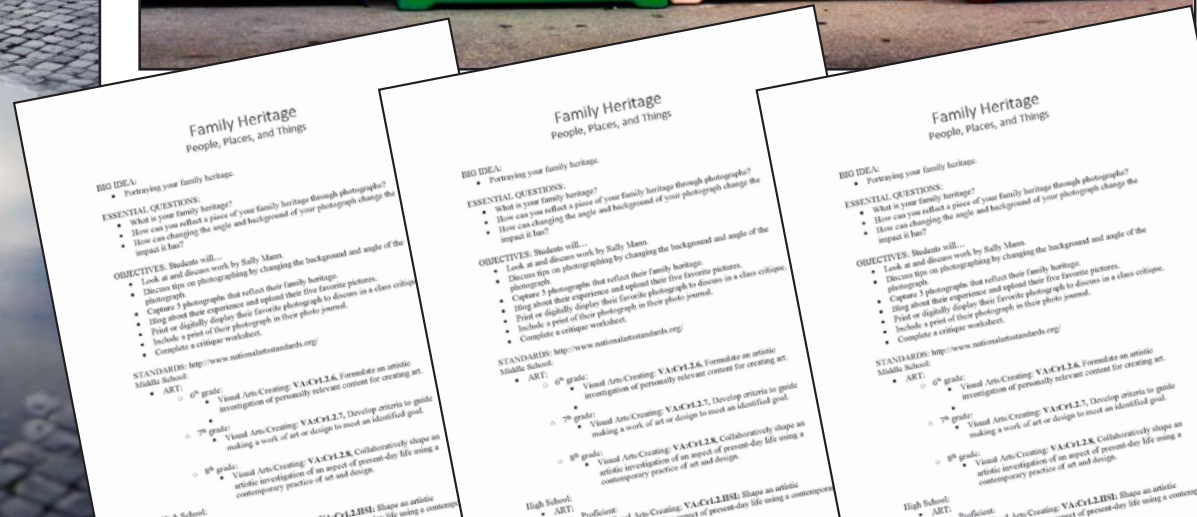


# INTRO TO DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY

## COMPOSITION & ELEMENTS OF PHOTO



# ELEMENTS OF PHOTOGRAPHY & RULES OF COMPOSITION: 2 PROJECTS

## INTRODUCTION TO PHOTOGRAPHY

### Elements of Photography & Rules of Composition

#### BIG IDEA:

- Elements of photography and rules of composition

#### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- What is the difference between taking and making a photograph?
- How can the elements of photography elevate your photograph?
- How can the rules of composition create a more successful photograph?

#### OBJECTIVES: Students will...

- Learn about and discuss the elements that help create a successful photograph.
- Participate in a photo scavenger hunt seeking out elements of photography.
- Learn about and discuss the rules of composition.
- Look at artwork by artist exemplar, Ciro Totku.
- Participate in a photo scavenger hunt seeking out the rules of composition.
- OPTIONAL: Participate in a "teacher's choice" critique of some of their successful photographs from the scavenger hunt.

STANDARDS: <http://www.nationalartsstandards.org/>  
Middle School:

#### High School:

- ART:
  - Proficient:
    - Visual Arts/Creating: VA:Cr1.1.HSI, Use multiple media to begin creative endeavors.
    - Visual Arts/Responding: VA:Re8.1.HSI, Interpret and analyze a collection of works, supported by relevant and sufficient evidence found in the work and its various contexts.

#### SUPPLIES:

- Computer and projector for presentation
- Printed worksheets
- Pencils and pens
- iPads for each student or pair students up (optional)
- If iPads are unavailable, have students use their phones to take pictures
- If phones and iPads are not an option, have students bring their own or provide DSLR cameras. Students will set their cameras to auto mode for scavenger hunts.

- Shape: Used in photographs to create pattern, repetition, unity, and variety. Distinguishing shapes are shapes that are isolated and as a result, emphasized. Overlapping shapes creates repetition and a sense of unity in the photograph.
- Contrast: The arrangement of opposite elements (light vs. dark colors, rough vs. smooth textures, large vs. small shapes, etc.) in a piece so as to create visual interest, excitement and drama.
- Emphasis: Used to help bring your eye to the focal point. Emphasis can be created through positioning, focus, depth of field, and framing the subject matter.
- Texture: Used in photography to help different subjects stand out from each other, create unity and variety and add interest.
- Space: Used in photography to create a sense of depth, frame the subject matter, and help define the focal point.
- Elements of art: The building blocks of a work of art. The visual components of color, form, line, shape, space, texture, and value.

- Viewpoint: The angle at which the photograph is taken, taking into consideration the best way to portray the subject matter.
- Inclusion and exclusion: Determining what are and aren't important parts of the photograph either through repositioning and reshooting or cropping the image.
- Mergers: Background objects that compete with the main subject matter and confuse the focal point.
- Focal Point: the center of interest or activity.

IMPLEMENTATION: For a 50 minute class, times may vary.

#### DAY 1: Introduction to the Elements of Photography

*This assignment is designed to be used with iPads or smart phones. Adapt as needed for DSLR cameras or similar.*

- Pass out the Elements of Photography notes worksheet. Explain that they should be taking notes as you move through the slides. They will reference these notes when they start on their first assignment.
- Start class by showing the Photography Basics-Elements of Photography presentation.
- Encourage students to participate in a class discussion as you go through the slides.
  - Have them visually compare the taking vs. making examples.
  - Move through the elements of photography slides, take questions as they come up.
  - Encourage students to point out how the elements are shown in the photographs.
  - Explain their assignment, an element of photography scavenger hunt, and go through a few reminders.
- Pass out the iPads or have students get out their phones. If students need to be paired up to work together, break them into groups. Each student still needs to take 11 photos regardless of working in a group.
- Let them leave the classroom and go inside and outside to take pictures. *Remind them to behave themselves while they are outside of the classroom. Before this assignment contact your administrators for approval and notify the other faculty members that students will be working outside of the classroom. Ask them to report any misbehavior and deduct points from their grade if anything is reported.*
- Students have the remainder of class to take pictures.
- 5 minutes before class ends, students need to report back to the classroom to return equipment and pack up to leave.

#### DAY 2: Take and Edit Elements of Photography Pictures

- As soon as students arrive in class, hand out the supplies and let them start photographing the elements of photography.

- Once they are finished taking their pictures they can do some basic edits using iPads or their phones, cropping, etc. The purpose of this assignment is not learning how to edit a photograph, but how to create a successful photograph.
- They need to upload their pictures to a computer, select their final 11 pictures, rename the pictures with the element it is meant to reflect, and save all the pictures in a folder titled Your Name-Elements Scavenger Hunt. *Submission options will vary. Ideally, have students drop their completed folders into a shared drive on your school's network. Or have students save them on a thumb drive to turn into you. Upload their pictures to your computer for grading, return their thumb drive to use on the next assignment. Or have students upload their photographs to a website such as Flickr. They can create a private profile used only for this class, or you can create a class profile and grant all students access to it.*

#### DAY 3: Introduction to the Rules of Composition

*This assignment is designed to be used with iPads or smart phones. Adapt as needed for DSLR cameras or similar.*

- Pass out the Rules of Composition notes worksheet. Explain that they should be taking notes as you move through the slides. They will reference these notes when they start on their next assignment.
- Start class by showing the Rules of Composition presentation.
- Encourage students to participate in a class discussion as you go through the slides.
  - Have them visually compare the taking vs. making examples.
  - Move through the rules of composition slides, take questions as they come up.
  - Encourage students to point out how the compositions are set up in the pictures. As a review, have them point out the elements that are used in the photos as well.
  - Before starting their assignment, they will look at artwork by Ciro Totku. They can use their iPads or computers to check out the Pinterest board of images and visit a website with his portfolio.
  - Explain their assignment, a rules of composition scavenger hunt, and go through a few reminders. Once they finish their artist research sheet they can start their scavenger hunt.
- Pass out the research worksheets and iPads, or have students get out their phones. Have them complete the artist worksheet and turn it into you for a participation grade.
- Once they finish, send them out to take pictures. If students need to be paired up to work together, break them into groups. Each student still needs to take 7 photos regardless of working in a group.
- Let them leave the classroom and go inside and outside to take pictures. *Remind them to behave themselves while they are outside of the classroom. Before this assignment contact your administrators for approval and notify the other faculty members that students will be working outside of the classroom. Ask them to report any misbehavior and deduct points from their grade if anything is reported.*

#### DAY 4-5: Take and Edit Rules of Composition Photographs

- As soon as students arrive in class, hand out the supplies and let them continue to photograph the rules of composition.
- Remind the students they must behave themselves, or their grades will suffer.
- Once they are finished taking their pictures they can do some basic edits using the iPads or their phones, cropping, etc. The purpose of this assignment is not learning how to edit a photograph, but how to create a successful photograph in step 1.
- They need to upload their pictures to a computer, select their final 7 pictures, rename the pictures with the rule of composition it is meant to reflect, and save all their pictures in a folder titled Your Name-Rules of Composition. *Submission options will vary. Ideally, have students drop their completed folders into a shared drive on your school's network. Or have students save them on a thumb drive to turn into you. Upload their pictures to your computer for grading, and return their thumb drive to use on the next assignment. Or have students upload their photographs to a website such as Flickr. They can create a private profile used only for this class, or you can create a class profile and grant all students access to it.*

OPTIONAL: Once students have submitted their pictures, select the best 1-2 that reflect each element and rule of composition. Go through those as a group and discuss why they were successful.

# LESSON PLAN:

BIG IDEA, ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS, US NATIONAL STANDARDS, STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS

**PHOTOGRAPHY BASICS**

What makes up a photograph?

- What elevates a photographer from the millions of people taking snapshots and uploading them to social media?
- TAKING vs. MAKING
- As a photographer, you must pay attention to what is making up your photograph.
- Which elements are coming together to create a photograph?

**TAKING:**

- Snapshots
- Recording a moment, not a lot of thought

**MAKING**

- Artistic and conscious control over the process.
- Paying attention to what you will capture in your photograph.

**Seeing Photography:**

- Photography isn't just about the main subject of the picture. You must also consider:
  - What are the supporting players to the focal point?
  - Are those supporting players helping or distracting?

**Elements of Composition:**

- Line
- Color
- Shape
- Contrast
- Emphasis

**LINE CAN BE USED...**

- ... to lead your eye towards the focal point.

**LINE CAN BE USED...**

- ... to create pattern and shapes.

**COLOR CAN BE USED...**

- ... to create interest.

**COLOR CAN BE USED...**

- ... to create emphasis.

**SHAPE CAN BE USED...**

- ... to create pattern.

**SHAPE CAN BE USED...**

- Shapes that are isolated and as a result, emphasized.

**DISTINGUISHING SHAPES:**

- Creates repetition and a sense of unity in the photograph.

**OVERLAPPING SHAPES:**

**CONTRAST CAN BE USED...**

- ... to emphasize the focal point.

**CONTRAST CAN BE USED...**

- ... to help different textures stand out from each other.

**CONTRAST CAN BE USED...**

- ... in your lighting.

**CONTRAST CAN BE USED...**

**EMPHASIS CAN BE USED...**

**EMPHASIS CAN BE CREATED...**

**EMPHASIS CAN BE USED...**

- ... to emphasize value.

**EMPHASIS CAN BE USED...**

**TEXTURE CAN BE USED...**

**TEXTURE CAN BE USED...**

- ... to emphasize value.

**Your assignment:**

- You will go on a photography scavenger hunt!
- You are tasked with taking photographs that represent the different elements of photography.
- You will take 11 photos in total.
- You must title your photographs with the element it represents then save your pictures to a folder titled: Your Name

**Don't forget:**

- The element you are photographing should be the highlight of the picture.
- You aren't just TAKING a picture you are MAKING it.
- You set the stage for the best possible picture. Add elements, take things away, get on the ground, go up high, think about the framing.
- You don't want to rely on editing to improve your pictures, you want your pictures to be good on their own.

# PRESENTATION:

ELEMENTS OF PHOTOGRAPHY EXAMPLES, REQUIREMENTS, & GRADING DETAILS

# ELEMENTS OF PHOTOGRAPHY

TAKING VS. MAKING:

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ELEMENTS OF COMPOSITION:

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LINE:

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COLOR:

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SHAPE:

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CONTRAST:

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EMPHASIS:

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TEXTURE:

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## ELEMENTS SCAVENGER HUNT

You will use your phone to capture your photographs today. Once you have captured your photographs, you will upload them to your computer. Title each photograph with the element it is meant to capture. Save the 11 photographs in a folder titled: **Your Name-Elements Scavenger Hunt**

Your focus is the elements of photography. You will have 11 photographs in total to take, each photograph should highlight the element you have assigned to it.

1. Line: You choose how line is incorporated.
2. Line to create movement.
3. Color: You choose how color is incorporated
4. Shape: one example of distinguishing shapes
5. Shape: one example of overlapping shapes
6. Contrast, pick one:
  - a. Contrast through size.
  - b. Contrast through lighting.
7. Contrast, pick one:
  - a. Contrast through texture.
  - b. Contrast through color.
8. Emphasis: Pick two to reflect in two different photographs:
  - a. Emphasis through positioning.
  - b. Emphasis through framing.
  - c. Emphasis through focus.
9. Texture: You choose how texture is incorporated.
10. Space: You choose how space is incorporated.

## ELEMENTS SCAVENGER HUNT

You will use your phone to capture your photographs today. Once you have captured your photographs, you will upload them to your computer. Title each photograph with the element it is meant to capture. Save the 11 photographs in a folder titled: **Your Name-Elements Scavenger Hunt**

# HANDOUTS:

## NOTES SHEET, SCAVENGER HUNT HANDOUT

# COMPOSITION

Rules of Composition

## RULES OF COMPOSITION:

- Rule of thirds
- Balancing elements
- Leading lines
- Viewpoint
- Inclusion and Exclusion

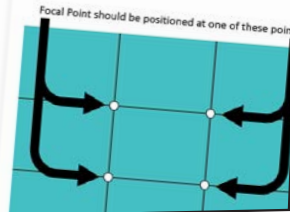


## What is composition?

- The relative arrangement of the elements of photography within the frame of a photograph.
- Composition is what separates TAKING from MAKING.
- When you take a snapshot and post it to social media, composition is one of the things that separates photographers from the rest.

## RULE OF THIRDS:

- Moving the focal point out of the center and into one of the "third" sections of the photograph frame.
- If you've ever used the crop tool on Instagram, this exact diagram pops up over your image. Even social media tools recognize this is a good rule of composition.



## TAKING:

- Snapshots
- Recording a moment, not a preplanned thought.
- Common, everyday

## MAKING

- Artistic and conscious control over the process.
- Pre-visualization:
  - "To visualize an image...to see it clearly in the mind prior to exposure and continuous projection from composing the image through the



## BALANCING ELEMENTS

- Although the rule of thirds creates a more pleasing and interesting image, it runs the risk of creating an unbalanced image.
- Consider the weight of your objects. If one thing feels too heavy, balance it with another element.
- There are two types of balance: formal, or symmetrical, and informal or asymmetrical.
- Asymmetrical balance pairs well with the rule of thirds.



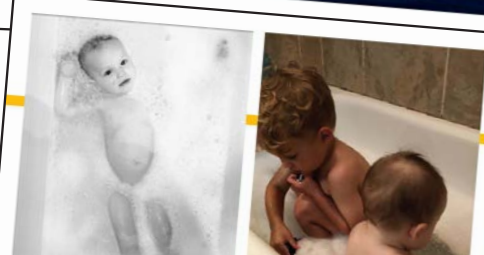
## LEADING LINES

- Our eyes naturally follow lines.
- By strategically placing lines, you can draw the viewer's eye around your photograph.
- You want the viewer to jump to the focal point. Lines move the viewer's eye around the rest of the composition.



## VIEWPOINT

- Consider what the best position is to capture your subject.
- Would it be more interesting to capture it from above?
- What about getting low to the ground?
- Will a straight on shot create more impact?
- How do you want your photograph to come across?



Side Shot vs. Overhead



## VIEWPOINT

- A straight on shot is important in this instance.
- Without a perfectly centered archway, the repetition and depth created by the arches going down the hall.



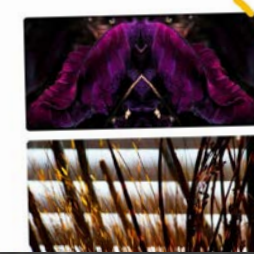
## INCLUSION & EXCLUSION

- What needs to be included to create a successful image?
- Are there elements that would be better cropped out?
- MERGERS are important to avoid.

## Uncropped vs. Cropped



There were too many mergers in the first photograph, so the photographer changed viewpoint, excluded background people, and reshot the image.



## EXPERIMENTATION

- Although there are "rules" of photography, all rules are meant to be bent and broken.
- Don't be afraid to try something new or that goes against the rules.
- The beauty of digital photography is you can take hundreds of pictures and select the best.

## Your assignment...

- Research artist, Ciro Totku, and see if you can identify the rules of composition used in his artwork.
- Complete part 2 of the scavenger hunt, focusing on the rules of composition.
- You will capture 7 photographs. The photographs need to be titled with the rule of composition it reflects and save them in a folder titled: Your Name/Rules of Composition.

# PRESENTATION:

RULES OF COMPOSITION EXAMPLES,  
ASSIGNMENT INFORMATION, GRADING

# RULES OF COMPOSITION

WHAT IS COMPOSITION:

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TAKING VS. MAKING:

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RULES OF COMPOSITION:

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BALANCING ELEMENTS:

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FORMAL BALANCE:

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INFORMAL BALANCE:

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LEADING LINES:

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VIEWPOINT:

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INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION:

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MERGERS:

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## RULES OF COMPOSITION SCAVENGER HUNT

You will each get an iPad to capture your photographs today. Once you have captured your photographs, you will upload them to your computer. Title each photograph with the rule of composition it is meant to capture. Save the 7 photographs in a folder titled: **Your Name-Rules of Composition.**

Your focus is the photography rules of composition. You will have 7 photographs in total to take, each photograph should highlight the rule you have assigned to it.

1. Rule of thirds
2. Balancing elements: Formal (or symmetrical) balance.
3. Balancing elements: Informal (or asymmetrical) balance.
4. Leading lines
5. Viewpoint
6. Inclusion and exclusion: Include one before picture and one after picture. The after picture should reflect a cropped image or repositioning to capture the image.
7. Experimentation: Try something risky and new. Don't be afraid to break some rules.

# HANDOUTS:

## NOTES SHEET, SCAVENGER HUNT HANDOUT

## ELEMENTS OF PHOTOGRAPHY RUBRIC

Line (4): \_\_\_\_\_  
Line to create movement (4): \_\_\_\_\_  
Color (5): \_\_\_\_\_  
Distinguishing shapes (4.5): \_\_\_\_\_  
Overlapping shapes (4.5): \_\_\_\_\_  
Contrast through size or lighting (4.5): \_\_\_\_\_  
Contrast through texture or color (4.5): \_\_\_\_\_  
Emphasis through positioning, framing, or focus (4.5): \_\_\_\_\_  
Emphasis through positioning, framing, or focus (4.5): \_\_\_\_\_  
Texture (5): \_\_\_\_\_  
Space (5): \_\_\_\_\_

Total (out of 50): \_\_\_\_\_

## ELEMENTS OF PHOTOGRAPHY RUBRIC

Line (4): \_\_\_\_\_  
Line to create movement (4): \_\_\_\_\_  
Color (5): \_\_\_\_\_  
Distinguishing shapes (4.5): \_\_\_\_\_  
Overlapping shapes (4.5): \_\_\_\_\_  
Contrast through size or lighting (4.5): \_\_\_\_\_  
Contrast through texture or color (4.5): \_\_\_\_\_  
Emphasis through positioning, framing, or focus (4.5): \_\_\_\_\_  
Emphasis through positioning, framing, or focus (4.5): \_\_\_\_\_  
Texture (5): \_\_\_\_\_  
Space (5): \_\_\_\_\_

Total (out of 50): \_\_\_\_\_

## RULES OF COMPOSITION RUBRIC

Rule of thirds (7): \_\_\_\_\_  
Formal balance (7): \_\_\_\_\_  
Informal balance (7): \_\_\_\_\_  
Leading lines (7): \_\_\_\_\_  
Viewpoint (7): \_\_\_\_\_  
Inclusion and Exclusion (8): \_\_\_\_\_  
Experimental (7): \_\_\_\_\_

Total (out of 50): \_\_\_\_\_

## RULES OF COMPOSITION RUBRIC

Rule of thirds (7): \_\_\_\_\_  
Formal balance (7): \_\_\_\_\_  
Informal balance (7): \_\_\_\_\_  
Leading lines (7): \_\_\_\_\_  
Viewpoint (7): \_\_\_\_\_  
Inclusion and Exclusion (8): \_\_\_\_\_  
Experimental (7): \_\_\_\_\_

Total (out of 50): \_\_\_\_\_

# RUBRICS