



FIVE DAYS TO BETTER PHOTOGRAPHY

LESSON PLAN

To learn more about photography, your students need to study photos – lots and lots of photos. They also need to take lots and lots of photos.

These five days' worth of lessons will give your students practice in improving their photography, for themselves and for their yearbook, while working on their skills of critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity.

Lesson One: Know Your Camera

- **Objective:** Help students learn how to use the manual controls of a camera so they can make adjustments to get the best images.
- **Activity:** Photo Scavenger Hunt

Lesson Two: What Makes a Good Photo?

- **Objective:** Help students learn about some of the rules that good photos follow.
- **Activity:** Follow the Rules

Lesson Three: What Have You Done?

- **Objective:** Get students to practice taking photos to improve their photo skills and learn more about photography by critiquing their photos.
- **Activity:** Take Two

Lesson Four: Taking a Closer Look

- **Objective:** Have students practice taking photos to improve their photo skills, and learn more about photography by critiquing their photos.
- **Activity:** Take Three

Lesson Five: Selecting The Best Image

- **Objective:** Have students practice taking photos to improve their photo skills and learn more about photography by critiquing their photos, with the goal of getting a photo good enough for publishing in the yearbook and submitting to the Walsworth Photo Contest.
- **Activity:** Using your Photo

LESSON 1

KNOW YOUR CAMERA

Your camera is a tool, and you will get the most from it if you learn how to use it properly.

First, learn to keep it steady. Use your left hand to provide firm support under the camera body and the lens while you tuck your elbows close to your body. This position will help keep the camera still as you take a photo.

Next, review the manual that came with the camera or find it online. Look for the items listed here and find the controls related to them so you can practice using them when you take photos for your first assignment.

- **Image size** – This setting determines the number of pixels that will be in the image. The higher the pixel count of an image, the sharper it will be and the larger it can be, printed or displayed, without becoming distorted.
- **Image quality** – Use the highest image quality setting possible when taking images to use in the yearbook.
- **Focusing** – Most digital cameras have auto focus. In some situations, such as low light, the automatic focus is too slow or not accurate. Switch to manual focus for quicker focusing and sharper images.
- **Camera light meter** – The meter works to provide the proper exposure for your image. It measures the light reflected off a subject and either sets the camera controls or indicates the control settings to accurately capture the image. If you can learn to read and understand your light meter, you'll make great strides in being in control of the images you're capturing for your yearbook.
- **Aperture** – This adjustable opening in the lens determines how much light enters the camera and hits the digital sensor, affecting exposure and overall image quality. It is represented by f-stop numbers. The smaller f-stop numbers (f/2, f/5.6) represent larger openings and less depth of field, while larger f-stop numbers (f/16, f/22) mean more depth of field. By selecting a small aperture, several areas of the image will have equal sharpness. With a larger aperture opening, the main subject will be sharper than other elements in the photo and will gain emphasis.
- **Shutter** – Like aperture, the shutter determines how long light is allowed to record on the sensor. Shutter speed numbers are whole numbers that represent fractions of a second, for example, shutter speeds of 60 and 125 mean the shutter will stay open 1/60th and 1/125th of a second. Dramatic sports photos that freeze the action of competition are made with faster shutter speeds. When slower shutter speeds are used to shoot moving subjects, the image blurs. The faster the subject moves, the faster the shutter speed required to stop the action.
- **Shutter lag** – The delay between pressing the shutter button and when the image is taken – is the time your camera is taking to capture the image, download it to memory, and prepare for the next photo to be taken. The more assignments you shoot, the more practiced you'll be at capturing the decisive moment, which will help you not miss the shot due to shutter lag.

LESSON 1

KNOW YOUR CAMERA

ACTIVITY: PHOTO SCAVENGER HUNT

Before the next class period, either alone or in pairs, work with the digital camera you will be using for yearbook assignments. Take the images below. Use two different settings for each photo, and write down what the settings were to help you learn the best settings for certain images. Upload your photos and share in class.

Photo/Prompt		Photo 1	Photo 2
Yourself	ISO:		
	fStop		
	Shutter speed:		
Two people that showcases a friendship	ISO:		
	fStop		
	Shutter speed:		
One person with a visual clue as to their hobby	ISO:		
	fStop		
	Shutter speed:		
A group of four people that showcases interaction	ISO:		
	fStop		
	Shutter speed:		
Tree bark showing detail	ISO:		
	fStop		
	Shutter speed:		
A white wall in direct sunlight	ISO:		
	fStop		
	Shutter speed:		
Brightly colored carpet or green grass with an object	ISO:		
	fStop		
	Shutter speed:		
Black asphalt with white lines	ISO:		
	fStop		
	Shutter speed:		
The front door of your home or school	ISO:		
	fStop		
	Shutter speed:		
An unusual angle on an automobile	ISO:		
	fStop		
	Shutter speed:		
The inside of your house or bedroom	ISO:		
	fStop		
	Shutter speed:		
An image showing the weather	ISO:		
	fStop		
	Shutter speed:		
A photo in your gym	ISO:		
	fStop		
	Shutter speed:		

LESSON 2

WHAT MAKES A GOOD PHOTO?

LESSON 2

WHAT MAKES A GOOD PHOTO?

Good images follow certain rules. Once you know these rules, your photos will improve. When you practice them over and over, your photos can become great.

As we look at your photos from the scavenger hunt, we will look to see whether any of these rules appear or how these photos could be improved by following these rules. We also will examine whether lighting, aperture or shutter speed were set correctly.

- **Angle** – Vantage point/point of view from which a photo was taken, such as eye level, overhead or ground level
- **Candid** – An un-posed photo, great for showing emotion as well as relationship between two or more people
- **Contrast** – Difference in brightness between the light and dark portions of an image
- **Depth of field** – Points nearest and farthest from the camera that are exceptionally sharp, or the range of things in the scene, from front to back, that remain sharp, creating a sense of depth
- **Emotion** – Highlighting how the subject or subjects in the photo feel, or what they are feeling
- **Filled frame** – Subject occupies entire frame, accomplished by either moving closer or using the zoom. Note that most digital cameras come with a digital zoom, which only simulates the zoom function and does not give you the highest-quality images. Check to see if your camera has an optical zoom, which is like a real zoom lens.
- **Framing** – The center of interest is viewed through something, usually naturally occurring such as other objects or people that are in the foreground and slightly out of focus
- **Leading lines** – Lines, such as a pointing arm, stair railing or fence, which lead the eye directly to the main subject or center of interest
- **Repetition** – Lines or shapes that reoccur, creating a pattern in an image
- **Rule of third** – A scene in the viewfinder or an image divided into thirds vertically and horizontally, like a tic-tac-toe board, so the focal point falls at one of the intersections, putting the center of interest slightly off center, making the image seem more dynamic
- **Selective focus** – Visual emphasis created by using depth of field to make the background or foreground sharper or more in focus

LESSON 2

WHAT MAKES A GOOD PHOTO?

ACTIVITY: FOLLOW THE RULES

Before the next class period, pick three photo rules and shoot photos demonstrating those effects. Upload your five best photos and share in class. Select photos to take based on these categories:

- **Sports Action** – Capture athletes in action and the spirit of competition.
- **Student Life** – Show students as they really are - who that person is, what they do and why.
- **Academics/Community Service** – Show learning in progress or people making a difference by giving back to the community.
- **Club or Organization** – Clubs and organizations allow groups to shape each individual. Show how they do it.
- **Feature/Portrait** – Discover who a person is by showing what they are feeling or a bit of their personality by using the face and emotion as the focus.
- **School Spirit** – We want to see the meaning of school pride displayed on the sidelines, in the stands, at practice – by anyone not competing in an athletic event.

LESSON 3

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

Today we will look at the five photos of each student and consider the rules of photography the student tried to use. To critique each photo, ask:

1. Does the photo use the rule successfully?
2. Describe what is good about the photo.
3. Describe the ways in which the photo could be improved.
4. Help the photographer pick three of the photos to go back and reshoot, keeping in mind the improvements suggested in the discussion.

ACTIVITY: TAKE TWO

Before the next class period, reshoot three of the photos as determined by the teacher and class, keeping in mind the improvements suggested in the discussion. Experiment while taking the photos. Bring back the original and two improved photos of the original three.

LESSON 4

TAKING A CLOSER LOOK

LESSON 4 TAKING A CLOSER LOOK

Today we will look at the photos of each student and consider the rules of photography the student tried to use. To critique each photo, ask:

1. Has the original photo been improved? How?
2. Which of the two new photos is better? Why?
3. Describe the ways in which the photo could be improved.
4. Help the photographer pick one of the photos to go back and reshoot, keeping in mind the improvements suggested in the discussion.

ACTIVITY: TAKE THREE

Before the next class period, reshoot one of the photos as determined by the teacher and class, keeping in mind the improvements suggested in the discussion. Experiment while taking the photos. Bring back the original, the best of the second set and your best one.

LESSON 5

SELECTING THE BEST IMAGE

LESSON 5 SELECTING THE BEST IMAGE

Today we will look at everyone's three photos, asking these questions:

1. How has each photo improved over the last one?
2. How has each photo followed the photography rules they were aiming for?
3. Is the final photo good enough to use in the yearbook and enter into the Walsworth Photo Contest?

ACTIVITY: USING YOUR PHOTO

Go to **walsworthyearbooks.com/photocontest** to enter up to five of your best photos. Also, file your photo in the appropriate place for use in the yearbook.