

# THE EVERYDAY PROJECTS



## The Everyday Projects – Lesson 2 Handout

### Elements of Photography

This is a list of the elements of photography covered in the [Photography as Storytelling presentation](#). While that presentation is a useful place to view examples, this is a useful resource to keep on hand when thinking about your own photography.

#### Distance

**Close:** Close-up photos allow the viewer to connect with the person being photographed, just like people meeting each other for the first time. We can also see some details, like the type of clothes they're wearing, that tell us a bit about them as people.

**Medium:** Photographs made from a medium distance allow you to see a central person or people, and then to take in other details and context around them.

**Far:** A photograph made from farther away can give a sense of place, an understanding of where we are. In storytelling, these are often called scene-setting images.

**Detail:** Focusing on particular details in a scene can help to add layers to a story.

#### Angle

**Eye level:** Photographing straight-on allows us to connect with the people being photographed.

**Below:** Photographing from below can add significance to what is being photographed. It can give the people in the photograph an appearance of being powerful. Photographing dramatically from very far below (a “worm’s eye view”) can really make a scene appear larger-than-life.

**Above:** Photographing from above can help to give us a sense of place, especially a “bird’s eye view” or aerial photo from very far above. Note that just as photographing from below can make the people in the photograph appear powerful, photographing someone from above can minimize them, as the viewer (and the photographer) are literally “looking down” on them.

#### Compositions

**Rule of thirds:** Have the person / people / thing that you are photographing in the middle third of the frame, and have approximately equal space with the sky above and the ground below.

**Leading lines:** The lines created by different people or objects into the photo lead our eyes to the central, most important thing happening in the photo.

**Tilt:** A tilted angle can make a photograph feel chaotic or playful.

### **Light**

**Catchlights:** Catchlights are the twinkles reflected in a person's eye. They give us something to immediately focus on, and help us connect with the people in the image.

**Even lighting:** Pay attention to where the light falls in your photo. Often, you want most or all parts of the photo to be evenly lit, as our eyes will be distracted by anything that is overly bright or overly dark.

**Dramatic lighting:** Using bright lighting, or paying attention to where bright light is landing in your frame, can help draw our attention to specific parts of the photo or make it more dramatic.

**Light and shadow:** Paying attention to shadows in your photographs can help deepen the mood, and if there is one area of the photograph that is well lit amidst the shadows, then that part will really stand out.

**Silhouette:** A silhouette occurs when the source of light is behind the person being photographed. It often makes an outline, giving us an idea of the person rather than specific details.

### **Color**

Colors help create a particular mood in a photo.

### **Moments**

Many photographs are successful just because they are such striking moments. You could catch the moment that a friend is laughing in pure joy, for example. You could freeze the action of a ballet dancer or football player in a pose that looks iconic. [See the presentation for other examples of moments that make a successful photo.](#)