



4H PHOTOGRAPHY 2025



CHOOSE YOUR BEST PHOTOS

Be sure to look at each photo with a technical eye. Your favorite may not be the best technically and probably isn't the best choice.

CATEGORIES

You can choose only one category to enter but you are encouraged to enter more if you have taken a lot of good photos.

- **Black and White Print Board (10 photos)**
- **Color Print Board (10 photos)**
- **Black and White Salon Print**
- **Color Salon Print**
- **Creative/Experimental Salon Print**

HOW TO DETERMINE A GOOD PHOTO

There are many elements in photography that come together to make an image be considered “good”. Elements like lighting, the rule of thirds, lines, shapes, texture, patterns, and color all work well together to add interest and a great deal of composition in photographs.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF A GOOD PHOTO

- **Timelessness**
- **It doesn't need to be explained**
- **Tells a story**
- **Attention To Detail**
- **Composition**
- **They create emotion**
- **Creativity**
- **Light**

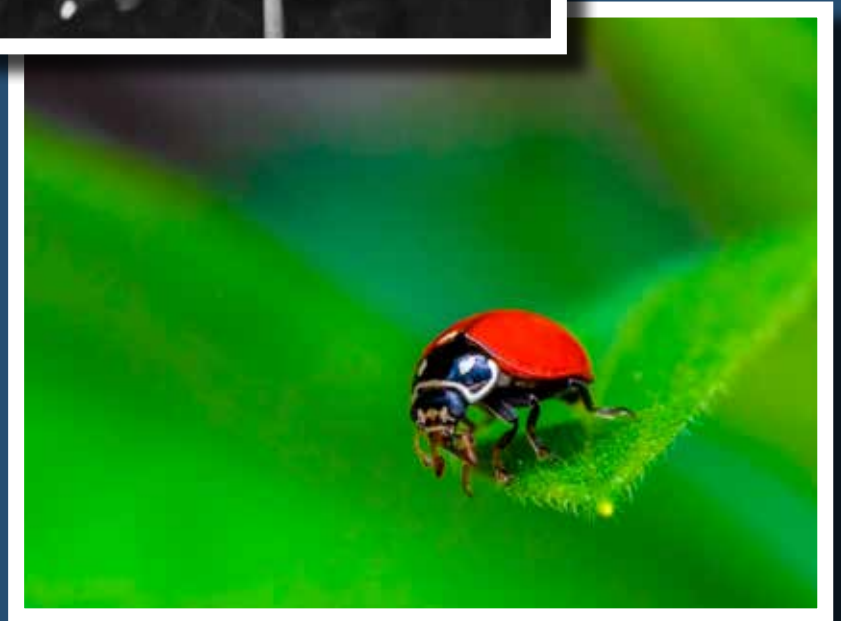
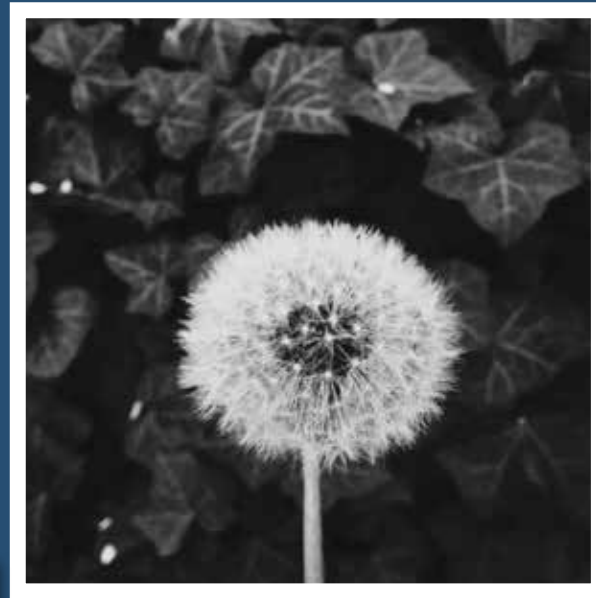
A FOCAL POINT OF INTEREST

A good photograph focuses on at least one subject, makes that subject clear in the photo, and composes the entire image in a way that is visual appealing—usually relying on the rule of thirds.

Here are some examples of no focal point. Though colorful and some contrasting color, there is no point of interest for your eye to land on or draw you in.



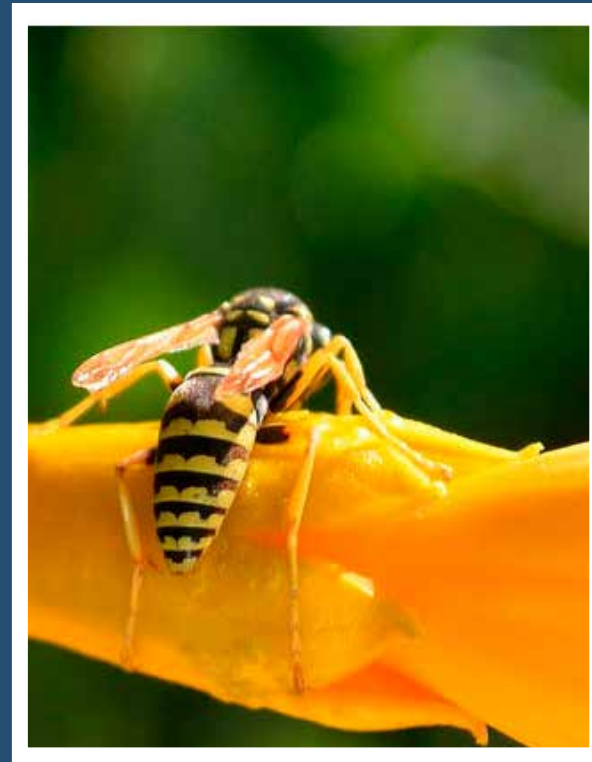
Focus and depth of field (the distance between the nearest and furthest elements in a scene that are sharp) is a great way to set your point of interest apart.

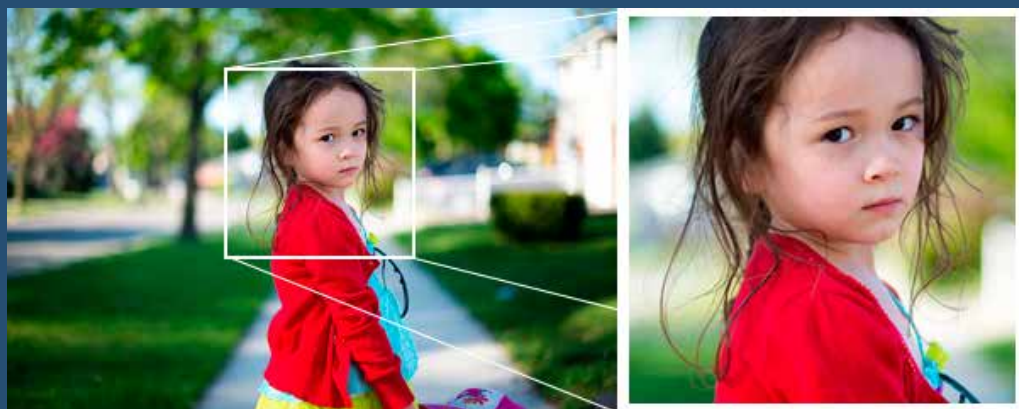


FOCAL POINTS OF INTEREST AND CROPPING

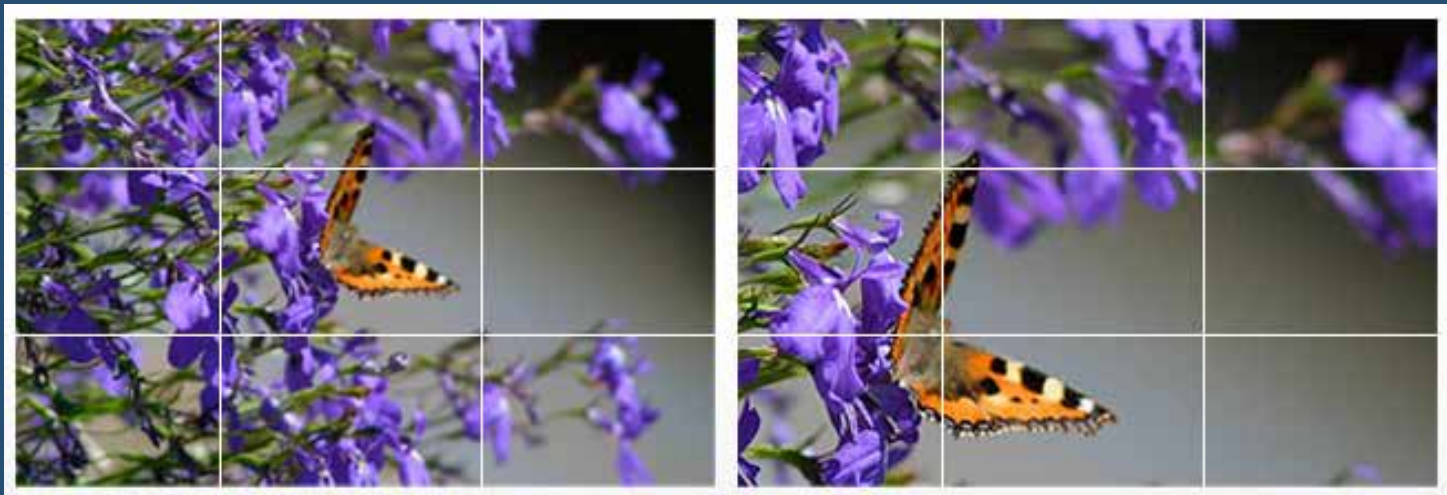
Don't confuse the viewer with too many competing focal points which might overwhelm the main one.

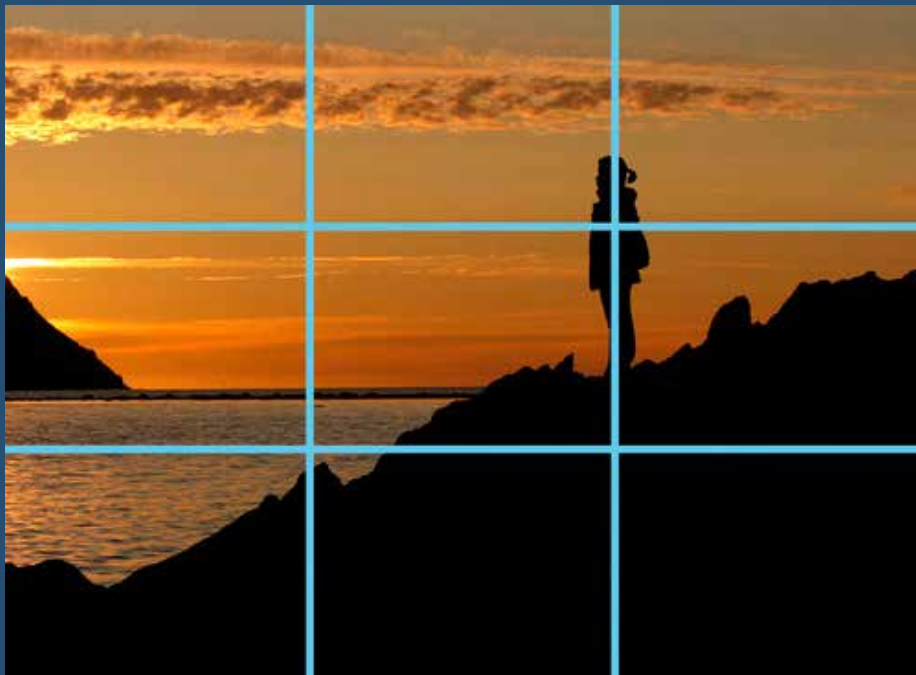
You can crop your original shot if you need to remove clutter.





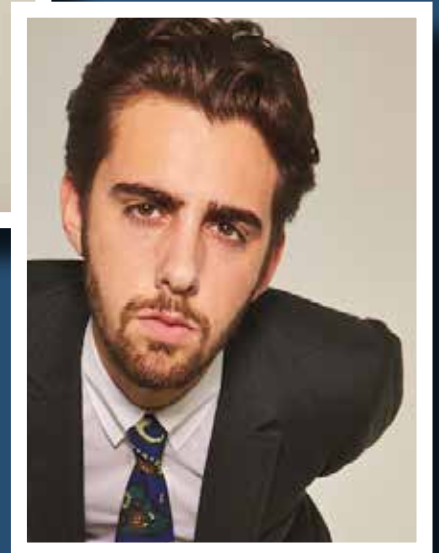
Keep in mind the rule of thirds.





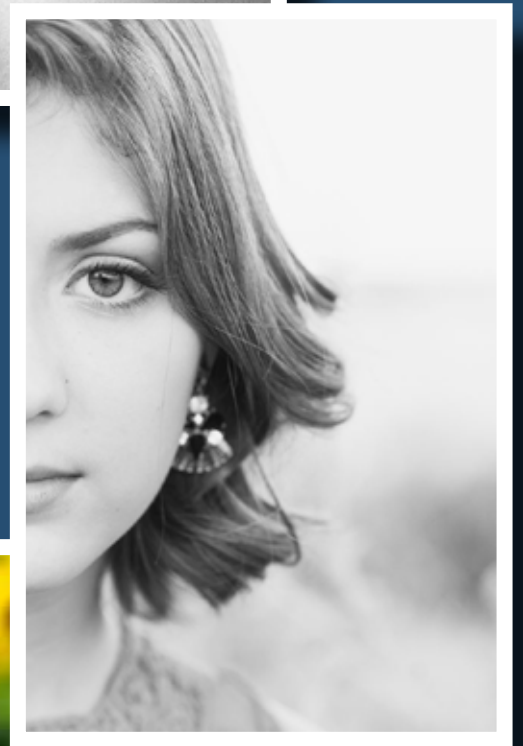
CREATIVE CROPPING

Creative cropping can add fun. Cropping can help to leave out unnecessary details. You don't always have to use the rule of thirds, but make it purposeful. A good rule is don't cut off limbs at the joint, ears at the tips or middle or tops of heads.



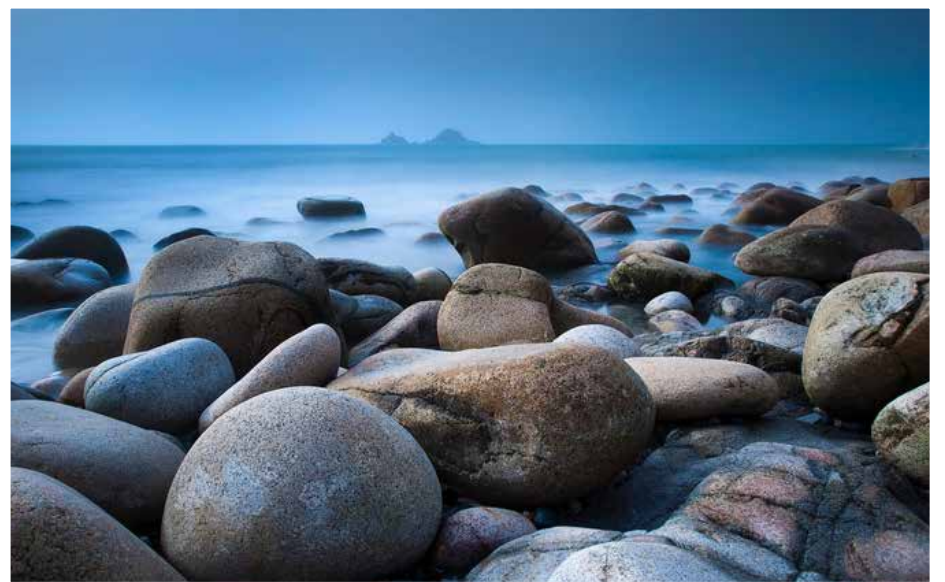






You can achieve a balanced composition and even out the main subject's "visual weight" by including another object of lesser importance to fill the space, if needed.







Remember, if you majorly crop a image, the image will become more pixelated and you will lose quality because you will be blowing it up. The higher resolution of the original shot, the more you can blow it up.





CAMERA GUIDELINES

Megapixel	Recommended Max Print Size (300 DPI)*
2	3 x 5 inches
3	5 x 7 inches
5	8 x 10 inches
6	11 x 14 inches
8	16 x 20 inches
10+	24 x 36 inches

*These are original sizes, not cropped and blown up to these sizes. It is ok to scale down but not up.
If you scale up, your DPI goes down and so does your quality.

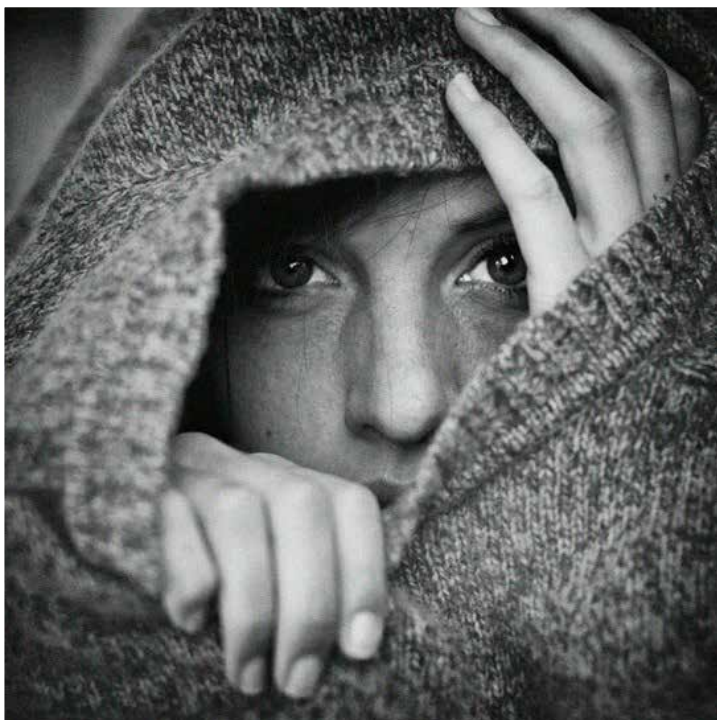
Think about direction when cropping your photos. You want a runner running into the photo. You want a person looking in, not out. The background can also add to the story.





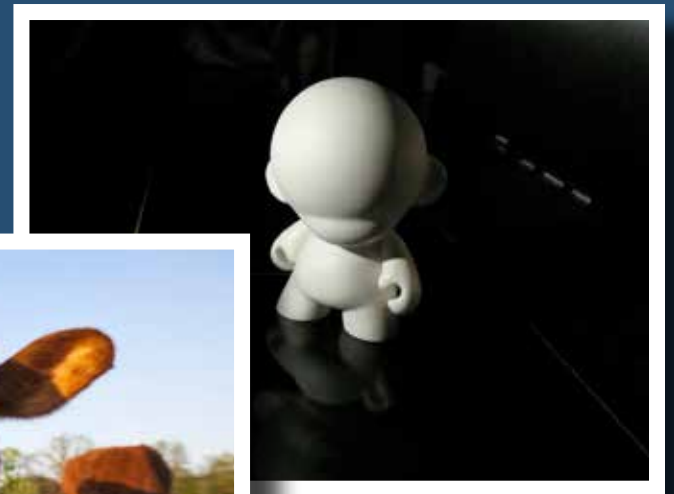
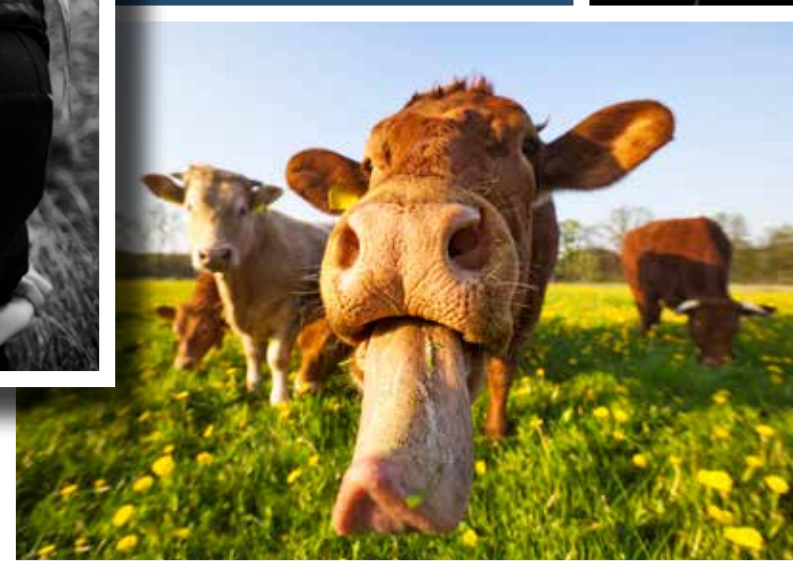
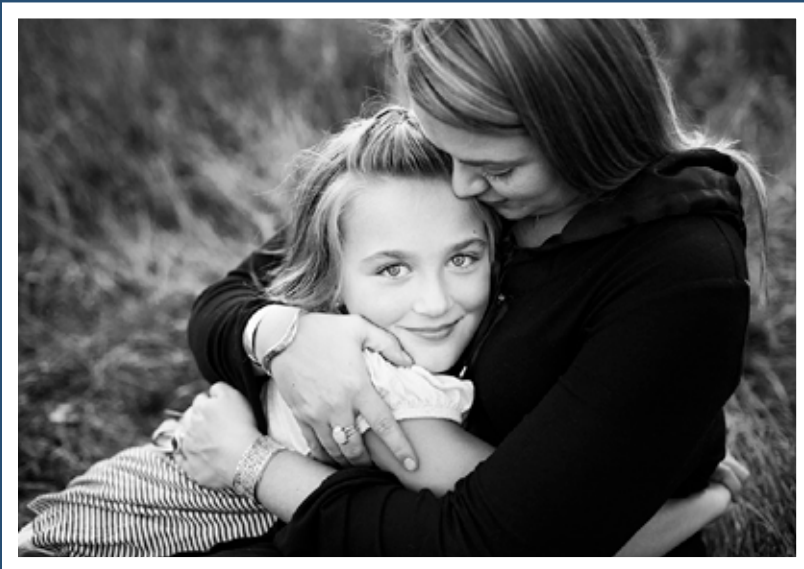
Think about if the background adds or take away from the story. You may be more likely to get a 'wow' if your shots are frame-filling and your subject is spilling over the frame. Again, make sure you are thinking about the rule of thirds.



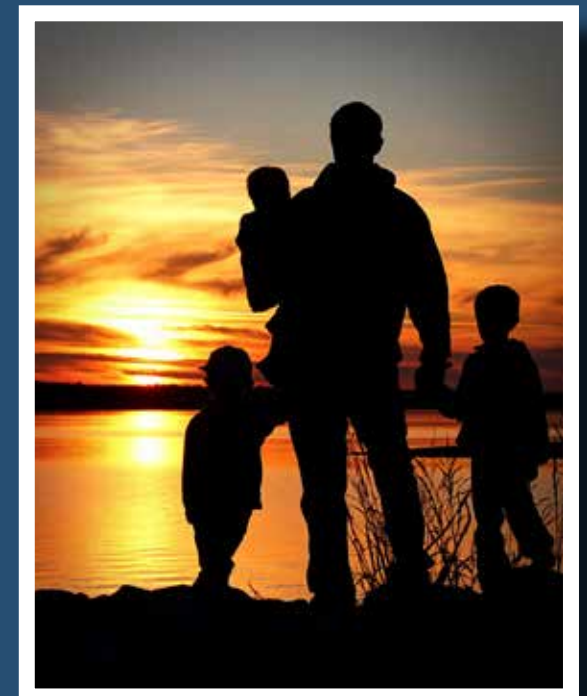
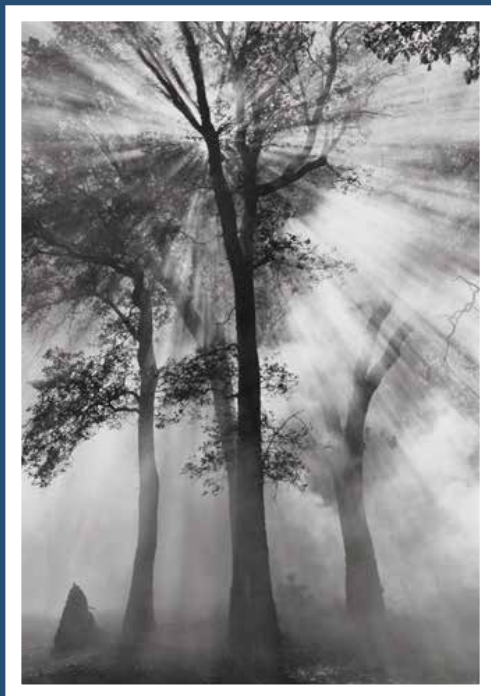


LIGHTING

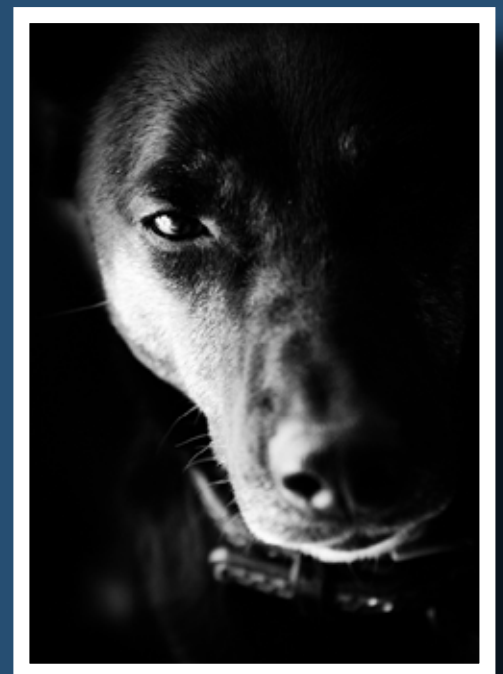
Light is one of the most important elements to consider when taking and choosing photos. Too much light will get you a washed out picture. Too little light will make your photo too dark and has too many shadows. When the light gives up more contrast, your photo will have more detail, shape and texture. Make sure and consider how good the light is when choosing your photos.



If you use back lighting, be sure there is enough light on your subject. In some cases you may want a silhouette.



If you use side lighting, make it purposeful.



EDITING

Editing photos such as cropping, color adjustment, and other enhancements are considered to be part of the normal photography educational learning process and are permissible. So judges can better evaluate a photography exhibit, the 4-H member is asked to attach to the back of their salon or print board exhibit the make and model of camera used and a description of any editing.

A photo that has been modified to change the original intent, meaning or story captured should be entered in the creative or experimental class.



Straighten
Crop
Sharpen
Contrast

If you take a photo in dull light—in shade, for instance, or under a cloudy sky—the photo may look flat, especially in black & white. You can compensate by increasing the contrast in editing software.

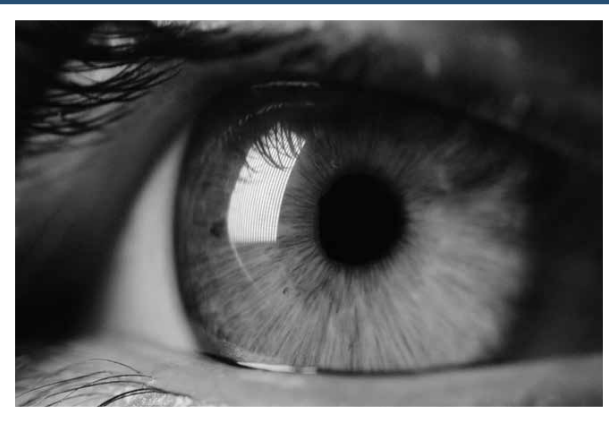
A contrast boost will deepen the shadows, brighten the highlights, and make your main subject pop. Be careful not to blow out the highlights too much or darken the shadows so much you lose all detail.

This is especially helpful if you took the photo in color and are converting to black & white.

You can also give them a boost of sharpening, but don't over-sharpen.



Original



Conversion



Contrast and sharpness edit



Original



Conversion



Contrast and sharpness edit



Original



Cropped



Brighten and sharpen



Original

Crop, brighten, dodge, burn and sharpen





Original

Crop, brighten, sharpen





Original

Crop, brighten, sharpen, contrast



Key Guidelines for AI Use in Photography:

- AI can be used in projects with parental permission.
- AI usage must be documented as a reference. Correctly citing AI as a source is important
- A majority of the work must be the 4-H member's original work.
- Creative/Experimental Category—Replacing any pixels of the original digital image using tools, including AI, places the photo in the Creative/Experimental category.

How AI might be used in 4-H Photography:

- Image Editing and Manipulation—AI tools can be used for tasks like enhancing image quality, removing backgrounds, or adding effects.
- AI can be incorporated to create unique and experimental photographic compositions.

Important Notes

The goal is to encourage creativity and original work while allowing exploration of new technologies like AI.

Judges understand that 4-H members may be new to citing AI and prioritize honesty about where information was learned.

Further information and resources about AI and its use in 4-H projects are available on the Purdue Extension website.

By following these guidelines, Indiana 4-H members can incorporate AI into their photography projects in a responsible and creative manner for entries in the Creative/Experimental category.

State Fair examples



State Fair examples



State Fair overall winner



4-H PHOTOGRAPHY

4-H

Photo Print Board Scorecard

Name (Last, First):

Level/Division/Class:

County:

Club:

Placing: ____ Merit/Honor ____ Blue ____ Red ____ White ____ Participation

Black and White ____ Color ____

EXHIBIT:

____ GREAT EXHIBIT! ____ NICE EXHIBIT ____ NEATLY DONE

LABELS:

____ EXCELLENT ____ GOOD ____ NEEDS TO IMPROVE

____ Must number photo ____ Need space for name label ____ Wrong title for project

PHOTO:

PHOTOS SHOW IMAGINATION: Excellent Good Needs to improve

COLOR OR TONE CONTRAST: Excellent Good Needs to improve

VARIETY OF SUBJECTS: Excellent Good Needs to improve

KNOWLEDGE OF COMPOSITION: Excellent Good Needs to improve

____ Needs to be a vertical/horizontal (circle one)

____ Use "rule-of-thirds" placement of subject or horizon line

____ Shows good composition

(Avoid placing them "dead center")

____ Good use of framing subject

____ Interesting subject!

____ Subject is too close for the camera used

____ Digital Resolution/File Size

____ Closer to subject

____ Avoid bright background/boards

____ Need to use flash to fill in light on subject

____ Watch out for cluttered background

____ Leave space for subject to move in picture

____ Photos should have a definite center of interest.

____ Appears to be out of focus or some camera movement

Ask yourself, "What is this a picture of?"

____ Could improve interest with a different camera angle

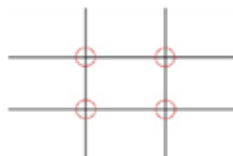
____ Hold camera level – the horizon should be level

BEST PHOTOS: _____

DESIRABLE PHOTOS: _____

OTHER COMMENTS:

Judges Score Cards



4-H PHOTOGRAPHY

4-H 485-W

Salon Print Scorecard

2/22

Name (Last, First):

Level/Division/Class:

County:

Club:

Placing: _____ Merit/Honor _____ Blue _____ Red _____ White _____ Participation

Black and White _____

Color _____

	Excellent	Good	Needs to Improve
1. Storytelling Ability.....(30%) • Clarity of story told • Interest value			
2. Composition.....(30%) • Arrangement of pictorial elements • Eye appeal • Attention-getting value • Strong center of interest			
3. Photographic quality.....(30%) • Pleasing contrast or color • Proper exposure • Proper focus			
4. Photo securely mounted and displayed attractively...(10%) • Matte colors complementary			

COMMENTS:

4-H PHOTOGRAPHY

4-H 483d-W

Creative/Experimental Digital Scorecard

2/22

Name (Last, First):

Level/Division/Class:

County:

Club:

Placing: ____ Merit/Honor ____ Blue ____ Red ____ White ____ Participation

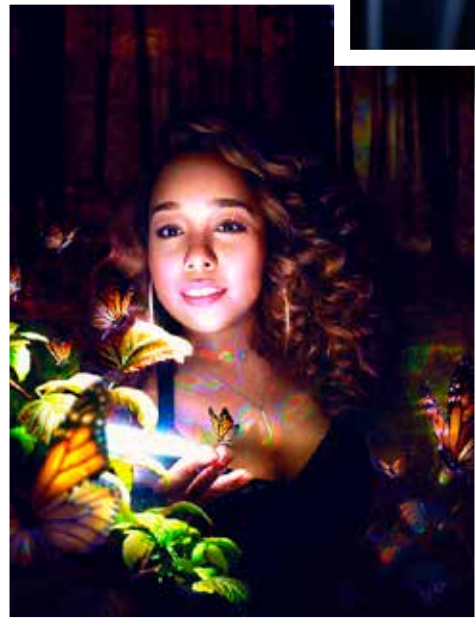
	Excellent	Good	Needs to Improve
1. Photo shows imagination.....(30%)			
2. Photo shows knowledge of composition.....(30%)			
3. Photographic quality.....(30%) • Pleasing contrast or color • Proper exposure • Interesting lighting • Proper paper • Proper focus • Proper resolution setting • Proper file size			
4. Photo securely mounted and displayed attractively.....(5%)			
5. Label neat and complete.....(5%)			
6. Before and After Example			

COMMENTS:

FINAL TIPS

- Make sure your 10 board photos are numbered.
- Make sure you leave at least a 2.5" x 4" space in the lower right corner for the entry label. This label is attached at check-in.
- Make sure your 10 boards have a title.
- Board must be 28" x 22", and horizontal, for the 10 print entries.
- Matting on salon prints are not required, but recommended for a nice presentation. The color should compliment and not compete with your image. Prints can be horizontal or vertical and must be mounted on 16" x 20" board, displayed vertically ONLY.
- Be critically when deciding which of your photos are the best. Ask someone for a second opinion if you cannot decide.
- Keep your project as neat and clean as possible. Presentation can be almost as important as your photos.

- Do not repeat images in different categories. If you used an image in color, DO NOT use the exact same image on a black & white board. Some judges do not like it if the same image is used as a salon and on a 10 board. If you like the subject, use one of your other versions.
- Make sure your photos are securely mounted.
- Read through all the rules of the project again.
- Your creative/experimental salon must include original photograph(s) on the back of the board and have a listing of steps and/or procedures used to create the end product. Make sure it is obvious you changed the photo.
- Stay for judging if you can, the discussion with the judge can be very beneficial.
- If you are entering the Creative/Experimental category, make it obvious something has been done. Combining multiple images tend to score the best. Try making something surreal, think creative fantasy. Does not have to be technically perfect to score well.



JUDGING AND PROJECT CHECK-IN DATE

**Saturday, July 12, 2025
Farm Bureau Community Building**

CHECK-IN JUDGING (Times are approximate)

Grades 3–5 8:30–9:00 am

Grades 6–8 10:00–10:30 am

Grades 9–12 11:30 am–Noon

If you are dropping off a photography project and not staying for judging then you can drop off anytime between 8:30 am—11:30 am.

JUDGING AND PROJECT CHECK-IN

- You will need to turn in at least 1 exhibit with name, age, club and camera used on the back (or a no exhibit record sheet). Include a discription of any editing done to the photo.
- The completed record sheet and manual are optional but encouraged.
- Judges are hired by the extension office. Project leaders have nothing to do with how your entries are judged. We don't always agree with the judges but we have no input.
- Presentation matters! Be neat and clean when prepping your boards.
- Technical considerations, composition, lighting, impact creativity and originality are key considerations by the judges.
- You do not have to stay for judging but we highly recommend that you do. Feedback from the judges can be very educational and they may score you higher after a discussion about how and why you created an image.

**BE CREATIVE
AND HAVE FUN!**