

Name _____ Hour _____

Photo Essay Instructions & Guide

LT: Use photos and words that support each other to tell a story or explore a theme.

SC: Create a photojournalism project about your community and publish it as a website.

- 1. Choose your subject.** Pick something you care about, know about, and can take pictures of. If you need story ideas, pay attention to conversations around you. Consider people you know. Maybe show us how the coronavirus and the suspension of school is affecting you.

What are some things, issues, or stories that you care about?

- 2. Develop your story.** Every story has a setting, characters, conflict, and resolution.

What is the topic of your story?

Where and when does your story take place?

Who is your story about?

What is the conflict or complication?

How is the conflict resolved?

3. Take your pictures. Spend some time with your subject(s) so you get to know each other and so you know more of the story. Try to capture natural, candid moments.

For visual variety, you will need three types of shots: overall, medium, and close-up.

Overall shots set the scene

When you take in a scene, you move your eyes from side to side to survey the entire panorama. The overall photo gives a similar perspective. The overall shot allows the viewer to understand the time and place of the story. It should give a survey of the setting for your story.

Medium shots tell the story

Shoot the picture close enough to see the subject(s) in action, yet far enough away to show their relationship to one another and to the environment. The medium shot contains all of the storytelling elements. The photo must tell the story quickly by compressing the important elements into one image.

An accident photo may show the victims in the foreground and the wrecked car in the background. Without the car, the photo would miss an essential detail – the cause of the victims' injuries. With only the crumpled car, the reader would wonder if anyone had been hurt. The combination of elements - car plus victims – briefly tells the basic story.

Close-up shots add drama

The close-up puts the viewer into eyeball-to-eyeball contact with the subject. At this intimate distance, a subject's face connects with the viewer and helps build understanding.

How close is close? The close-up should isolate one element. Not all close-ups including person's face. Sometimes objects can tell the story. A close-up of a child's doll covered with mud might tell the story of a flood better than an actual view of the disaster.

Look at the examples of the three types of shots on the next page, then use Google to search for examples of photojournalism and photo essays. Identify the type of shot used in the examples you find: overall, medium, or close-up.

The overall shot of the Thunderguard Bike Club establishes for the viewer the size of the motorcycle gang.

(Photo by Fred Comegys, *Wilmington (Delaware) News Journal*.)



When published alone, a medium shot must tell a complete story. As SWAT team officers move in, a woman and child run from a check-cashing outlet where more than one hundred customers had been held hostage after an attempted armored car robbery went bad in Philadelphia.

(Photo by Jim MacMillan, *Philadelphia Daily News*.)



Nothing beats a close-up for drama. The tight crop leaving just the two eyes of the doll and the one of the child jolts the reader's attention.

(Photo by Richard Koci-Hernandez, *San Jose Mercury News*.)



4. Choose the right pictures to tell your story.
 - Use 3 or more photographs.
 - Use at least 1 overall shot, 1 medium shot, and 1 close-up shot.
 - To tell a story, your photos must work together to set the scene, reveal the character(s), and show the conflict/complication and the resolution.

5. Write a paragraph to introduce your photo essay.
 - Introduce your story or theme.
 - Give background information as needed.
 - Give people a reason to care about your photo essay.

6. Write a caption for each picture.
 - Explain what we need to know to put the picture into context.
 - As needed, use text to move the story along.
 - Use Google Docs so you can copy and paste the caption into your website.
 - Ask me to check for errors so you can correct them before you publish your story.

7. Write a headline.
 - It should reflect the theme of your photo essay.
 - It should draw readers in.

What is your headline?

8. Publish your photos, introduction, captions, and headlines as a webpage.
 - Use Google Sites or another webpage building app that you are comfortable with.
 - Include 3 or more photos, an introductory paragraph, a caption for each photo, and a headline.
 - Publish your webpage.
 - Share the published webpage link with the class photography folder. Share it with that folder, not with my email address.
 - Also put your individual photo files in the Google Drive photography class folder like we always do.