

Photo Composition



By Robert J. Courtemanche, CJE
rcourtemanche@galenaparkisd.com

Galena Park HS, Texas

Permission for use granted for any classroom teacher in a public or not-for profit / non-profit school system.



ROOKIE MISTAKES

▶ Too Dark





ROOKIE MISTAKES

- ▶ Too Dark
- ▶ FIX: Use Flash, Get Closer





ROOKIE MISTAKES

- ▶ Holding The Camera Wrong





ROOKIE MISTAKES

- ▶ Holding The Camera Wrong
- ▶ FIX: Use Two Hands and Don't Block The Lens





ROOKIE MISTAKES

▶ Too Bright





ROOKIE MISTAKES

- ▶ Too Bright
- ▶ FIX: turn off flash, move back or change the white balance





ROOKIE MISTAKES

▶ Camera Shake





ROOKIE MISTAKES

- ▶ Camera Shake
- ▶ FIX: Use flash or set camera to faster shutter speed





ROOKIE MISTAKES

- ▶ Fingers In Lens





ROOKIE MISTAKES

- ▶ Fingers In Lens



- ▶ FIX: Hold camera properly



ROOKIE MISTAKES

- ▶ Shooting From Behind





ROOKIE MISTAKES

- ▶ Shooting From Behind
- ▶ FIX: Always shoot two eyes, one ear





ROOKIE MISTAKES

▶ Shooting Through Glass





ROOKIE MISTAKES

▶ Shooting Through Glass



▶ FIX: Don't





ROOKIE MISTAKES

▶ Ear Shots





ROOKIE MISTAKES

- ▶ Ear Shots
- ▶ FIX: Always shoot two eyes, one ear





ROOKIE MISTAKES

- ▶ Mugging (posing) for the Camera





ROOKIE MISTAKES

- ▶ Mugging (posing) for the Camera
- ▶ FIX: Shoot the posers, and then delete them later





ROOKIE MISTAKES

- ▶ Cutting off body parts





ROOKIE MISTAKES

- ▶ Cutting off body parts
- ▶ FIX: Back up, crop only at shoulders, waist and knees





Tips from the Masters





Tips from the Masters



- Find the unusual in the everyday



Tips from the Masters



Stephen Brashear / The News-Review



Karl Maasdam / Corvallis Gazette-Times

- ▶ Find the unusual in the everyday



Tips from the Masters



- ▶ Look for action: doing something is better than doing nothing



Tips from the Masters



- ▶ Get Close: Remember the goal is to shoot faces and detail



Tips from the Masters



► Get Close



Tips from the Masters



- ▶ Focus, focus, focus
- ▶ An out of focus picture is worth nothing



Tips from the Masters



- ▶ Crop at shoulders,
- ▶ waist and knees





Tips from the Masters



Stefano Rellandini / Reuters



- ▶ Verticals = tall
- ▶ Horizontals = wide



Tips from the Masters



- ▶ You always need to
- ▶ See the face, except...



Tips from the Masters



- ▶ Look for emotion or expression and you get that in faces



Tips from the Masters



► Look for emotion
or expression





Tips from the Masters



- ▶ Try A POV Shot
- ▶ (Point of View)



Tips from the Masters



- ▶ Break the photo up into thirds, it helps provide balance and make photos more dynamic



Tips from the Masters



- ▶ Break the photo
- ▶ into thirds



Tips from the Masters



- ▶ Frame the subject
- ▶ when possible



Tips from the Masters



- ▶ Frames help provide context of surroundings



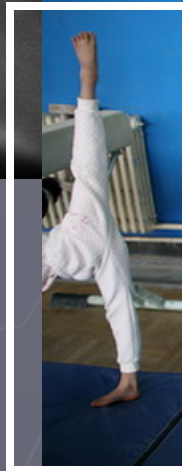
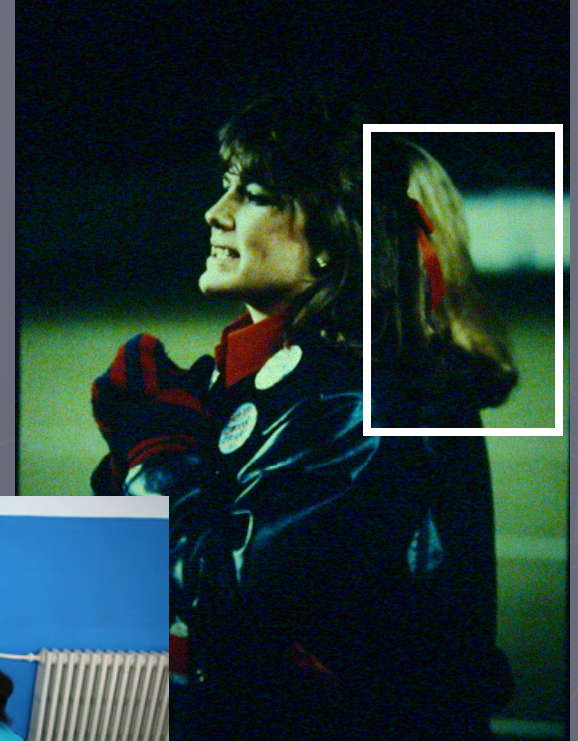
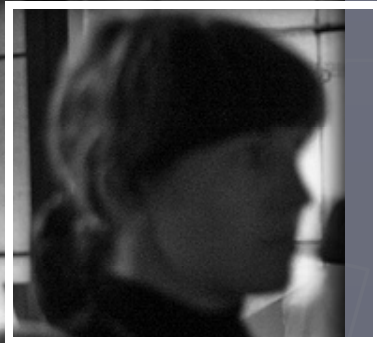
Tips from the Masters



- ▶ Watch out for distractions



Tips from the Masters



► Watch out for distractions



Tips from the Masters



- ▶ Too many subjects makes a boring picture without any focus



Tips from the Masters

- ▶ Picking only one person out in a crowd creates a strong subject





Tips from the Masters



- ▶ Look for repeated
- ▶ form or shapes



Tips from the Masters



Ryan O'Connor - U.S. Navy



- ▶ Repeated form or
- ▶ shapes are interesting



Tips from the Masters



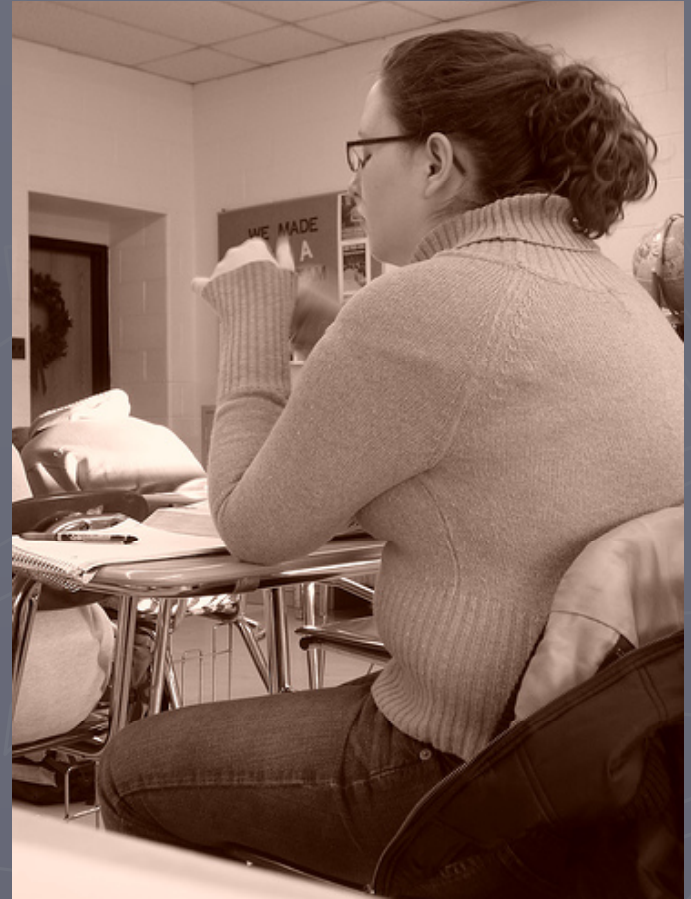
- ▶ Don't shoot straight, try different angles
- ▶ “Any photo shot standing is a snapshot”



Tips from the Masters



- ▶ Don't shoot straight
- ▶ Try different angles





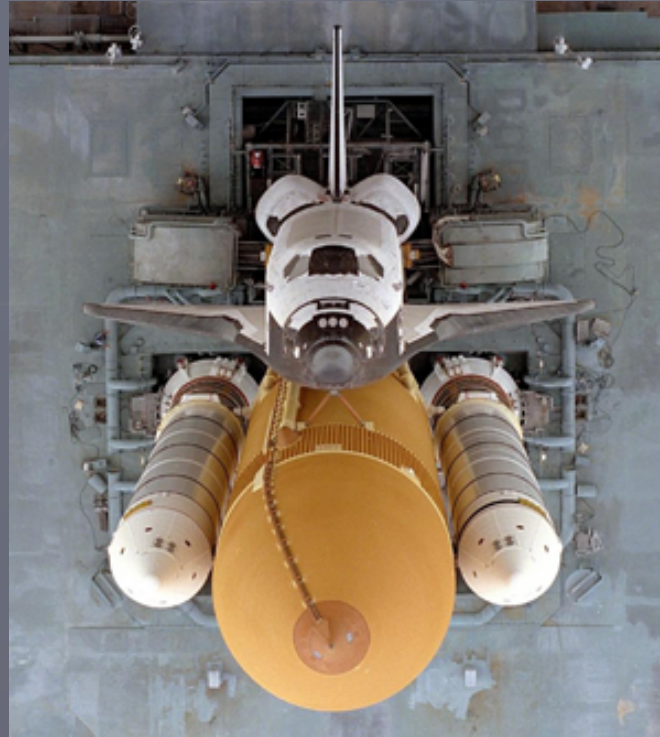
Tips from the Masters



- ▶ Don't shoot straight
- ▶ Try different angles



Tips from the Masters



- ▶ Don't shoot straight
- ▶ Try different angles



Tips from the Masters



► Lines lead the eyes



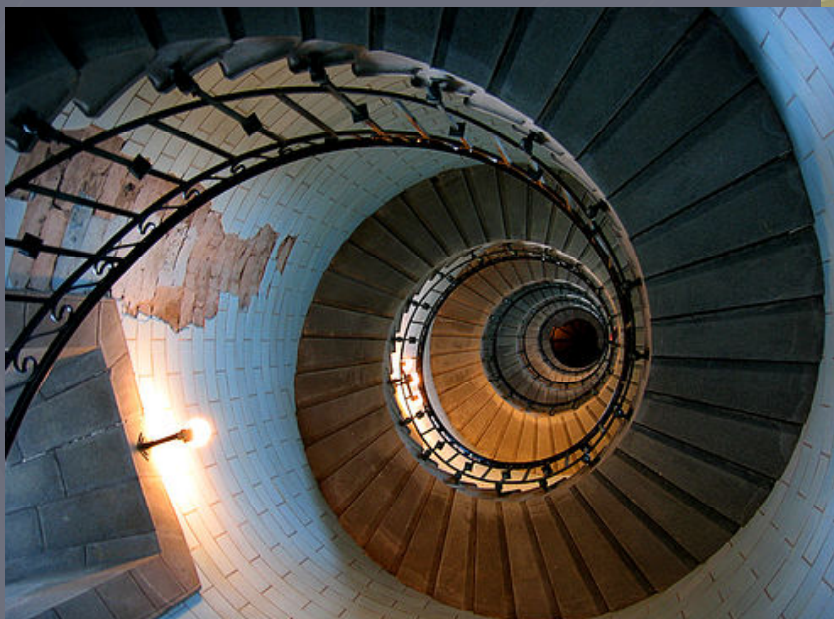
Tips from the Masters



- ▶ Lines lead the eyes



Tips from the Masters



► Shape adds depth



Tips from the Masters



- ▶ Pan with the action to avoid blur



Tips from the Masters



- ▶ Some blur is acceptable in action shots



Tips from the Masters



- ▶ Use backlight to create silhouettes



Tips from the Masters



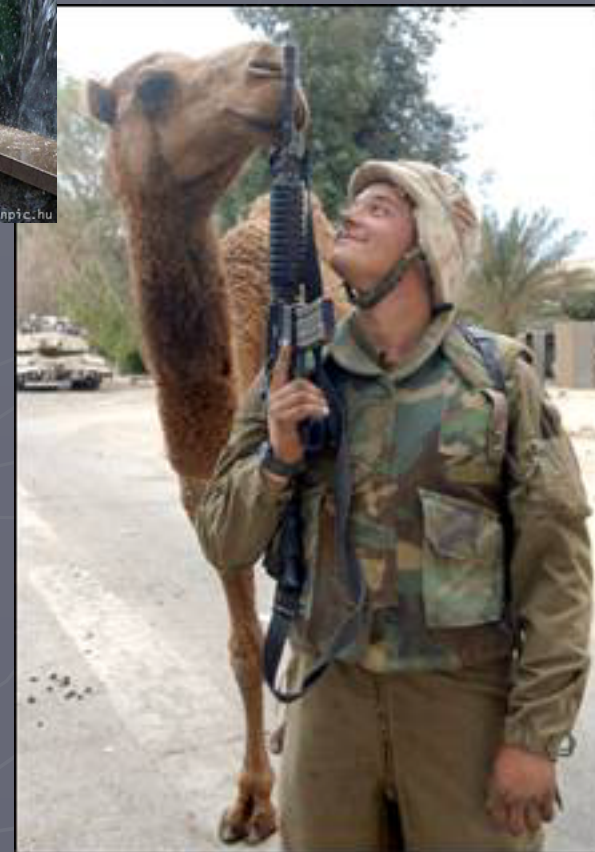
Thomas Ovaile / The Fresno Bee



- ▶ Look for useful shadows



Tips from the Masters



- ▶ Keep an eye out
- ▶ For fun



Tips from the Masters



Steve Malone / News-Press



- ▶ Keep an eye out
- ▶ For fun



Tips from the Masters

- ▶ Check out flickr.com for interesting photo ideas

