

Photography & Digital Photography Basics

Digital Photography

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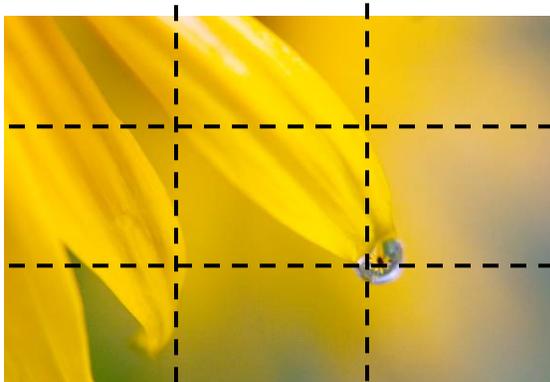
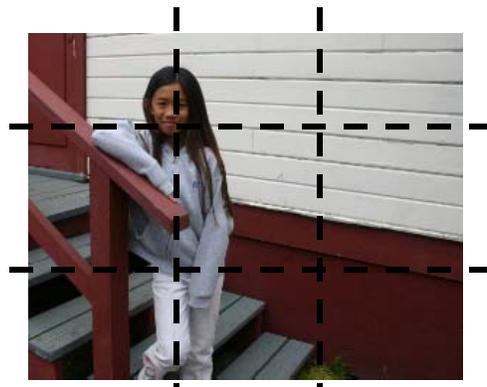
The rule of thirds

Most amateur photographers will place the main subject in the center of the frame, which is fine for some photographs.

To create a more dramatic image, begin to look at the image in sections of thirds. The simplest way to think about it is to imagine a tic-tac-toe game on the image.

Move the horizon and the subject from the center of the composition into one (or more) of the thirds. Ideally, the main subject or focal point will land in one of the intersection of the four lines.

If the horizon is visible, keep the horizon line straight. The horizon can be either high or low, following the upper or lower third.



Room to move

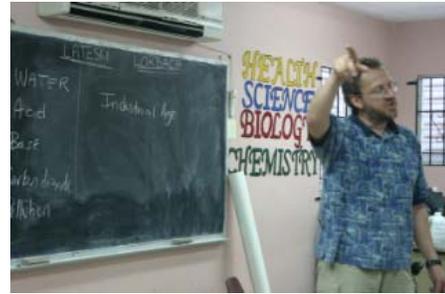
Not only is it important to pay attention to location of the subject within the frame, it is just as important to allow for movement within the image.

Although still images never really move, they can still give the illusion of movement. With that in mind, it is important to allow the subject to have room to move and a place to move into.

In this image, this ferry boat is ready to leave the image. Although the dynamic thirds are positioned well, the boat is moving in the wrong direction for this image to work well. If the boat was going the opposite way and cropped in so there was less water, it would be fine.



This image of the teacher has the teacher facing out of the image, which also leads the attention out of the image.



In contracts, the second photo has the teacher facing into the photo, with room to move, (again, using the rules of thirds.)



The follow are additional examples of images with “room to move”

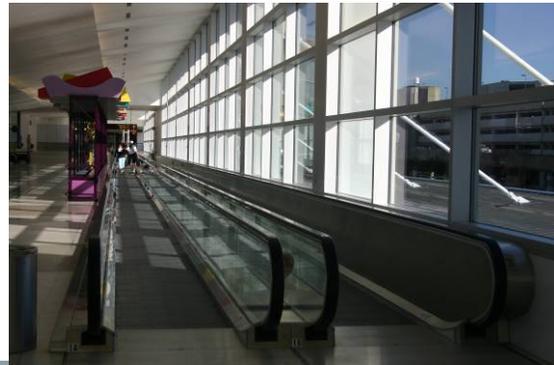


Vanishing Points and Leading Lines

Another way to add dramatic effect to images is to draw the viewer into the image with the use of Vanishing Points, also known as Perspective. This brings dimension to the image.



The viewer's attention remains in the image in the first two images.



In this image the viewer's attention is taken out of the image completely.



Placing the vanishing point in the different horizon lines and using of rules of third can change the way the image affects the viewer feeling of the image.



Repeating Patterns

Repetition of design and color are also interesting composition tools.

A combination of repeating patterning and vanishing points can create a very dramatic image.



Lighting

Backlighting

Backlighting – having the source of light come from behind the subject

If an object is transparent, using back lighting will brighten the object and bring emphasis to the object. You can see in this image the effects of back lighting as the bottles in the back, which are backlit, are more dramatic than the bottles in the front, which are not backlit.



Backlighting a non-transparent subject will give a silhouette effect.



Backlighting a closer object will create a rim light effect. This gives the feeling of dimension.

It is important though, to make sure you also have some lighting coming from in front of the subject as well to create detail in both the highlight and shadow and create dimension.



Backlighting that doesn't work

If you are photographing subjects on a bright day, or the subject is in the shadows it may be necessary to force your camera to increase the exposure or force the camera to use a flash to add lighting to the front of your subject. You can also use light colored objects to reflect light to the front of the subject. Even a piece of white paper can offer enough light reflection to improve an image of a close up subject.



When the sky is lighter and at sunset, forcing the flash can improve the image immensely.



Side lighting – having the source of light come from beside the subject. Anything on the opposite side will be reflected back onto the subject.

This is the most commonly suggested type of lighting. Having your lighting source coming from the side creates dimension in your image.



Front lighting / Top lighting

Having the majority of your lighting coming from in front of the subject (or directly behind you) is usually only suggested for distant images or when it is unavoidable. Front lighting can create a flat looking image and if people are the subject of the image they will most likely not be happy about looking into the sun. This is not to say that back lighting them is any better, but more of a side lighting would be preferred.

Top lighting a subject can create dramatic shadowing but should be avoided if your subject is a person, as you will create the illusion of bags under the eyes, raccoon eyes, and even mustaches on the subject.

Using the Flash

One thing that is nice about digital photography is that most cameras provide an instant preview of the image just captured. This allows you to adjust your image right away. Also most digital cameras will take photographs without flash in limited or low lighting situations.

In order to take photographs in low lighting settings, the camera must adjust the time of exposure to light. This is fine for a stationary object, but if the subject has even the slightest motion (or you are unable to hold your camera still) you will most likely end up with movement in the image or a blurry image.

Most cameras will turn on the flash when it determines it is needed. The flash can also be overridden to either be on or off if desired.

One of the biggest mistakes made related to flash, is using the flash when the subject is far away, or there are other items between the photographer and the intended subject. The flash is only intended to light the area within about ten feet.

The flash will reflect off of the closest object, making it the brightest thing in the image.

Notice in the two examples, the top one the light is reflected off of the tablecloth and center pieces, while in the second image the natural lighting provided a more dramatic effect.

(Please also note though, the second image is more blurry because of the time of exposure and the movement of the subjects)



Photography Groups of People

Getting Into the Shot

One of the biggest mistakes made in classroom photography is not getting in close enough to the action. So many times the photograph is taken from a distance to only capture the back of several students' heads and not really capturing what the students are really doing.



Ideally, the best way to capture the image is to get in close to the students and capture either over one of their shoulders or from between two students. Try to be at the same level as the students as well.



Avoid using a flash if at all possible. Try to use the window light or adjust the camera for the low light setting.



Differences Between Film Photography and Digital Photography

First I would like to remind you that your film photographs can become digital images quite easily. Most places that develop your film will also put your images onto a floppy or CD at an additional charge. It is more expensive to have this service performed after the film has been returned to you. When in doubt pay a few more dollars and have the images put into digital format at the time of processing. If you did not have your images put on a CD at the time of development, or you have older photographs that you wish to use digitally, you may still capture your images digitally by scanning the image or negative.

Image adjustments

Common to both film and digital imaging is the fact that you are recording light and shadow. You can adjust the image in several ways.

Filters Adding a Polarizer or other filters.

EV levels (Equivalent Value) pertain to the amount of light needed to record the image properly. EV + or – adjustments on the camera for more light + for less - . If the image is too dark, adjust the EV to a + level to allow more light and if the image is too light, adjust the EV to a – level to reduce the amount of light.

ISO rating The ISO Setting are similar to the ASA in film. Some cameras have ISO adjustments from 100 to 1600. In low light you would raise the ISO to 400 to 1600, In bright light, lower it to 100 or 200.

MODE In digital imaging the modes, such as macro, action, and portrait can be selected for the scene according to the amount of light available. Action mode equates to a higher ISO to stop the action in an outdoor bright scene.

White Balance The color of the light also affects how the image is recorded. If it is bright sunlight, incandescent or fluorescent light, shade or cloudy, each have a different color temperature and will record the image differently. It is important to choose the correct setting for digital for your images to have true color.

Lens Aperture The amount of light that comes into the lens, or f stop, can be adjusted on many cameras. From f3.5 to f45 depending on the lens. The lower the number the more light comes in.

Shutter speed The faster the shutter speed, the more steady the image will be. Some cameras adjust from 1/5000 of a second to Bulb where the lens stays open until you manually close it, for long time exposures.

Flash You can add flash to lighten the subject. The flash distance to subject will determine the amount of light as well as the amount of output.

Reflector Adding a reflector will adjust the image brightness. The angle of incidence is equal to the angle of reflectance.