

One Week to Better Photography

Glossary

Adobe® Bridge® Useful application packaged with Adobe Photoshop that previews, organizes and renames digital image files and creates digital contact sheets

Adobe® Photoshop® Image-editing software application that allows the photographer to crop, resize and enhance image appearance; sometimes referred to as the digital darkroom

Angle Focus or approach that is taken to a story or photograph, for example, a bird's eye view or the 50-yard line versus the end zone

Anticipating action The photographer watches action or an event, gaining the knowledge to be prepared to record the peak of action; a useful technique to compensate for shutter lag

Aperture Adjustable opening that permits light to pass through the lens into the body of the camera and onto the digital sensor or film, represented by f-stop numbers

Auto exposure A camera feature that automatically determines the proper exposure for subjects positioned inside a target area visible in the viewfinder

Auto exposure lock A camera feature (AE) that allows the photographer to automatically determine proper exposure on a subject, lock the exposure setting and then reposition the subject for better composition

Auto focus System that allows the camera to automatically bring the subject into focus

Automatic flash Flash units that automatically calculate the distance to the subject and make adjustments in light output for proper exposure

Backgrounding Research that the photographer does to gain understanding of the subject or event before shooting the assignment

Balance Arranging objects that are not equal in size, tone and color, such as images, headlines, copy and graphics, in a manner to create equilibrium on a spread, page or cover

Bird's Eye View Use this view of a scene or object from above or overhead to provide another perspective

Body language The position of a subject's body that adds visual interest or important information to the visual story

Bounce flash A flash technique that directs the flash to the ceiling or other surface so that light falls indirectly on a subject and produces softer light

Candid An unposed photo showing action

Camera angle The position of the photographer in relation to the subject and the visual story

Captions A few words or lines of text that describe and add information about a photo; also called a cutline

Center of visual interest The main point of interest in an image (CVI); if effectively placed, it is the first place the eye rests when looking at the image

Composition The arrangement of elements in an image that make it visually pleasing and effectively communicates visual information

Contact sheet A page containing thumbnails of image files, used for reference; Photoshop has a contact sheet feature that can be used to help organize digital images

Contrast The degree of black and white tones in an image, which can be used to focus on a subject

Crop Eliminating unwanted elements in an image that do not contribute to or detract from the visual story, either using the camera's viewfinder before the image is shot or using photography software afterward

Dedicated flash A flash unit designed to work with a specific camera brand and model(s) that, when attached to the camera, makes a connection for flash control from the camera controls

Depth of field The distance between the nearest and farthest objects appearing in sharp focus in an image

Eye flow Movement of the reader's eye around the photo as visual information is processed

Filled Frame If you think you are close enough to your subject, zoom in a little more or take a few steps closer. Chances are, your photo will improve even more as you get in close and fill the frame.

Flash modes Control selections on automatic and dedicated flash units that allow for choices in aperture setting and distance from the subject

Fluorescent white balance Digital camera white balance setting used where fluorescent lighting is the primary light source, such as classrooms

Focal length Optical distance between the center of the lens and the point behind the lens where the light rays focus (wide-angle, normal or telephoto); this optical measurement determines the angle of view of a lens: lenses with smaller focal lengths have a wider field of view, while longer focal lengths have a narrower field of view and magnify distant subjects

Focus lock A camera feature that allows the photographer to set focus on a point and change positions if the subject in the viewfinder moves

Framing A natural frame around the center of interest draws attention to the subject; the most effective frames appear naturally in the scene, such as objects or people, and are in the foreground and slightly out of focus

f-stop Numbers that indicate the opening size of the aperture. The lower the number, the larger the opening. The higher the number, the greater the depth of field.

Highlight An area of a photo that is the lightest in contrast

Histogram A graph in photography software displaying the distribution of image brightness levels

Hot shoe Where flash unit is attached on top of a camera

Image format Positioning of the camera's rectangular image sensor to create either a horizontal or vertical image

Image stabilizer A feature of some telephoto lenses and cameras that prevents shake from ruining image sharpness

In-camera composition Application of the principles of composition when the image is adjusted in the viewfinder prior to taking the photo

Interpolation Process of adding pixels to digital images; when digital images require enlargement, Photoshop and other imaging software apply image analysis processes to add new pixels to fill in the enlarged image size

JPEG (JPG) Joint Photographers Experts Group; a compression format for digital images

JPEG damage Progressive loss of pixels occurring when JPEG files are repeatedly opened and closed; convert JPEG files to TIFF or Photoshop files or make a copy before repeated viewing or editing

LCD Liquid crystal display; area on the back of digital cameras for viewing image playback, menus for camera features and settings

Leading lines Strong lines, such as a pointing arm or a stair railing, that lead directly to the main subject or center of visual interest provide the viewer direction

Light Meter Used to measure the amount of available light

Macro A lens setting or type of lens that allows for close-up photography

Manual focus A traditional lens type or a switch on an auto-focus lens that allows for manual focus control

Megapixels One million pixels and multiples of one million pixels; a common method of measuring and comparing the maximum image size capabilities of digital cameras; the higher the pixel count of an image, the better and larger the image

Mid-tone An area of an image that has middle tone values

Original image files Files created in the camera, containing all the digital information recorded during exposure; preserve these JPEG files in secure storage, and edit and view only copies of these files

Photo essay A group of related images that work together to establish a theme or point of view

Photo story A group of related images that work together to tell a story

Posed Photos created when subjects “mug” for the camera or the photographer directs subjects to take a position; these photos do not accurately tell the story

Program mode A camera control function that allows the camera to automatically determine exposure based on the selection of different types of shooting situations

Red-eye reduction An electronic flash setting that activates a pre-flash to reduce or prevent red spots in the subject’s eyes

Remote trigger A photo-electric, infrared or radio-controlled trigger for synchronized remote firing of a flash positioned some distance from the camera

Repetition of pattern A repeating pattern of people or objects draws attention to them. When one element is slightly different than the others, the visual impact is increased and an effective center of visual interest is created.

Resample image Selection box in the Photoshop Image Size controls that determines whether pixels will be added or removed from images when image size and resolution adjustments are made

Resolution In digital imaging, refers to the number of pixels or dots that make up an image; an image's resolution must be high enough to reproduce well on the printed page

RGB Acronym for red, green and blue, the three colors used in video display, for example, on your computer monitor, and the standard method digital cameras use to record and display colors

Rule of thirds In this rule of composition, a scene in a viewfinder or in an image is divided into thirds vertically and horizontally (like a tic-tac-toe board) so that the focal point falls at one of the intersections. This puts the center of visual interest slightly off center, making the image seem more dynamic

Screen composition The application of the principles of composition when the image is processed using computer software

Selective focus Create visual emphasis by making the background or foreground sharper

Shadow An area of a photo that is very dark or almost black in tone

Shutter The camera opening that allows light to enter and capture it in the format of an image on an electronic sensor

Shutter lag Delay in some digital cameras between the time the shutter is pressed and image exposure

SLR A single lens reflex digital camera, usually with interchangeable lenses, that allows for viewfinder viewing directly through the lens; most digital SLR cameras also feature larger image sensors and advanced exposure control features that make them a good choice for yearbook photography

Staged photos Photos where the photographer poses the subjects rather than capturing images as an event takes place

Subject-background contrast Emphasize storytelling elements by placing them in front of a contrasting background. Try shifting camera position or angle, or wait for the subject to move in front of a different background.

Sync The timing between the electronic flash and the camera shutter release that coordinates flash illumination of the subject with exposure

Sync cord A cord that connects the flash to the camera and allows for flexible, off-camera positioning and aiming of the flash unit

Telephoto A lens or zoom lens setting that yields a longer focal length and narrow field of view; distant objects appear closer through a telephoto lens

Tonal range Range of tones in an image from light to dark and the contrast they provide

Tungsten white balance Digital camera white balance setting used where tungsten is the primary light source, such as a stage event

White Balance A camera control that allows for the adjustment of the color temperature of a scene so that there will not be a color shift in white objects

White point An area of an image that should be white

Wide-angle A lens or zoom lens setting for a shorter focal length that provides a wider angle of view and increased depth of field

Worm's Eye View Take your viewer in close to a scene or object by taking a photo at ground level

Zoom A single lens adjustable to multiple focal lengths; some zoom lenses also incorporate a macro setting for close-up photography