

PHOTO COMPOSITION

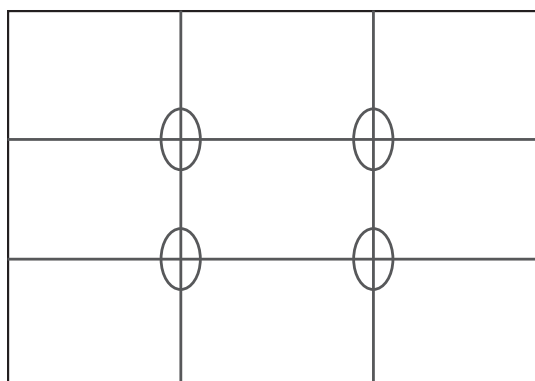
Goal: To learn basic principles of photo composition

In yearbook, photography tends to be candid photography — all of the photos are action shots that tell a story or capture a moment. Yearbook photographers avoid posed photos where the subjects are mugging for the camera; for example, students grinning with their arms draped across one another's shoulders.

In taking candid photos, photographers use the elements of photo composition to make their photos more visually appealing to their audience. In formal terms, photo composition is the study of the arrangement of objects in a photograph. Look at the examples below:

BALANCE

Photographers should strive for balance in their pictures. Balance is achieved when all compositional elements in a photo work together to tell the story. In an unbalanced photo, one or more elements in the photo will compete for the readers' attention, causing confusion.



MERGERS

A merger is a compositional flaw that occurs when two or more elements come together in a photo to produce an unwanted and confusing effect.

Example: A plant that appears to grow from the top of a subject's head.

RULE OF THIRDS

You can balance your photographs by using the rule of thirds — the circles to the upper right indicate the visual hot spots. Position the camera so the center of interest lands on one of those areas to create a more visually exciting photograph. The action or center of interest should fall in the upper, lower, left or right third of the cropped image. Make sure your cropped sports photos have leading space.

- The musician's face is positioned at the intersections rather than being centered. This allows for a feeling of movement and spacing rather than a perfectly centered image which feels more static.



INVICTUS

Ward Melville HS — Setauket, NY



**MINOTAUR**

Bloomingdale HS — Valrico, FL

CENTER OF INTEREST

To have a dramatic impact on the audience, the center of interest should be obvious.

Even with a photograph of a large crowd at a sporting event, there should be only one subject of the photo.

- The ball carrier and defensive player trying to bring him down are the center of interest while the surrounding players provide the background setting.

ANGLE

Photographers can make their photos more appealing by choosing a unique angle. A low angle can isolate your center of interest with a background of sky or ceiling while a high angle can provide the audience with a different perspective. Lens choice can also have a huge impact on compositional angles. A 15 mm fish-eye or aspherical lens helps to create dramatically wide angles that can enhance any unique physical angles from which the photo was shot.

- The photographer is shooting downward for this photo of the girls painting on the wall.

**SUNSET**

Corona del Sol HS — Tempe, AZ

FRAMING

A frame can be made up of either objects or people that surround or “frame” the center of interest. For example, if a student is standing in a doorway, the door frame acts as a frame to draw attention to the center of interest.

- The piano lid forms the perfect frame for the girl playing.

**WESTWIND**

West Henderson HS — Hendersonville, NC

LEADING LINES

The eye follows leading lines to the center of interest, especially from the foreground to the background. A road, a chalk line on an athletic field or painted lines on a track, all act as leading lines.

- The viewer's eye follows the paintbrush directly to the second subject's face.

**TELEIOS**

Mount Paran Christian School — Kennesaw, GA

PEAK OF EMOTION

Photographers take pictures that tell great stories when they take them at the peak of emotion — at the moment when something happens. The peak of emotion is often the reaction to the event. The photographer should strive to capture action, reaction, motion and emotion.

- The photographer got in close to capture the reaction to defeat in the championship game.

**SAGA**

Shawnee Mission West HS — Overland Park, KS

FOUR TIPS FOR TAKING GREAT PHOTOGRAPHS

PICK A GOOD SUBJECT.

Look for interesting or expressive people.

MOVE IN CLOSE.

Many beginning photographers take pictures from too far away. Zero in on your center of interest by moving closer. Look through your viewfinder to see if the center of interest fills the frame. If not, move even closer.

WAIT FOR SOMETHING TO HAPPEN.

Be patient. At a football game, wait for the coach's reaction to a fumble. At a band competition, wait for the announcement of the first-place winner, then shoot a band member's reaction. For sports, stay after the game to capture the reactions and emotions.

SHOOT TWICE A DAY, EVERY DAY.

Whether you are on assignment or not. This is called "enterprising." Enterprising is a great skill-builder. It allows you to become more familiar with your equipment, and you never know what unexpected dominant you might capture.

PHOTOGRAPHY VOCABULARY

Goal: To introduce the vocabulary for photography

APERTURE

The opening in a photographic lens that admits light. The shutter speed determines how long light hits the camera's sensor. The aperture determines how much light gets through.

CANDID PHOTO

An action photo that tells a story or captures a moment. With the exception of group pictures or individual mug shots, yearbook photos are candid photos.

CENTER OF INTEREST

The subject of a photo.

CROPPING

Eliminating excess content to leave only the area of the picture you would like reproduced in the yearbook.

DOMINANT PHOTO

The largest, most dynamic photo on a spread. Typically, the dominant photo is two to two-and-a-half times larger than any other photo on the spread.

DEPTH OF FIELD

The distance in front and behind the subject of a photo that is in acceptable focus, the zone of sharpest focus.

ENTERPRISE PHOTOGRAPHY

To walk around looking for interesting candid subjects or events to shoot.

FRAMING

To surround or frame the center of interest with another object (for example, a doorway) to attract the audience's attention to the primary subject of the photo.

ISO

The number that indicates the camera's sensitivity to light. The higher the number, the less light you need, BUT the noisier (grainier) the photograph looks.

LEADING LINES

Lines the eye follows in a photograph, particularly lines running from the foreground to the background.

MEGAPIXEL

A unit equal to one million pixels. A term used to describe resolution; the more pixels in an image, the higher the resolution of that image.

MUG SHOT

A straightforward head-and-shoulders shot.

PHOTO COMPOSITION

The arrangement of objects in a photograph.

PHOTO OP (OPPORTUNITY)

A staged event, usually a pep rally or other official school function on campus (or can be off campus).

RESOLUTION

The number of pixels that make up a digital image. Measured in dots per inch, resolution determines the quality of detail in an image. The higher the resolution, the more pixels per inch. The more pixels per inch, the greater the detail. An image with low resolution, 72 dpi for example, will not reproduce well in a yearbook. A resolution of 300 dpi is recommended for optimal print quality.

SD CARD

Digital image storage device.

SELECTIVE FOCUS

The technique in which the subject of a photograph is in sharp focus while elements around it are not. An object in sharp focus will be isolated from blurred surroundings.

SHUTTER SPEED

The measurement of how long the camera's shutter remains open as a picture is being taken. The aperture and the shutter speed together determine how much light hits the camera's sensor and for how long.

SOFT FOCUS

The image is not sharply focused.