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Photoreportage for Secondary School Teachers

A GUIDE
2023



*“**Photography** is the only language that can be understood anywhere in the world.”*

– Bruno Barbey, photographer

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1. Introduction

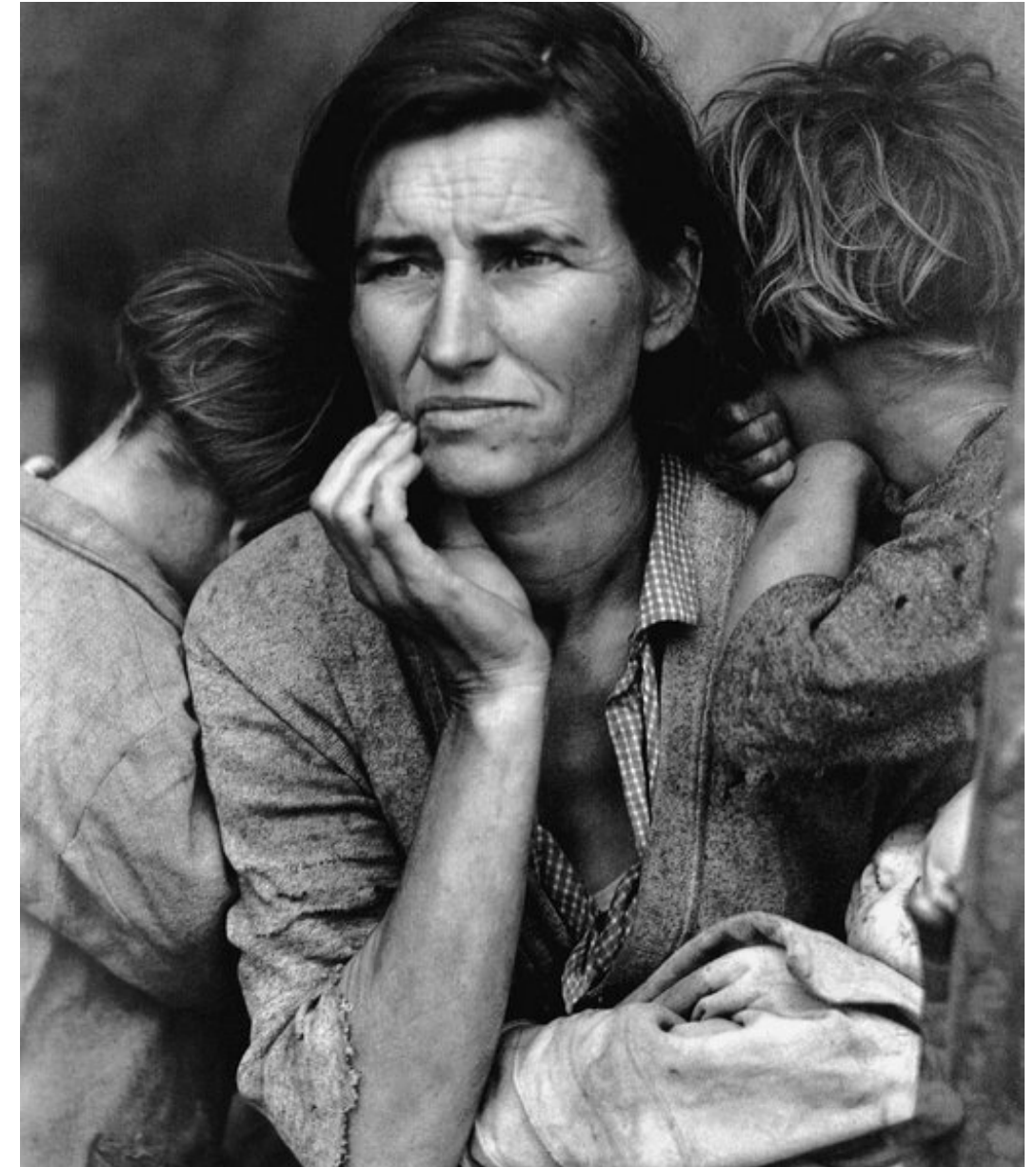
• Photo Reportage/Photojournalism:

- Photo reportage/photojournalism, its role in telling stories .
- Visual storytelling and its impact.
- Visual Literacy.

- **Photoreportage**
is a form of visual storytelling through pictures. Photographs are used to depict news, events, and stories with journalistic integrity. They can capture authentic moments or events in a narrative or report-like mode, highlighting emotions, thus helping viewers understand events and issues in a powerful way.

- **Visual Storytelling**

is the core of photoreportage. It involves using images to create a narrative and also evoke emotions. When done well It can inspire, move the viewer to take action and can change lives.



The Migrant Mother: a famous example by Dorothea Lange, 1936, used as visual storytelling. It conveys the worry and despair of the Great Depression.

Visual Literacy

The **ability** to recognize, and understand ideas conveyed through images. The “3 C’s” framework may help us become more visually literate in developing the ability to communicate more effectively through photographs .

The 3 C's are:

Content: WHO/WHERE- the subject matter (people, places, things) we photograph.

Concept: WHAT and WHY- the message you want to convey and the purpose for creating your images.

Composition: HOW - the art of seeing, selecting, and arranging elements and subjects in such a way that message communication is achieved.



2. Equipment

- Gear/equipment
- Camera types and their features, DSLRs - smartphones.



The [gear](#) does not necessarily define a photographer; knowing [how to](#) use the right tools is what matters most.

You may use your [mobile](#), but be sure you know all about its camera, its features and benefits, at least just the basic things.

It is worth using a digital or a DSLR camera: the bigger but better lenses and sensors help us capture more detailed, sharp, and better pictures than those of an iPhone.

In such an effort keep note that:

- A [camera bag](#) should include standard and zoom lenses and a tripod.
- There is a variety of [Types of cameras](#) and [lenses](#) used in photoreportage

In any case

- Dress in neutral colors to avoid drawing attention to yourself.
- You may find [more details](#) about if you are interested.

3. Technical Skills:

- The essential technical skills: exposure, focus, composition.

The basic terms to know

Exposure: aperture, shutter speed, and ISO to control the amount of light in a photograph. (ISO is the camera's sensitivity to light).

You may be interesting to [know about](#) the trade-offs of increasing ISO (noise) in low light situations.

Focus: create sharp, well-composed images.

Try experimenting with different camera [focus modes](#) and techniques.

Composition: the elements you choose and their arrangement in your photo.

You should consider [the basics](#):

- the rule of thirds and how to use gridlines to compose balanced shots.
- leading lines, framing, and symmetry for more dynamic compositions.

Shooting techniques like capturing candid moments, framing, and using different angles (are presented in part 7).

4. Composition and Visual Impact:

- The key elements of photojournalism
- Composition techniques

3 key elements to successful photojournalism

- **Subject:** is mainly what makes a powerful photo plus the moment and the way it is portrayed. Whether you isolate it in a shallow depth , or you focus on everything in the foreground/ background, whether your photograph is clear and detailed, or impressionistic and blurred depends on your mind and creativity.
- **Composition:** the arrangement of items in photos. When it emphasizes what is most important downplaying whatever distracts from it then the story is a success.
- **Light:** severe, mild, warm, cool , and anything in between conveys a different emotional message and can change the character of your final image.

COMPOSITION TECHNIQUES

the rule of thirds,

leading lines,

balancing elements.

Tip: Organise photo critiques for students to analyze photo stories and compositions.



5. Choosing a Story:

- Guide students in choosing a compelling story/theme for their photo reportage.

Select the **subject**

"It's important to find a topic that interests more than just yourself. Topics need a certain social or societal relevance".

Prof. Christoph Bangert

- Select news events or current affairs that are significant and of public interest.
- Research and gather background information about the subject to understand its context.
- Identify key moments and elements that need to be captured to tell a comprehensive story.

Identify the **evaluation criteria**:

- **ORIGINALITY**

How can I approach this subject in a way that others do not?
What do I see that others do not?

- **HONESTY**

Why do I really care about this topic? Is my presentation of this subject respectful?

- **CREATIVITY**

What is the most thought-provoking or persuasive way to present my perspective?

- **ACTION**

What can my photographs reveal concerning my initial intention?

6. Planning the Photo Essay:

- Plan the shots, including research, create shot lists for a narrative flow.
- Think about the key moments to capture for conveying the essence of story.

Plan ahead to tell the story.

It is not just a case of pointing the camera and taking the picture; you must get completely immersed in the action. This gives a sense of perspective to images, which convey the atmosphere at those moments in time.

SO

- conduct a research and gather information to understand the subject/s,
- assess the lighting around,
- plan the shots,
- wait for that perfect moment to unfold, or ... just make it happen!

7. Capturing Images: mind Framing and Angles or Candid Moments?

- Shoot many different shots.
- Focus on the importance of Framing and Angles when shooting a photo
- Consider also capturing candid moments that evoke emotions and authenticity.

Reportage photography is not just covering what's going on like documentary photography; it's capturing it in a way a realist artist would paint it.

Duncan Ridgley
reportage photographer



Mind the Framing :

- **Framing** subjects within the environment adds context.

WHAT IS IT?

The use of elements in a photoshot within a scene to create a frame around the subject.

WHY?

To draw attention to the subject, add depth and dimension.

HOW TO DO IT?

By using natural objects, (trees, windows, doorways), or artificially manipulating the environment, or even using props or other means.

Mind the angles:

The angles (high, low, eye level) have a great impact on the storytelling aspect and can enhance your work because they can:

- ✓ convey various emotions
- ✓ give viewers multiple perspectives
- ✓ make editing easier by choosing from multiple angles to tell a better story
- ✓ allow modification of the photo structure



Be an angle master

- **EYE-LEVEL ANGLE - CAPTURE THE EYE VIEW:** the simplest, most commonly angle. Take the camera at the same height as the eye to have a natural outcome with the sense of stability.
- **LOW ANGLE - PORTRAY DOMINANCE:** shot below a subject's eye line, looking up at them. Point your camera upward at your subject to make it appear larger and powerful.
- **HIGH ANGLE - MAKE YOUR SUBJECT VULNERABLE:** Take your camera overhead to portray your subject as inferior, smaller and less powerful. It evokes psychological effects on the observer.
- **WIDE ANGLE - DESCRIBE COMPLETE SCENERY:** portrays the surroundings to establish a location. It is often used to depict emotions, ex. loneliness. Although the object might look smaller, the side view highlights the emotions.
- **BIRD'S-EYE VIEW ANGLE - SCENIC BEAUTY:** It highlights various shapes, lines, and shadows, but it demands experience and resources like drones.

and a lot [more angles](#)

Candid Photography:

Taking photos that are unplanned, non-technical, in which the models and the scene are not staged/posed, can be challenging. They can, however, convey the most authentic stories with their energy and rawness, capturing true emotions and interactions.

In such a case

- be a patient observer
- anticipate moments
- keep your camera on, always
- move around
- practice on friends
- shoot frequently
- shoot from the hip
- be respectful



8. Selecting and Editing:

- Select the most relevant and powerful images for the photo reportage.
- Adopt photo editing techniques to enhance images while maintaining authenticity.
- Avoid excessive manipulation

Tell a Story with Sequencing:

- Take a series of photos aiming at creating a narrative that unfolds smoothly.
- Ensure your photos have a logical flow to guide the viewer through the story.
- Include photos of both wide-angle shots to set the context and close-ups to capture details and emotions.



Process and Edit with Care

Our aim is to capture the truth, maintaining the authenticity of the image and respecting the ethical boundaries of post-processing; however some editing is often necessary to enhance the storytelling aspect.

Basic Editing:

- Use some basic photo editing software or apps for enhancing images. ([Gimp](#) ex. is an excellent free software or "start a project" on [picsart](#)).
- Preserve the authenticity of the photos while enhancing their visual impact.
- Avoid altering the content or context of the image through heavy editing.
- Limit post-processing to basic adjustments like exposure, contrast, saturation, and crop images if necessary.

9. Creating the Photo Essay:

- Organise the selected photos into a cohesive photo essay.
- Focus on the importance of a logical sequence and flow to maintain the story's continuity.
- Get inspiration of famous works
- Explore various platforms to present photo essays (print, digital, multimedia).

Famous works worthseeing

The Depression Era Photography of Dorothea Lange

Struggle to Live – the fight against TB by James Nachtwey.

Homes from Gaza by Grey Hutton

Inside the Democratic Republic of Congo's Diamond Mines, Lynsey Addario



Present your outcome

Let classmates, first check if they get the story

You may:

- print the photos and post the story on the wall to get feedback and adopt new ideas
- gather photos in a ppt slideshow
- fix photos to a poster board



10. Adding Captions and Contextual Information:

- Discuss the role of captions in complementing and enriching the visual narrative.
- Practice how to write informative and concise captions that provide context.
- Mind accuracy and objectivity in caption writing.

Caption writing

Captioning is an important part of journalism. The captions provide us with the context, backgrounds and intentions behind the photographs so they must be accurate and informative.

In photojournalism they are written in a standard way:

- Each caption is consisted of two sentences.
- All the necessary information (Who, What, When, and Where) is included in the first sentence.

The following points can help you write a caption that will intrigue the viewer enough to read the story.

Tips:

- Use present tense for your first sentence of the caption.
- Tell the reader what is currently happening in the photo.
- Include information NOT in the main story to further advance the reading experience.
- Try to make the reader WANT to know more.
- Do not make assumptions; you may use quotes from people to illustrate how they felt in that moment.
- Avoid the obvious and tell the reader what they cannot see. Do not use phrases such as 'is shown, is pictured etc.
- Start it as general and get more specific.
- If you have to label multiple people in a photo, do it from left to right and start your caption with the phrase 'from left.'

11. Legal and Ethical Considerations:

- Discuss about the ethical considerations and responsibilities of photojournalists including objectivity, truthfulness, and respect for subjects' privacy.
- Discuss the impact of visual representation on public perception and empathy.
- Encourage open discussions about the ethical dilemmas one may face while documenting events.
- Focus on being respectful while photographing people in their natural environment.

Understanding the Ethics and Responsibilities:

Generally speaking, when shooting within a public space, photographers have the right to take photographs without asking permission, as an extension of the right to freedom of expression.

However, in some cultures, the right to privacy is very important. So the ethical dilemma is to find a balance.

Especially nowadays that our mobile camera is so handy we should always keep in mind:

- Distinguish between what is ethical and what is legal.
- Be Mindful of Ethics and Consent.
- Respect the privacy and dignity of the people you are photographing.
- Obtain consent when appropriate, especially when photographing individuals in sensitive situations.
- Avoid intruding in events that require space and privacy.

12. Presentation: Impact and Reflection

- Firstly analyse the impact of powerful photojournalistic images throughout history.
- Then let the students present their work and urge them to consider the potential consequences of their work on individuals and communities.

After creating a photo story:

- Discuss about the impact their photo reportage may have: how/if it can create awareness and contribute to positive change in society.
- Consult the criteria of evaluation already set (originality, honesty, creativity, action- part 5).
- Feedback should also address the style, composition, approach.
- Discuss the challenges met and lessons learned during the process.
- Use feedback and self-evaluation to elevate their skills.

13. Exhibition: Dissemination and Impact

- Organize presentation sessions and exhibitions
- Ask for feedback
- Consider the impact of the work.

Follow up

Either within the school, or via public presentations of the final works you should encourage viewers to discuss/comment/critique the outcomes, focussing on reviewing the photos and commenting on their effectiveness in conveying the story.

You may

- Plan a photo reportage exhibition within the school or local community to showcase students' work.
- Invite parents, fellow students, and community members to the exhibition to raise awareness about important issues.
- Organize a presentation session, where students can explain their photo essays and the stories behind their images.
- Create online galleries or portfolios to share students' work with a wider audience. They may also be published as a class book or blog.

14. Celebrate and Support:

- Briefly make a final resume of impact of their photo reportage and its power to bring about positive change.
- Offer your support to future works

Praise and encourage

Encourage everyone to consider the impact of their own work on the community.

Urge them to submit their final pieces independently via social media and record the comments.

Let them vote for the best creation/s and publish the photojournal "expert/s" in the school site/newspaper or art journal.

Display in any way students' works to instill pride and a sense of accomplishment while raising awareness of important issues.

Plan for the next project and exhibition to come!



Practice makes perfect

The steps presented in this guide aim to help our students turn their ideas into wonderful photo reportage, so powerful that can inform, engage, inspire, convince audiences with impactful storytelling.

There is still so much to know about!

Remember that practice and continuous learning are essential in mastering reportage photography.





**ENJOY
LEARNING**
with a lot
of fun!

"Reporters of cultural heritage without borders"
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Resources

<http://marydewsonlinecourses.weebly.com/visual-literacy--the-3-cs.html>
<https://www.adorama.com/alc/what-are-the-different-types-of-cameras-used-for-photography/>
<https://photographycourse.net/different-types-of-cameras/>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=74FYHZ1Bv3c>
<https://www.photoreview.com.au/tips/shooting/shooting-techniques-for-action-photography/>
<https://ethos3.com/tips-for-shooting-your-own-presentation-photography/> Focus modes
<https://shotkit.com/camera-focus-modes/>
<https://www.visualartistry.co/blog-1/what-will-photography-be-like-in-the-next-50-years-gr5zc-8n8d9>
<https://enviragallery.com/what-is-a-photo-story-in-photojournalism/>
<https://streetbounty.com/what-is-photojournalism/>
<https://contrastly.com/photojournalism-101/>
<https://www.slrlounge.com/>
<https://www.kcur.org/post/award-winning-photojournalists-show-intense-year-kansas-city-public-library-exhibit#stream/0>
<http://citizenj.edgeqld.org.au/5-simple-tips-for-the-beginner-photojournalist/>
<https://www.tonybrownphotography.com/post/3-main-elements-of-a-good-photograph>
<https://petapixel.com/what-is-photojournalism/>
<https://reportagephotographer.com/reportage-photography/>
<https://shotkit.com/leading-lines-photography/>
<https://shotkit.com/rule-of-thirds-photography/>

Corbett, B. (2002). "A Simple guide to digital photography". New York: Amphoto Books. Kobre, K. (1996). (3rd Ed.). "Photojournalism: The professional's approach". Boston: Focal Press