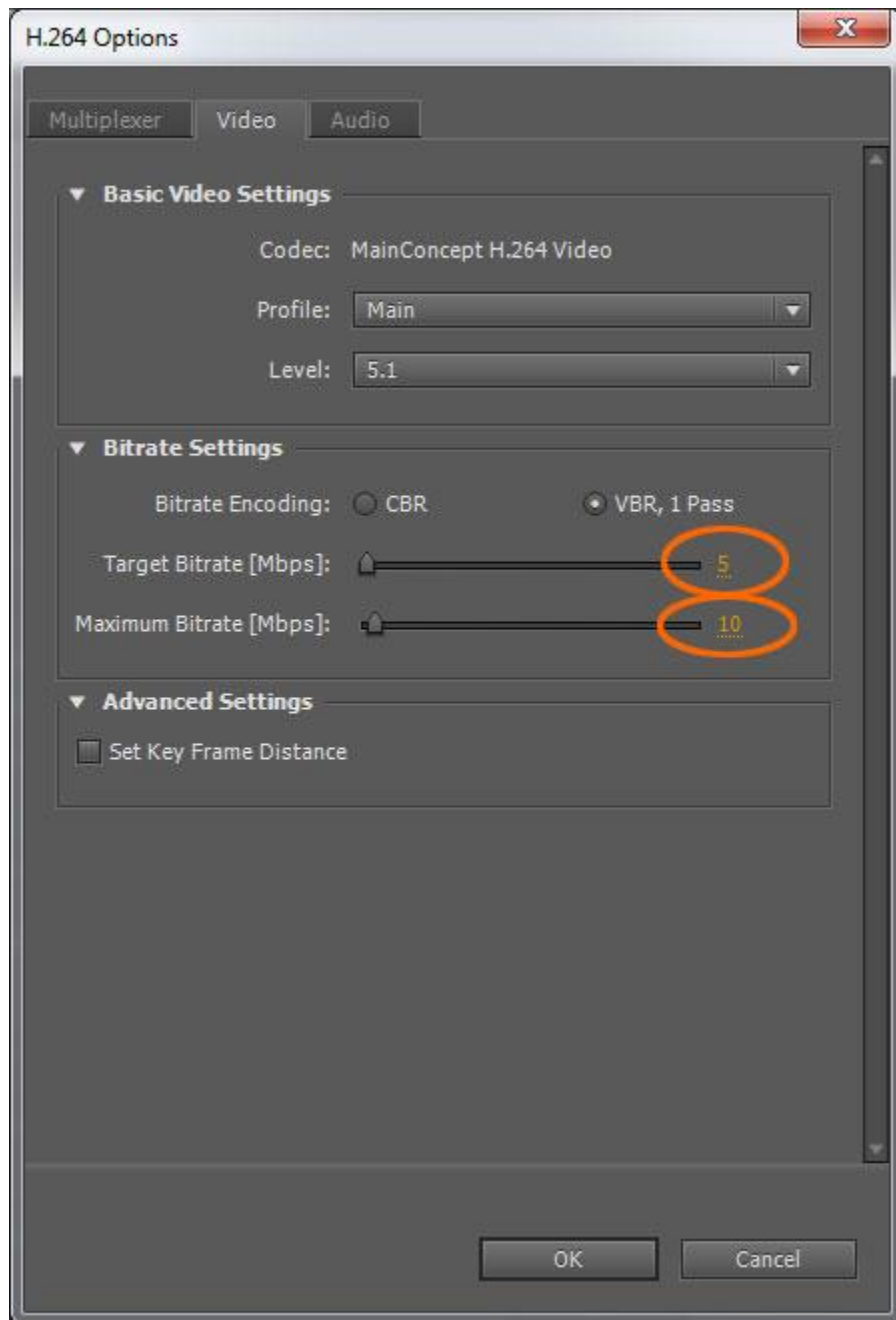
1. Drag your composition into the render queue as usual. Use the down arrows to choose the following presets: render settings = best settings, output module = H.264. Note that After Effects suggest a file extension of MP4, which is a good choice.



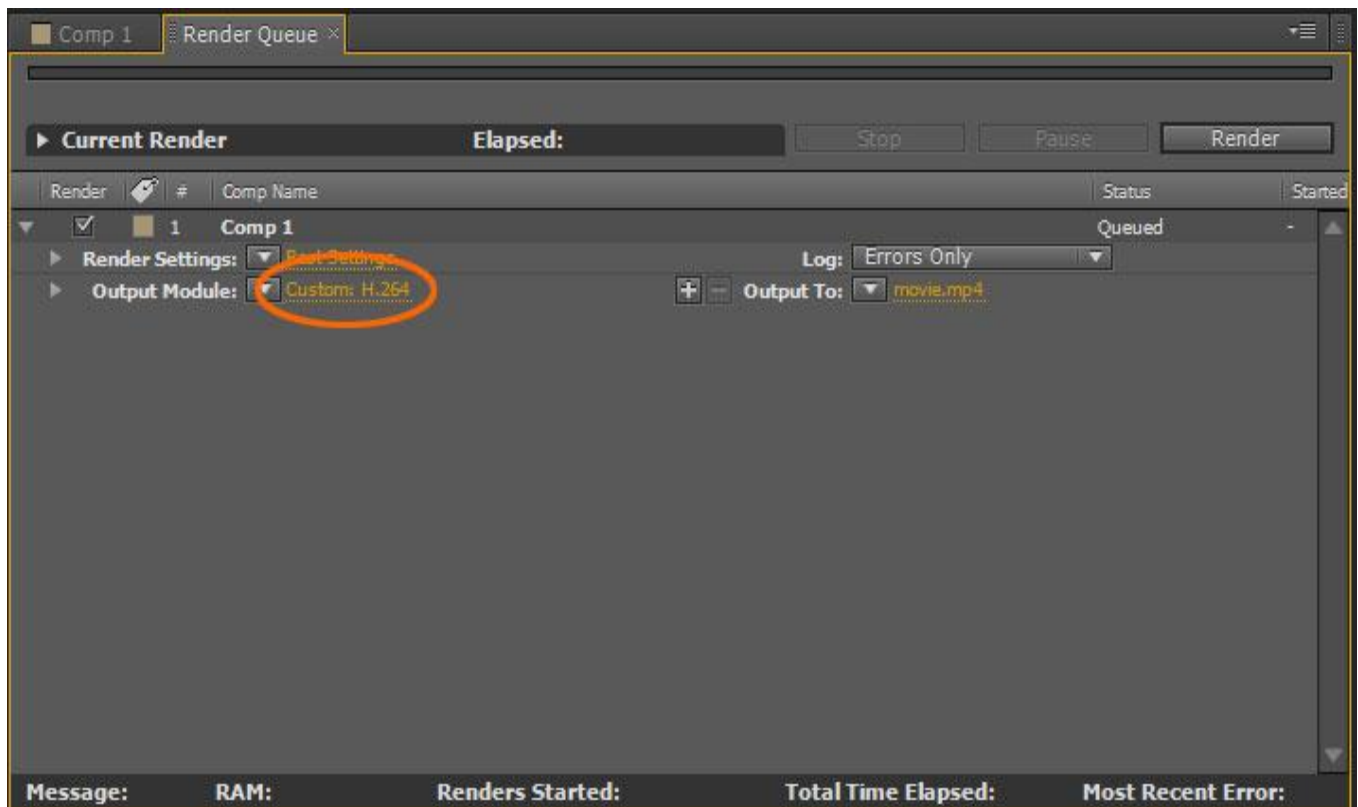
2. Click the H.264 preset to access FORMAT OPTIONS (optional: change audio output = 48kHz)



3. In the H.264 format options, change target/maximum bitrate (if needed)



4. Once you accept these settings, your output module should now read "custom: H.264". Feel free to save these settings for future use under EDIT > TEMPLATES



Note: For rough drafts, proof critiques, quick renders and even quicker uploads to Youtube, you can render your movie at half-size 360p SD (640 x 360 px). The bitrate for SD movies can be lowered to 2 to 5 Mbps.

Tips: also see [letterboxing instructions \(PDF\)](#) and [Vimeo compression guidelines](#)