

TIMELY TIPS

Photography

Understanding White Balance

OBJECTIVE

Students will learn how different light sources affect the color in photos and how to adjust white balance to make their images look more natural.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Cameras (DSLR, mirrorless or phone camera with manual white balance control)
- Access to a photo editing app (Lightroom, Photopea, Photoshop)
- [White Balance Tips Chart](#)
- [Motor Oil Lighting Photo](#)

PART 1

INTRODUCTION (5-10 MINUTES)

Show students the motor oil lighting photo that uses different white balance settings.

Ask the class:

- Which photo feels warmer or colder?
- What's different about the lighting?
- Which one feels most natural?

PART 2

TEACH (10-15 MINUTES)

Explain why we use different white balance settings and how each affects color.

Kelvin is a scale that measures how “warm” or “cool” light is — low numbers are orange and cozy, high numbers are blue and cool. Print or share the [White Balance Tips Chart](#) for each staffer to keep with them in their photography bag.

PART 3

ACTIVITY (25-30 MINUTES)

Break into small groups where each group has at least one camera.

Each group will photograph the same object or subject under different light sources:

- Classroom
- Window Light
- Outdoors
- Gym Light

For each location, switch between several white balance modes (Auto, Cloudy, Shade, etc.)

PART 4

REFLECTION (5-10 MINUTES)

Have students compare photos and discuss.

- Which looks most natural?
- Which do you like best for each lighting type?
- What surprised you most about how light color affects a photo?