

COMPOSITION



RULE OF THIRDS

WHAT Divide frame into a “tic-tac-toe” board, placing the subject off-center, at one of the lines.

WHY Adds context.

IMPACT This technique allows the subject to have “something to look at” or “somewhere to go.” Cropping in too close may rob the audience of the subject’s intention.

NOTE Many cameras have a setting that will show the grid in the viewfinder.



WORM'S EYE

WHAT Photo shot from very low angle.

WHY De-emphasize the subject, making them appear smaller or less important or showcase background.

IMPACT Commonly used to showcase an unusual perspective or share a particular viewpoint that isn't often seen.

IDEAS Sports team huddle from below, graduate throwing up hat/confetti, players on field to showcase stadium.



FILL THE FRAME

WHAT The subject takes up most or all of the frame. If the background is visible, it is very simple.

WHY Avoid distractions, making subject matter very obvious.

IMPACT Often used to showcase textured art, action photos in or above water, up-close emotion or facial details, etc.

TIP Don't just use a tight crop to achieve this affect, as it will lower the resolution. Instead, use a zoom lens or simply move physically closer to your subject when shooting.



LEADING LINES

WHAT Leveraging natural lines in a photo

WHY Guides the viewer's attention to something specific

IMPACT This technique is often used to convey distance or motion, or to emphasize the subject matter.

WHERE TO FIND LEADING LINES

Everywhere! School hallways, floor or ceiling tiles, railings, trees, streets, bridges, windows, sunrays, rivers, shorelines, fences, bricks, etc.

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REPETITION

WHAT A pattern of similar subjects or objects in a photo.

WHY Emphasize something or to create an ambience.

IMPACT Sometimes this technique is used most effectively when the pattern is broken by a varied subject.

EXAMPLE The third student from the left is standing a little closer to the camera and the others are a bit out of focus. The repetitive subjects in the background allow her to very clearly (and literally) “stand out” from the rest.



BIRD'S EYE VIEW

WHAT Photo shot from very high angle.

WHY Emphasize the subject, making them appear bigger or more important or showcase environment.

IMPACT Commonly used to showcase an unusual perspective or share a particular viewpoint that isn't often seen.

IDEAS Stadium from above, students working at desk, view of cafeteria from 2nd floor of building, principal overseeing activities, etc.



FRAMING

WHAT Using natural elements to create a frame around the subject.

WHY Emphasize subject, while showcasing scenery or environment. Adds context.

IMPACT Often used to showcase conversation between multiple people or simply highlight subject.

TIP Use this technique in tandem with Selective Focus to further emphasize the framing effect.



SELECTIVE FOCUS

WHAT Use a narrow depth of field to intentionally focus on either the foreground or the background.

WHY Guides the viewer's attention to something specific.

IMPACT This technique is often used to focus on a subject's emotion.

TIP There are exceptions, but typically you want to focus on the subject's eyes. The rest of the photo can usually be inferred, but journalists are storytellers of people!