

GETTING A GREAT HEADSHOT

While certainly not the hardest thing you'll do in class, we often need headshots for mods, to accompany a story or for a sidebar. Headshots are simply photos of a person's head and shoulders. Review this sheet to make sure you are taking quality shots the staff can use. This isn't the hardest thing you'll do, but it is important.

Stay away from the wall

- ◆ Always try to take a headshot photo away from a wall. By nature, these photos aren't that exciting to start with, but a brick wall makes them worse. Get a little depth behind the person. And, make sure there aren't obvious distractions in the background.

Plan ahead

- ◆ You might just need the headshot, but take photos of more than what you need. The designer might change a layout and need something more horizontal than vertical, or vice versa. Best to have more, than not enough.
- ◆ Work with the designer ahead of time to avoid any potential issues. Sometimes a designer will have a specific look they are going for.
- ◆ Consider the technical issues, too. Lighting is important. Make sure, especially inside school with florescent lighting, you are taking the photos in a spot of high-quality light. If outside, pay attention to the location of the sun and avoid shadows created by bad placement.

Examples

- ◆ Example B allows for a bit of space above the head, which is common for a headshot.
- ◆ Example C represents a photo taken too close to the subject and the open space has been lost.
- ◆ When it comes to sidebars, consistency is key. Examples D and E are photos for the same sidebar. Example D is a headshot where too much space above the head was left and not enough below the subject's neck. To fit the space, her head is now out of proportion to Example E. Designers will want to try to align the eyes of the people in the sidebar. Taking a photo like Example A gives more flexibility to the final product. You can crop to the dotted line, but keep the full photo.

Be considerate

- ◆ Some people are uncomfortable having their photo taken. Be considerate of this, and do what you can to make the person feel comfortable. Too many headshots look like the person featured is unhappy or unfriendly. Always try for a smile!

