

TIMELY TIPS

Photography

Using Photo Composition to Create Stronger Yearbook Photos

OBJECTIVE

Students will practice using simple photo composition techniques to create more interesting, storytelling-focused yearbook photographs.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- DSLR cameras and/or smartphones
- Access to a classroom, hallway or outdoor space
- Paper and pencil (optional)
- Sample yearbook or school photos (optional)

PART 1

QUICK PHOTO CHALLENGE

Without discussing photography techniques yet, ask students:

What makes a photo interesting?

Have students individually write down:

- Three things they think make a photo stand out
- One photography skill they believe they do well
- One photography skill they would like to improve on

After students respond, have them briefly share answers with a partner or small group and pose this question:

If you could only keep one photo from your camera roll or photo gallery, what would make you choose it?

Guide students to notice that many memorable photos use intentional composition, even if they do not realize it.

PART 2

LEARN THE TECHNIQUES

Review the following techniques as a class:

TERM	DEFINITION
Rule of Thirds	Placing the main subject off-center instead of directly in the middle of the frame.
Fill the Frame	Move closer and eliminate unnecessary background distractions from the shot.
Leading Lines	Use lines from sidewalks, hallways, desks, bleachers or other objects to guide the viewer's eye to the subject.

LESSON PLAN CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

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PART 3

PHOTO COMPOSITION CHALLENGE

Work individually, with a partner or in small groups based on available equipment.

Challenge students to capture:

- One Rule of Thirds photo
- One Fill the Frame photo
- One Leading Lines photo

Students may photograph classmates, school objects or everyday classroom activities.

Review

Once students finish shooting, have them choose their strongest image. For each selected photo, students should be prepared to answer:

- What technique did you use?
- Why did you choose that composition?
- What makes the photo more interesting than a standard snapshot?

PART 4

CLOSURE

Have students identify their favorite photo from the activity and have students complete the statement:

"I improved this photo by using _____ because it helped viewers notice _____."

RELEVANT RESOURCES

Use these resources to continue your classroom preparation focusing on photo composition and the fundamentals of shooting effective yearbook photography.

- **The First 60 Days** – Use this structured plan to map out your photography lesson plans, along with other topics that suit your needs.
- **Yearbook Suite Curriculum: "Photojournalism: Telling Stories with Images"** – Help students move beyond snapshots by learning how composition, timing and storytelling work together to create meaningful yearbook photography using this comprehensive unit plan.
- **Photojournalism Ethics Lesson Plan** – Introduce students to the ethical responsibilities of yearbook photographers, including truthful image representation, ethical editing practices and responsible use of emerging technology.
- **Photo Editing Fundamentals Lesson Plan** – Teach students how to strengthen their images through cropping, color correction and other basic editing techniques while maintaining the integrity of the original photograph.