

Remember --- when taking better photographs, a little **T. L. C.** goes a long way . . .

T.

Is for Technique.

This is the way you use your camera settings – shutter speed, aperture and focus.

L.

Is for Lighting.

(photography means: *writing with light*)

Understand your light source (existing light, front, side or back light & flash) and its direction will improve your photos.

Bad lighting = poor photograph.

Good or Interesting lighting = pleasing photograph.

C.

Is for Composition.

This is how you put together or “arrange” your image. Follow “The Rules” of photography.

Photography rules can be broken—but you should learn and follow them first before you experiment with them.

“The Earth is Art; the Photographer is only a Witness.”

These tips and descriptions are meant to help you get a better understanding of what is expected in each of the photography categories.



If you have questions regarding the list or descriptions, please contact:

Your Club's Photo Leader

or the

Superintendent of the Photography
Department

(Did you know that National Geographic photographers take about 1,000 photos for every one that is printed!)

PORTRAITS -- Practice good eye-to-camera contact with your people and animal subjects. Most importantly, focus on your their eyes—they should be tack sharp. Also, try to capture a “catch light” (that little sparkle) in each of the eyes.



(Of note, the eyes follow the rule of thirds when composing a portrait—although probably not placed at one of the intersecting points, you would typically place the eyes in the area of the top horizontal line—top one-third of photo.)

Keep backgrounds simple and shoot at eye level whenever possible. (You may have to get down on your knees or belly to get on an eye level with your subject.) Hands can sometimes look awkward in a photo, so give your subject something to hold--an object that reflects their personality or goes along with the photo theme.

Whenever possible (unless the background is needed to show location or environment), move or zoom in close to crop out unwanted background items. Grouping people closer together will also create a feeling of companionship.

Look at your subject from more than one angle, then move around and shoot from many different views. The potential for a great shot increases with the number of photos taken.

Enlargements – Make your best photo into a print larger than 4x6; choose a size that works best for your photo—5x7 is more rectangular; 8x10 is more square.

Shutterbug Challenges – Read the guidelines closely. These eight challenges are an opportunity to be more creative and promote your photography as art.

Still Life – These photos will be an arrangement of non-living items. Be sure there is absolutely no living item in the photo—not even a blade of grass. **TIP:** Create a theme by selecting 3 or more items that go together. Use a simple background that does not distract from your items.

Sunrise or Sunset – Scenic vistas shot just as the sun is coming up or going down. **TIP:** No flash; look for interesting clouds and foregrounds. Be aware of any distractions in the sky.



Trail Camera – (new in 2016) Exhibitor must choose site, set up and monitor camera. **TIP:** Crop photos for composition.

Transportation – Things that get you from place to place—boats, trains, strollers, skateboards, etc. **TIP:** Be sure to leave some room in front of a moving object, even if it is not moving.

Trick Photography – Shoot photos from different angles, get low, get high; move your subjects around to give an unusual perception; i.e., one child carrying a bucket with another child’s head and shoulders with arms waving like they are trying to get out of the bucket or a child waving a butterfly net like they are catching an overhead plane. **TIP:** Check the internet or photo books for other funny, “tricky” ideas.

Urban Activity(ies) – Things that happen in town; no cityscapes. **TIP:** Shoot things like street workers, children doing sidewalk chalk drawings or farmer markets.

Weather – Shots of interesting and inclement weather as it is happening. **TIP:** Don’t just take photos in good weather. Be sure to keep camera and gear (as well as yourself) protected.

What Photography Judges Look For

Technique:

FOCUS -- Is everything that is supposed to be sharp, sharp? Is depth of field used properly for the image?

LIGHTING – Is the direction of the light correct? Is it soft or harsh? Are there “hot” spots that are detracting?

EXPOSURE – Is the image too dark or too light? Should you have used a reflector or fill flash?

PRESENTATION – Have you followed the rules for the exhibit? Does the image fit the category? Is the overall entry neat? Are the photos adhered well? Does the exhibit have a hanger?

COMPOSITION:

RULE OF THIRDS– Is the subject placed properly? Is there a clear subject?

HORIZON – Is the horizon straight? Is the horizon placed properly?

VERTICAL OR HORIZONTAL – Does the subject fit the format? Is there a lot of empty or dead space?

SEPARATION – Does the subject stand out from the background? Is the background simple or too “busy” or is anything “growing” out of the subject’s head?



IMPACT (INTEREST) – STORY TELLING ABILITY:

This is the “WOW” factor. It can be positive OR negative. -

-- Does it show a clear emotional response?

-- Do I want to keep looking at the image?

-- Is the image vibrant or washed out?

-- Would I hang this on my wall?

UNDERSTAND YOUR EQUIPMENT

Read your camera instruction booklet; understand the functions, and practice, practice, practice.

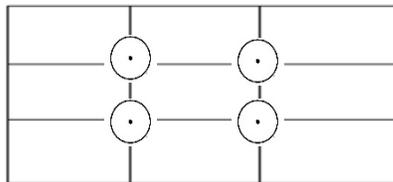
HOLD YOUR CAMERA STEADY

For best support, use a tripod. Or, you can lean on something solid or hold your arms tight to your body and be the tripod! (Be very careful your camera does not move downward when you press the shutter button to take your picture.)

RULE OF THIRDS

Photos should have a center of interest, but that interest should not always be in the center of the photograph.

Mentally divide your image area into thirds (horizontally and vertically—like a tic-tac-toe grid). Place your subject (or center of interest) at or near where the “lines” intersect.



HORIZONTAL VS. VERTICAL

Be aware of your subject—a single subject tends to look better in a vertical format. Shoot vertically to emphasize height, dignity or strength. Shooting horizontally will give a sense of rest or peace to your photo or show great expanse.

FRAMING YOUR SUBJECT

“Frame” your subject with an interesting foreground. Frames can be anything from crib bars and tree branches to door frames. Putting “frames” around your subject will create depth and will place more attention on your subject.

Portrait – This image **MUST** show eye contact between the subject and the photographer. The subject must be posed and not a candid shot; may be full body, 3/4 body, or head & shoulders shot. **TIP:** Shoot with a partner, pose and repose each other until you get the shot/look you want.

Rural Activity(ies) – Activities that happen outside the city limits; no landscapes. **TIP:** Shoot things that happen on a farm like milking a cow or planting/harvesting crops.

Scapes/Scenes (Cityscape, Landscape, Road/Path/Trail, Street Scene & Water Scene) – Be sure your scenic scape fits the category and shows the “big scene.” Follow the rule of thirds with foreground, midground & background. **TIP:** Generally a scenic scape with present better as a horizontal image.

Seasonal Scene – Clearly show the season; although a landscape generally shows this better, may do a close up if the subject is clearly seasonal. **TIP:** Judges like to see images from seasons other than summer—it shows you took photos all year long and not just the week before the Fair.

Self-Portrait/Selfie – Interesting photo of you. **TIP:** May need to crop for proper composition and rule of thirds.

Silhouette – Your subject will lack detail and should be a sharp, dark shape. **TIP:** Put your subject between you and your light source (light subject). Be sure your subject’s shape is recognizable and interesting.



Sports Scene -- Be sure to leave “room” in front of the subject. **TIP:** See the “Action” tip.

Flowers or Trees – Any plant life fits in this category. Get close and try different angles for a more interesting shot. **TIP:** Watch your background and avoid clutter, use your rule of “leading lines.” Photos are also of more interest if subjects are in odd numbers; i.e., 1, 3, 5, etc.



Holiday or Special Occasion – Be sure the event photographed is clear and of interest. **TIP:** Your subjects will have more interest if engaged with each other and not the photographer.

Human Interest – This is a photo typically with a person/people and an animal(s). It may depict an interaction between the two or a posed portrait-type photo. **TIP:** Be sure to have eye (and ear) contact if you shoot a portrait-type image.

Lines, Patterns or Designs – These photos are all about lines and designs. May be a close up or a landscape. **TIP:** Your subject does not have to be recognizable, but make sure your lines or designs are obvious and interesting.

Nature – No “hand of man” may show in your photo. Very open category, as may be an animal, plant, etc. in its natural setting. **TIP:** Best to get very close; be sure that your subject is obvious and of interest.

Photos That Tell a Story or “How To Do It” – Be sure that your photos are clearly telling a story and that the judge does not have to guess the story. **TIP:** Keep it simple and make sure your background enhances the story and does not distract from the story.

MOVE IN CLOSE



Don't be afraid to get closer (as close as your camera will allow you to get and still keep your focus sharp). Even salt shakers will look interesting if you get close enough.

Move in (or zoom in) to get a more personal connection between you and your subject. (Filling the viewfinder with your subject will also help you get rid of the things in the background that you may not want showing up in your photo.)

LEADING LINES



A “line” of any type directs your attention to the subject. (“Lines” can be a path or a road that ends at a barn, a row of desks pointing to the front of the classroom, or footprints in the sand that lead to the people on the beach.) Lines add depth to your photo, so use them when you can.

HORIZONS

Be careful of your horizon placement and be sure it is straight. Try not to place it in the middle of your photo. (Decide what is most important, the sky or the ground, and give the one with more importance more room. Follow the rule of thirds.)

MOTION

Always leave some room in the front of a moving subject (even a subject that is not moving). This will keep your subject from looking as though it is “leaving” your photo, look less crowded and space for the subject to move “into.”



BACKGROUND

Before you press the shutter button to take a picture, take a careful look at your background. Look for simple backgrounds that are not cluttered and will not distract from your subject and allows the subject or point of interest to stand out.

Category Descriptions

Avoid using photos that look “just like” each other. This will avoid questions regarding the use of the “same photos” in two different item numbers.

Action – (stop, slow or panned) Use shutter speed to create a certain “look” to your image. Be sure to leave “room” in front of the subject. **TIP:** To stop (or freeze) the action, use a faster shutter speed. Slow shutter speeds will blur moving subjects, but keep nonmoving items sharp. Use a tripod. Panning is the following of your subject with your camera and pressing the shutter during the pan.



Agricultural Scene/Barn/Silo – This is not a rural/ag activity, but more of a landscape image or a close-up of a barn and/or silo or some aspect of a farming situation. **TIP:** Use leading lines if available; also see tip for architecture.

Alphabet Photography –Spelling out a word using one photo for each letter; i.e., a wheel would be an “O”. Be sure your “letter” fills the frame. **TIP:** Look for shapes and designs in everyday life that could be a letter; if all else fails, create one (such as propping poles against a wall to spell the letter “N”).

Amphibian/Insect/Reptile – Get very close up and show good detail, yet stay safe. **TIP:** Don’t get so close that you lose your sharp focus; if need be, crop the photo so your subject fills the frame.

Animal(s) – Try not to show any people in your photo. Photos of pets should show them at their best, whether at play, relaxing or posed. **TIP:** Show a photo of an animal, not a photo with an animal in it—get close.

Architecture/Building – Make good use of lighting and leading lines to add interest and depth. Photo may show the whole building or a unique feature. **TIP:** Show two sides of the building so it doesn’t look flat.

Bird(s) -- Try not to show any people in your photo. Photos of birds may show them in their natural environment or may show a unique feature of the bird. **TIP:** Show a photo of a bird, not a photo with a bird in it—get as close as possible.

Child or Person – One subject in the photo; a child would be under the age of 18 and an adult age 18 or older. **TIP:** Keep it simple; the photo should “tell a story” for more interest.

Children or People – More than one in the photo; may all be in the same age category or a combination. **TIP:** Your subjects will have more interest if engaged with each other and not the photographer.

Clouds or Rainbows – Follow the rule of thirds; your subject will fill 2/3 of the photo. Choose a shot that shows interest. **TIP:** Watch your foreground, as it should be in silhouette or add interest but not distract from the cloud(s) or rainbow.

Crawford County Fair/County Tourist Attraction – Photograph activities at the fair or in your community that attract tourists. **TIP:** Keep your camera handy at all times and record events that happen at the fair or make a point to visit some of the unique attractions in Crawford County.



Extreme Close-up – These photos will be a small portion of a subject. Choose a subject with bold color, lines or a unique shape for an interesting photo. **TIP:** Don’t forget you need to identify the subject somewhere on your entry tag.