

# FOCUS: Photography

## TIPS FOR PHOTOGRAPHY

*One general rule that may be all you need: A picture tells a story or evokes an emotion – and, hopefully, both.*

Whether it's a close-up of a child's smiling face, an instructor doing a demonstration for several students, or a team holding up its trophy – the best pictures tell a story and evoke emotion.

If you find yourself saying, "I've got to get a picture of that," then you're looking at something that will almost certainly make a good photo.

There are some specific things to pay attention to in order to maximize the chance of getting good photographs.

### **Size**

Set your camera for a large, high-resolution image. Otherwise, when processed for publication, the picture may be either too small or grainy.

### **Lighting**

Be mindful of strong sunlight or dim interiors, which can cause glare or black areas in your picture. If you can, adjust your camera for light sensitivity. If you can't, open shade without shadows is good lighting. If the camera doesn't have a light sensitivity setting, try using the flash to even out the light and shadows when shooting in strong sunlight. If you must shoot in a dim room, turn on more lights. If no more lighting is available, make sure you are close enough to your subject for the flash to reach. Caution: If the room is very dim and you get too close to your subject, you may still get glare and dark areas.

### **Distance**

Get close enough that your subject(s) fills most of the viewfinder. Avoid "dead space" in a picture.

### **Identify**

Newspapers want names, positions, and towns of residence of people in photos. Identify people from left to right in rows from front to back.

## **Expressions**

People with odd expressions, closed eyes, or turned heads have ruined many an otherwise good photo. If it is a group shot, give them a 1-2-3 or some other signal so they are all alert and looking in the direction you want them to, with the kind of expression you want them to have, when you snap the picture.

## **Action**

Only take a static picture – everyone in a line looking at the camera – if that is what you really need and want. Even with a still camera, you can get good “action” shots. Whether it’s a student working on a project, an instructor assisting students, or even a smiling group holding a trophy they’ve won, an appearance of life and action adds interest and meaning to a picture. Some cameras have a fast enough shutter speed to freeze action or can take multiple shots in quick succession. If yours can’t and the subjects are moving, even slightly, just ask them to “hold that pose” for a moment. Otherwise, your photos will blur.

## **Arrangement and Number**

Try to avoid large crowd shots – unless that is what you want. When published, individuals are not usually distinguishable. If it is a group gathered to have its picture taken, make sure the people stand in compact, clearly delineated rows. Otherwise, it becomes almost impossible to correctly identify them by position in the photo. Individuals or a few people are the easiest shots. There are fewer variables to take into account. The subjects should generally be centered in the picture. Try to get some horizontal and vertical shots for variety.

## **Background**

Use a plain background. Busy backgrounds can be visual clutter.

