

# PHOTOGRAPHY

## THINKING VISUALLY

Human beings are visual creatures.

We are wired to be attuned to movement, colour and contrast; our sight informs us of what is in our environment. We see images on the printed page or computer screen first. A photograph grabs attention and stops the reader before a caption, before a headline, before a lead. Photography is and will always be one of the most important aspects of a yearbook.

Photographers need to understand what they are doing when they get to an event. **JUST SENDING A STUDENT TO AN EVENT WITH THE INSTRUCTIONS "TAKE PICTURES" WILL NOT GET YOU THE RESULTS YOU INTENDED.** Students who have not done this before need clear detailed instructions.

### BEFORE YOU SEND THEM

#### TO THE WOLVES:

1. Talk to them about the book's theme and layout style.
2. Do they need to take portrait and landscape images?
3. Go with them to their first event. Show them what to do.
  - Expecting someone to succeed at a new job with no training is not reasonable
  - Show them how to introduce themselves to coaches, refs, teachers
  - Show them what getting close means. Telling a student to get close to the action may mean the back seat in the bleachers to them.
4. Have them do a practice shoot and bring you the images. Review the pictures together and adjust behaviors before they start taking real shots.
5. Show them what you need for team photos. Keep space around the edge of the frame to allow for cropping if needed, take the team picture regardless if some are missing.

6. Create a shopping list for images needed, this list will provide the student with a clear idea of what they need to do.

- Dominant Photo – Player making a layup taken from under the hoop.
- Shot of players watching game from the bench.
- 5+ image of fans cheering.
- Cheerleading team.
- Action shots of players on court (get close).
- Coach and players in huddle.
- Pregame warm-ups.
- Post game victory celebration.

They need to only submit good images; they should be deleting any shots that are obviously poor.

A photo check should be done at the midpoint of any season or event to be sure you have good images. If you do this now you have time to correct it. If you wait till the end of the season or event and you don't have what you want, you can't fix it.

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## HOW TO GET EVERYONE PICTURED IN YOUR BOOK

- Request a list from the office of the entire student body.
- Request a list of all faculty and staff.
- Require all staffers to write the page number of each student who appears on their spreads.
- Use CME indexing tool and tag images to track how many times a student appears in the book.
- Put a black, red and green pen with the list.
  - > Use black to record the page number for included in story/quote.
  - > Use red to indicate they are included in a photo.
  - > Use green to indicate class picture and group/team shots.
- This index does not need to be included in the book but would provide a coverage report indicating who is in the book and who is not.

## PHOTOJOURNALISM

### 1. The 6 Ws:

Show Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How.

Plan to answer these questions as you cover an event. You will end up with much better pictures, and variety that you can use in your spread.

### 2. Use the Photos to Capture the Whole Story

Show conflict and struggle. Plan ahead and show the effort, pain or determination that goes into the event you are covering.

### 3. Introduce Characters and Location

Make sure you capture the most important people, but also show the place, audience and context in your shots.

### 4. Show More than You can Tell

Capture the details you could never describe in words – the facial expressions, costumes, poses and emotions that make a photo worth a thousand words.

### 5. Action, Reaction, and Interaction

Capturing action is good, reaction of the opposing team, audience or participants is better, and showing interactions between students, regardless of the activity is even better. This is why posed shots are the least desirable!

## 7 THINGS TO AVOID WHEN PLACING PHOTOS ON A LAYOUT

### 1. Failure to use a Dominant Photo

The dominant photo should be the best photo of the spread, and be at least 2.5 times larger than other photos.

### 2. Bleeding Photos Without Allowing Enough Space

Bleed photos should extend 1 pica past the edge of the page, to allow for trimming.

Important content should stay 2 picas to the INSIDE of the edge, to avoid being cut off.

### 3. Photos Do Not Face Across the Pages

Plan the layout so that all subjects look at the reader or across the gutter.

Images can be flipped, but watch out for text and other sensitive subjects!

### 4. Forcing Photos Into Predetermined Spaces

Never stretch photos to fit a space. Images can be resized, but their proportions have to stay the same.

Plan your layouts along with your photography, but be prepared to change your layout to fit the best photos.

### 5. No Variety in the Shape and Size of Photos

The shape of the Dominant Photo should be repeated, then contrasted.

Fill the remaining space with at least 2 photos of different sizes.

### 6. Photos Resized to Fit a Space

Resize photos only up to 125% of their original size, or images will start to deteriorate.

If you can't size it large enough to fit your box, choose another image or change the layout.

### 7. Spacing of photos is Inconsistent

Internal margins should be the same throughout a spread (or book).

If you overlap images, do it the same way on ALL spreads!

## DESIGN AT A GLANCE! PHOTO SHAPES AND SIZES

- Have you used a variety of shapes and sizes?
- Do you have consistent inner spacing?
- Are you maintaining the eyeline?
- Are there both horizontal and vertical images?

## COMPOSITION

### 1. Focus and Depth of Field



- Focus is the most important element of photography, but not everything in the photograph needs to be in focus. Depth of field refers to the part of the picture that is in focus.
- Using a shallow depth of field, f/2.8 or f/4 you can blur the things that are not important and highlight your subject.
- Using a deep depth of field, f/16 or f/22 creates a "deep zone" that allows more forgiveness with precision focusing.

### 2. Camera Orientation



- The camera can be held in two ways to view a scene; landscape format (horizontal) or portrait format (vertical). Camera orientation affects what the photographer sees and shoots as a different emphasis is viewed, thus dynamics change. Picture shape should be dictated by the natural arrangement of the subject and elements being shot.

### 3. Stance or Angle of View

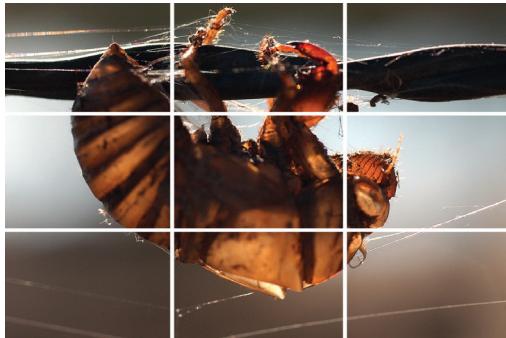


- The perspective from which the photographer chooses to take a photograph is generally, eye level (also called flat angle). This perspective can be a little boring to the viewer.
- For a stronger composition, move up higher or get closer to the ground, or move far off to the side for more unusual perspective. Think bird's eye view and worm's eye view. Shooting up at people can give you a whole new perspective. Alternatively, step on a chair or table to shoot down at what you want to capture. Shooting down at a group you can show much more of each person! By bringing the horizon low in the frame or shooting up at something, you can also get a dramatic effect.



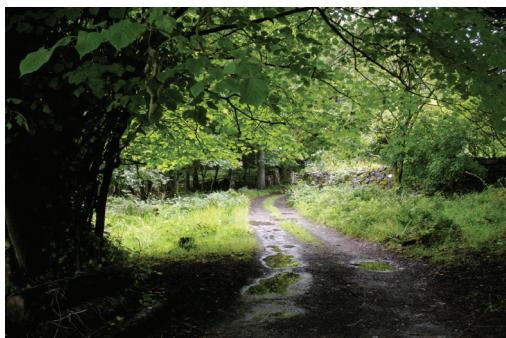
#### 4. Distance

- Robert Capa (20th Century war photographer) commented, "If your pictures aren't good, you aren't close enough."
- Strong images isolate the key part of the action or emotion for the audience and also exclude extraneous elements from the frame. Cropping after shooting the image is a poor habit. Good photos are tightly cropped in-camera. It is important to attend to the scope of the scene e.g. a French horn player or a basketball player going up for a basket.



#### 5. Balance and the Rule of Thirds

- A basic guide for strong compositional structure in a photograph is the rule of thirds. The rule of thirds imagines each image being made of up a nine-square grid like a stretched tic-tac-toe box. Using the imagined lines and intersecting points on the grid as guides for placing key elements that makes up the composition. By thinking in rule of thirds attention is directed from "middle of frame" composition that can dismiss valuable emphasizing elements that can create additional impact.



#### 6. Framing and Shapes

- Framing is a tactic by which a photographer looks for and uses elements in the scene to frame the subject. This could be shooting through the legs of a chair or branches of a tree, making sure the subject is in tight focus. A natural frame within your picture can increase interest. Arches, both natural and man-made can be used to great effect especially when lighting conditions are optimized. (See Yearbook Curriculum: Visual Journalism page 028)
- Using natural or coincidental shapes can also make photographs more interesting. Often the distorted shapes of athletes under strain will make great sports photographs, or use interesting angles of view to create great shapes from simple objects.



## 7. Leading Lines

- Leading lines lure the eye deeper into a picture or to an important subject. Straight, curved, parallel or diagonal lines are all good at promoting interest. Hallways, lockers, field striping, a finger pointed at someone or the way a group of people are looking are all leading lines. A leading line can be a visible or invisible line.
- Telephone poles that suddenly appear to be coming out of a person's head are an example of leading lines that should not get into a photograph.



## 8. Pattern and Repetition

- Just as lines can lead the eye to a place in the photograph, patterns can draw in the viewer to evaluate what they are looking at. Whether a repeated shape leads the eye through the image or a staggered pattern gives depth, you control where the eye looks.
- Including a repeating element in a photo, such as a sequence of swimmers' feet, or a row of helmeted football players on a sideline or a whole basket of peaches.



## 9. Blurring and Freezing Action

- Most sports photos are taken with a fast shutter speed, which freezes the action, and can show the contortions of the athlete's body. Another way of capturing the movement is by panning, or moving your camera with the object you are photographing. This keeps your subject in focus, but blurs the background, to give a good sense of speed.



## 10. Patience and the Decisive Moment

Since a photograph is a fraction of a second, the photographer learns to anticipate and to trip the shutter to capture the exact moment of an action or scene.

Catching action is one of the hardest things to do. It is easy to go to a game, take 200 photographs and still not have one good image. If there is no action in the photograph, no interaction between people, no reaction to events and no emotion that you can define, what story are you telling?



## 11. Light

- Light; its direction, its colour, its contrast, its intensity, its absence, is the ingredient without which there is no photo, no image, no moment. The quality of the light affects the overall mood of the photo, the shadows which may or may not occur and every other part of the photograph.
- A great time of day for soft, mellow light in pictures happens at "golden hour," which is about an hour before sunset.
- Photographs taken in bright light at noon have a lot of contrast, which creates harsh shadows, and can give people raccoon eyes.

## SELECTING AND STORING

With the advent of digital cameras, storing and keeping track of photos have become some of the more difficult aspects of the yearbook. When more than 20 photographers are taking pictures to go on over 200 pages, there are thousands of photos in many categories to keep track of. The only way to avoid mistakes, is to have a workable system that allows everyone to know who took the photos, what the subject matter of the photo is, and whether it has been used or not. Many yearbooks include an index of all people featured in stories and pictures. In order to be able to do this, you need good records!

### YOU HAVE PICTURES. NOW WHAT?

- Most people think photographs represent reality. This is not true. Because of the speed of the shutter speed used, the optics of lenses and the ability to use selective focus and framing, photographs can do much more than represent reality. Depending on how the camera is set, the same photo can tell very different stories. A wide angle shot of the playing field and the nearly empty stands gives a very different impression than a telephoto shoot of a player's or audience member's face.
- A fast shot of soccer player kicking the ball can freeze the action, showing how their body distorts with the kick, while a slower shot or one that was panned can blur the leg and ball to give a sense of the speed and power of the kick.
- Selecting And Editing Photographs
  - > Choosing what photos to keep for inclusion and which photos to discard is crucial. If the photographer took a photo with strong visual elements, but at the layout stage the photo is cropped to exclude these elements, the effort is wasted. Photography should be planned, so photographers and layout staff know what the intended story and visual effect is, but at the same time, only good photos should make the yearbook. Just because an image was planned, it should not be included if it's a bad shot.

In the age of digital, when you can take hundreds of photos in one session, the most important aspect is to discard any photos that are not compelling before someone uses them, just because they have some space to fill. Here a few rules:

- > Cropping
  - ◊ How you place photos, what parts you leave out, and how much you resize images can have a great effect on what your pages look like. The golden rule applies here: Do unto others as you would have done upon you! Think about where things are placed and what is cut off!
- > Throwaway any picture that...
  - ◊ Is out of focus
  - ◊ Is too dark, too light or too boring
  - ◊ Has technical imperfections scratches, lost highlights or bad colour.
  - ◊ Does not tell a story! This is photojournalism!
  - ◊ Is without a clear subject.
  - ◊ Has the yearbook staff or their close friends.
  - ◊ Is without a story to tell, that would only make the subject look foolish.

- > The Keepers
  - ◊ Photos with a clear center of visual impact and a story to tell.
  - ◊ Photos that show action or even better the peak of action.
  - ◊ Photos that were taken CLOSE to the subject, so they make good dominant photos.
  - ◊ Pictures taken from interesting angles or perspectives.
- > Photographs to Spread
  - ◊ Consider the gutter. Make sure faces are not trapped there!
  - ◊ Watch the arms and legs – watch what you cut off, or what is sticking into the edges of your photos.
  - ◊ Watch the background – are there poles coming out of the heads of your subjects?
  - ◊ Do not destroy the rule of thirds that a photographer tried hard to shoot.
  - ◊ Crop your images to exclude dead space and create a center of visual impact, using the rule of thirds.

## 7 STEPS TO LOGICAL PHOTO MANAGEMENT

### 1. Take photos in batches

Group photos of one theme with others of the same theme. This makes them easier to find.

### 2. Use a tracking sheet

Record the 6 Ws for each photo as you take it – this is much easier than finding the information later.

### 3. Photos should be submitted

Someone should be in charge of storing, naming cataloguing and possibly grading and deleting photos – BEFORE they are allowed in any spread.

### 4. Store photos logically

Use a single shared image directory for all of your staff. Break down the images in folders corresponding to a sectional model; events, sports, portraits, academic, etc. Ensure that dates are included on the folders with names such as "Jr. Boys Basketball" in case multiple games are shot. Add the word "team" on the folder title if it contains the team photo for ease of access.

### 5. DO NOT let staff keep photos

All photos that are used should be kept in the same place, or it will be impossible to check quality, cropping, information or replace the image if it should get lost.

### 6. Mark used photos

Each photo should only appear ONCE in a yearbook. After that, it should be clearly marked as used and be put aside in a separate folder.

### 7. Do not keep photos from previous years

The temptation of using an old photo when there is no current one is too tempting for many staff members at deadline time. Don't let it happen!

## TERMS

(For information on lenses, see Yearbook Curriculum: Visual Journalism)

### DSLR (digital single lens reflex camera)

This is the standard camera used by most working photojournalists. It has fully adjustable shutter speeds, a family of lenses that offer the photographer a wide variety of shooting options.

### Aperture



- Refers to the opening diameter of a camera lens; the aperture is the opening of the lens, which allows light to travel through it and strike the light-sensitive surface to create an image. The aperture is like the iris of the eye; it contracts or expands to adjust for the amount of ambient light hitting the eye.
- The numbers on the lens barrel are called F-stops and refer to the "brightness" of the lens as it is stopped down.
- The key concept to keep in mind is that the lower the F-stop number, the more light that is coming through the lens. Generally, this is most important to pay attention to when shooting in a low light, because a "fast lens" allows the photographer to stop more action and shoot in situations with low ambient light.
- A lens with maximum F-stop of 2.8 is usually considered 'fast.' For shooting sporting events or stage performances.

### Shutter Speed:



- The length of time light is allowed to travel through the camera's shutter before the shutter closes. In order to take a photo, light has to travel through a lens, strike a light-sensitive surface for the right amount of time.
- Shutter speeds are actually fractions of a second: "125" on the shutter speed dial means 1/125th of a second, while "1000" means 1/1000th of a second.
- The right shutter speed paired with the properly adjusted F-stop, will create a well-exposed image on the memory card.
- In terms of good photographs, a few rules of thumb are helpful in getting good images:
- When holding a camera (handheld photography), avoid taking photographs at 1/60th, because the movement the photographer makes can show up as camera-shake in the photograph.

- The higher the shutter speed, the faster the action that can be captured as a “freeze frame”. When a picture looks “blurry” and as though someone has moved too quickly in the frame, it happens because the shutter speed was too slow to capture the action.

- 1/60th:

- > Slowest suggested shutter speed for handheld photography. Good shutter speed for a portrait when the subject is standing or sitting still, or for a handheld still life. Not suitable for action photography.

- 1/250th:

- > Good all-around shutter speed that will freeze slow-moving action, such as a person walking or a person giving a speech and moving slightly but not too quickly. This setting is a good shutter speed for providing great variety in F-stop combinations when shooting on standard sunny days outside. Indoors, this might be the highest available shutter speed for an indoor sporting event, such as basketball, and because of the lighting trade-off, there will likely be motion blur of a player's hands, arms or feet.

- 1/500th:

- > Shutter speed that will freeze a high percentage of movement but not all of it.

- 1/1000th-1/2000th:

- > The highest shutter speed on most DSLRs. These shutter speeds will freeze fast-moving action, such as soccer players, moving branches in a high wind or droplets of water

## Exposure:



UNDER EXPOSED



NORMAL EXPOSURE



OVER EXPOSED

- The combination of shutter speed and F-stop that will create a well-exposed image. Memory Cards and ISO Memory cards are made up of pixels, however, the ISO is effectively “set” by the photographer, and the ISO can be set higher or lower at will by the photographer within different frames shot on the same memory card.
- A higher ISO rating [400/800/1600/3200] indicates a more sensitive digital medium that can produce good quality images under low light conditions.
- A lower number [25/50/64/125] moves down the scale of sensitivity, requiring more light to get the same image than a “faster” ISO setting.

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## TAKING PICTURES WITH YOUR SMART PHONE

- These days hundreds, if not thousands of photos are being taken at an individual event. Use this to your advantage and gather photos from the student body.
- Make sure your smart phone lens is clean. Cell phone camera lenses tend to be exposed and get touched by oily fingers.
- Natural light works best. Turn off the flash.
- Use the focus feature by tapping the screen on what you want to be in focus.
- Hold your phone still. Just like a DSLR, you will get better pictures if you're not moving.
- Don't use the front facing camera (the lens where if you are looking at your phone you can see yourself). The front facing camera has a lower resolution and will result in a lower quality of photo.
- Get closer to the subject and don't use the zoom.
- Turn on the grid so you can follow the rule of thirds.

