Animated Reels with Claude

How to get Claude to write a full animated reel in code from one idea, with the prompt, the setup steps and the fixes for when a render goes wrong.

Why this costs no video credits

Video AI tools run on credits. A Claude skill takes a different route. It writes the reel as code, so there are no video credits to burn.

In 4 weeks I posted 60 reels this way. They brought over 1 million views and 15,000+ new followers across my social platforms, all from one Claude subscription. This guide shows how it works, the prompt I give Claude, the setup, and the fixes for when a render goes wrong.

01

How it actually works

1. You give Claude one idea and, if you have one, your voiceover. Claude turns the voiceover timing into a table of beats. Each beat has a start time, an end time, the words spoken and what is on screen.
2. Claude shows you a storyboard before it builds anything. It is one page with a grid of panels, one per beat, each showing that beat's key frame in your style. You approve it or ask for changes.
3. Claude builds the reel as code that draws every frame from the time. It renders the frames into a video and the sound effects into an audio track, then mixes them under your voice.

02

The one thing almost everyone gets wrong

People skip the storyboard and ask for the finished reel in one go.

> **WATCH OUT**
>
> Approve the storyboard before the build. Changing a still panel is quick. Changing a finished animation means building and rendering it again.

> **TIMING RULE**
>
> A visual should land on the word it shows. It can lead the word by up to 0.2 seconds, but it should never show up late.

---

03 The prompts

Paste the main prompt first, then add your style line. You can ask Claude to build from the style description alone, or attach a reference file for the style if you have one.

MAIN PROMPT

```
I want an animated reel made in a [STYLE] look, timed to my voiceover.

MY CONTENT:
[Paste your idea or your script here.]

MY VOICEOVER TIMING:
[Paste the word-level timestamps of your voiceover here. Use words.json if you made
one.]

STORYBOARD FIRST. Before you build anything, make one HTML page with a grid of panels,
one per beat of the story (about 6 to 10). Draw each beat's key frame in this style.
Under each panel, show:
- the beat number and its start and end time
- the exact on-screen text
- how it gets there from the previous panel
- its key sounds
Under the grid, list any facts or numbers you had to assume. Then wait for my OK.

WHEN I APPROVE, BUILD THE REEL:
- Size it for a vertical reel, 1080 by 1920.
- Turn my timing into one table of beats. Every animation reads its times from that
table, never from numbers scattered through the code.
- A visual lands on the word it shows. It can lead the word by up to 0.2 seconds and
never lag it.
- On-screen text is key words, labels and numbers only. Do not print the sentence being
spoken.
- Make every frame a pure function of time. No Math.random. Use a seeded random inside
the draw.
- Score sound effects under my voice. Keep small sounds quiet and put the big hits in
the pauses.
- Expose a seek(t) function and a DURATION value so the reel can be rendered frame by
frame.
- Render it to an mp4 with my voiceover on top and the effects ducked underneath.
```

STYLE LINE (CLAYMATION EXAMPLE)

```
Style: Claymation Set. A plasticine stop-motion look. Chunky hand-squished pieces with
soft waxy shading, thumbprints and tool marks on a sculpted clay set. Everything
animates on twos. Each piece pops on with squash and stretch. Arrows are rolled clay
coils. Labels and numbers are pressed clay letters that get re-sculpted when the number
changes.
```

Set it up in Claude Code

1. Make an empty project folder and open Claude Code inside it.
2. Record your voiceover and save the audio file in that folder.
3. Ask Claude: Transcribe my voiceover with word-level timestamps and save them to words.json. If a transcription tool is missing, ask Claude to install one.
4. Check that ffmpeg is installed, because it joins the frames and the audio into the final mp4. If it is missing, ask Claude to install it.
5. Paste the main prompt, add your style line and your idea, and send it.
6. Open the storyboard page Claude makes. Reply with changes, or reply OK.
7. After your OK, Claude builds the reel and renders it. A successful first run gives you a vertical mp4 where each visual appears on its spoken word and the sound effects sit under your voice.

> 💡 **QUICK TIPS**
>
> - Ask Claude to render two or three single frames before the full render, so you can check the look first.
> - Keep the storyboard and the beats table in the folder. A new take of your voiceover only means updating the table.

04

The commands I actually run

> **FIX A CROWDED PANEL**
>
> `Panel [NUMBER] feels crowded. Keep only [WORDS] on screen and make them bigger, then redraw the storyboard.`

> **FIX LATE TIMING**
>
> `The visual for [WORD] shows up late. Read its time from the beats table and make it land on the word, leading by up to 0.2 seconds and never after.`

> **TRY A NEW STYLE**
>
> `Rebuild this same reel in [STYLE]. Keep the beats table and the timing, and only change how things look and move.`

> **SCORE THE SOUND**
>
> `Score the sound effects so the big hits land in the pauses between my sentences and the small sounds stay quiet under my voice.`

> **CHECK BEFORE THE FULL RENDER**
>
> `Render frames at [TIME] and [TIME] and show them to me before you run the full render.`

When it breaks

ERROR	FIX
Text is too small on a phone	Ask Claude to raise the headline and label sizes, then redraw the storyboard.
A visual appears after the word is spoken	Ask Claude to read the time from the beats table and lead the word by up to 0.2 seconds.
The reel looks different each time you scrub	Every frame must come from the time alone. Ask Claude to remove Math.random and use a seeded random.
Rendering is slow	Ask Claude to cache textures that do not change between frames, and aim for well under 100 ms a frame.
Sound effects drown out your voice	Ask Claude to use the voiceover mix, with the effects lower and ducked under your voice.
The picture drifts from the voiceover	Ask Claude to use the audio as the clock, so play, pause and scrub all follow the audio.
The font looks wrong in the first frames	Ask Claude to wait for the font to load before drawing the first frame.

Ready to go deeper?

Want the videos made for you? Paste any link or idea into Content Engine and get a published video in under 3 minutes, with DM automation armed to capture leads.

Meet Content Engine →

https://builds.digicuratoragency.com/content-engine/