

MY PLACE PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION FOR SCHOOLS IN SCOTLAND

HOW TO TAKE GREAT PHOTOGRAPHS TEACHER'S RESOURCE

If you can spend some time explaining to the pupils how to take a good photograph, it will pay dividends. Not only will it will **help them with this project**, but, with luck, it will also encourage them to **engage further with their heritage**, and inspire them to **use photography as a fun hobby and useful tool** throughout life.

We've created this resource to give you 10 Top Tips on the basics of photography. It is designed to be used in conjunction with **How to Take a Great Picture - Handout for Pupils**. The following document gives you some background information when running through the handout with the pupils.

Tip 1: Wait for the camera to do its business

One of the most common problems in photography is *camera shake*. Most digital cameras have a slight delay between when the shutter button is pushed and when the camera records the image. Children, keen to look at the picture they have just taken, sometimes move the camera before it has fully processed the shot. Advise them that **good things come to those photographers who wait...**



Tip 2: Hold still

Another cause for camera shake is an unsteady hand.

Make sure that the children **hold the camera firmly** with their left hand (keeping their fingers out of the way of the lens) and with their right hand, hold it between the thumb and two middle fingers, with the right index finger on the shutter button.

If a pupil is left-handed but using a right-handed camera, s/he may need extra help to keep it steady.

Tip 3: Squeeze the shutter button slowly

The shutter button should be pressed slowly. This not only helps prevent camera shake, but also allows the camera to determine the right focus and exposure. Most digital cameras have what is known as the 'half-button'. When the shutter button is half-pushed, it engages the autofocus and exposure meter (which determines how light or dark to make the image) without taking the picture. This useful technique allows a more seasoned photographer to take better photos.

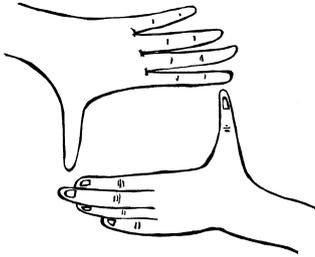
Tip 4: Don't let the sun catch you out

As a general rule, **photographers should try to make sure the sun is behind them when taking a picture.** This ensures that the subject of the picture is adequately lit, which helps the camera make the right decision on the exposure of the image. When a photographer faces the sun, the light meter is fooled into thinking that it is brighter than it really is. It overcompensates for this by making the picture darker than it in fact needs to be. In contrast, **if the light hits the front of the object being photographed, the exposure will be much better.**

Tip 5: Keep on Movin'

Encourage students to **look at the subject from a number of perspectives before taking a picture**. This will ensure the perspective and composition are just right.

If there aren't enough cameras to go around, get pupils to use the fingers-and-thumbs technique, putting them together to form a rectangle ('framing') and then holding them up to examine different views.



Tip 6: Look up! Look Down!

Ask pupils to observe the building at different levels. **Looking up** at a building can create some beautiful images, and so can (if possible) **looking down** on it. Obviously safety is an issue and we don't want to encourage the pupils to clamber into any tricky positions to take their picture.

Tip 8: Have an Eye for Detail

Once students have taken pictures of a whole building, encourage them to begin to **look for details**, and to try taking pictures of some interesting close-up parts of the building. Sometimes these pictures can be even better.

Tip 9: Check it out

Pupils should **check each photo after they have taken it**. They can then decide if there's anything they want to change in their next photo.

Tip 10: Take plenty of pictures

Every good photographer needs perseverance. By taking plenty of photographs, students are increasing their chance of getting one they really like.

Finally...

We hope you and your school group will enjoy taking photos while exploring some of your local heritage. And remember: a great picture doesn't have to be of a great building. Any building at all, whether ancient or modern, neat or ramshackle, can make a great picture.

NB: Legal Stuff

On the whole it's fine to take pictures of buildings, but there are a few legal issues to be careful about. You should always ask permission before taking photographs of the inside of a building, and sometimes of the outside of a building too. Banks and shopping centres, for instance, do not always allow photographs to be taken for security reason. The same goes for some private property. If in doubt, always ask first. More information on rules and regulations can be found here: <http://www.urban75.org/photos/photographers-rights-streets-buildings.html>

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