Photography Field Guide

Whether you’re shooting with a mobile phone or a DSLR camera, this field guide is intended to be a helpful primer on taking thoughtfully composed, well-lit photos.

Composition Essentials

* The focal point should always be obvious in your photos.
* Get close to your subject; this is one of the most effective ways to eliminate distractions and focus the attention where you want it to be.
* Experiment with different angles, including high and low vantage points, to find new and interesting perspectives.
* Streets, sidewalks, fences, rows of street lights, streams, branches, etc., can act as leading lines.
* To use the rule of thirds, imagine overlaying the lines of a tic-tac-toe board onto an image you’re composing. Position your subject at one of the four intersections of the grid to create a point of interest.
* When composing a photo, look for framing devices in both the foreground and background (like windows, doors, people, etc.).
* Having a brightly colored or saturated foreground against a dull background (or vice versa) can help isolate your subject from its surroundings.
* A photo with a **shallow** **depth of field** has a very narrow focal point while the rest of the image is blurry. Photos with a **deep** **depth of field** are entirely or nearly entirely in focus and clear—neither the foreground nor background are blurry.
* A low f-stop (like f/1.4 or f/2.8) uses a large aperture and results in a **shallow depth of field**.
* A high f-stop (f/22 or similar) uses a small aperture and results in a **deep depth of field.** Mostly everything in the image will appear clear and in focus when using a deep depth of field.
* Combine a larger aperture (f/1.4) and a longer (telephoto) lens for the shallowest depth of field effect. A deeper depth of field is gained by using the widest lens with the smallest aperture (f/22).

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