

2021-2022 4-H Photography Judging Guide

The photography judging contest is an opportunity for 4-H photography project members to demonstrate the skills and knowledge they have learned in the photography project area. The guide has been developed to assist 4-H volunteers in providing training for 4-H youth prior to the County and State 4-H Photography Judging contest. This event is conducted annually to support learning in all photography projects. There are two divisions for this contest: junior and senior. Junior participants must be between the ages of 8-12 in 4-H age. Individuals 13 and older must complete the senior contest. If a junior chooses to participate in both divisions, they must complete the senior level contest first. The top ten senior participants from each county are eligible to participate in the state contest. Should ten seniors not be available, juniors may be asked to participate in the state event.

References for this event are the 4-H photography project manuals, accompanying leader guides, kodak.com and wikipedia.org. Links to pre-recorded Photography Workshop sessions are available by contacting Jill Jackson (Jackson@udel.edu). These workshop topics included: Composition, Still Life, Editing Photos and Quality Judging tips. A variety of photos to practice quality judging can also be found here: <https://www.kansas4-h.org/events-activities/contests/photography-judging/index.html>

JUNIOR (ages 8-12)

Part 1 – Identification of Parts of a Camera – 4-Her's will identify the following parts of a digital camera and smart phone camera using the diagrams provided on page 5.

Digital Camera Parts:

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Viewfinder | 6. Shutter Button |
| 2. Lens | 7. Mode Dial |
| 3. Flash | 8. Play Button |
| 4. Memory Card Slot | 9. Power Switch |
| 5. LCD Display | 10. Erase Button |

Smart Phone Camera Parts:

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Front/Rear Facing Icon | 5. Flash Icon |
| 2. Effects Icon | 6. Photo Type Icon |
| 3. Shutter Button | 7. Timer |
| 4. Gallery Icon | 8. HDR Icon |

Training Idea – Encourage members to bring in a digital camera to a project meeting in order to review the camera parts. Explain that not all digital cameras are alike and review differences. Set-up tours at a local camera shops to enhance the 4-Her's understanding of the parts and to view the different types of Digital SLR Cameras and smart phone cameras.

Part 2 – Two to Three Quality Judging Classes (color or black and white) will be selected from the following list: Members will be asked to rank four photos based on the criteria of what makes a good photograph.

- | | |
|---------------|------------|
| 1. Animals | 3. Marine |
| 2. Individual | 4. Flowers |

There are quality-judging points that should be considered when ranking quality judging classes. These points include:

- | | |
|----------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Clarity | 6. Lighting |
| 2. Composition | 7. Appeal |
| 3. Color | 8. No Distracting Elements |
| 4. Focus | 9. Photo Tells a Story |
| 5. Exposure | 10. Rule of Thirds |

Training Idea – Encourage members to bring in photos. Have the members review and discuss each photograph by considering the quality judging points. Select four photographs that are related in subject matter based on one of the categories listed above. Have members rank the four photos based on the criteria of what makes a good photograph.

Part 3 – Composition – 4-Her's will identify photographs based upon the photographs composition. Review the enclosed sheets pertaining to composition.

Training Idea – Encourage members to bring in digital photographs at a project meeting and review composition in terms of rule of thirds, lines, lighting, simplicity, balance, framing, pattern, and texture. Have members analyze the photos and evaluate what is good, bad, and what principals of good composition could be applied in a different way to make the photograph better. Encourage members to practice looking around in the viewfinder to consider the way each element will be recorded and how it relates to the composition.

SENIOR

Part 1 – Editing Digital Photographs – 4-H'ers will be asked to compare different before/after sets of photographs that have been edited and must identify which type of edit was used. They will also be asked to demonstrate editing techniques using Microsoft Word or a smart phone. These edits may include cropping, removal of red eye, changing brightness or contrast, rotating or flipping a photograph or resizing a photograph.

***Training Idea** – Have members work on a computer to become familiar with the process of enhancing and making changes to photographs stored on the computer.*

Example:

Original Photo



Edited Photo (Cropped)



Part 3 – Composition – 4-H'ers will identify items to use in photographs based upon their chosen composition. Members may be required to define or explain different types of composition or to identify the specific compositions used in a photograph as well. Review the enclosed sheets pertaining to composition. See enclosed composition sheets.

Training Idea – Encourage members to bring in digital photographs at a project meeting and review composition in terms of rule of thirds, golden triangle, golden rectangle lines, lighting, simplicity, balance, framing, pattern and texture. Have members analyze the pictures and evaluate what is good, bad, and what principles of good composition could be applied in a different way to make the photographs better. Encourage members to practice looking all around in the viewfinder to consider the way each element will be recorded and how it related to the composition.

Part 4– Still Life Photography– 4-H'ers will be asked to photograph a Still Life Arrangement demonstrating a specific composition.

***Training Idea** – Encourage members to select items that are related to each other and arrange them to compose and set up a scene for a still life photograph while also demonstrating different types of composition.*

Part 5 – Two to Four Quality Judging Classes– (color or black and white) selected from the following list:

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------|
| 1. Animals | 4. Marine |
| 2. Individual | 5. Flowers |
| 3. Groups of People | 6. Still Life |

*Please be aware that Senior members will be required to provide WRITTEN reasons for at least **two** classes of photographs.*

There are quality-judging points that should be considered when ranking quality judging classes. These points include:

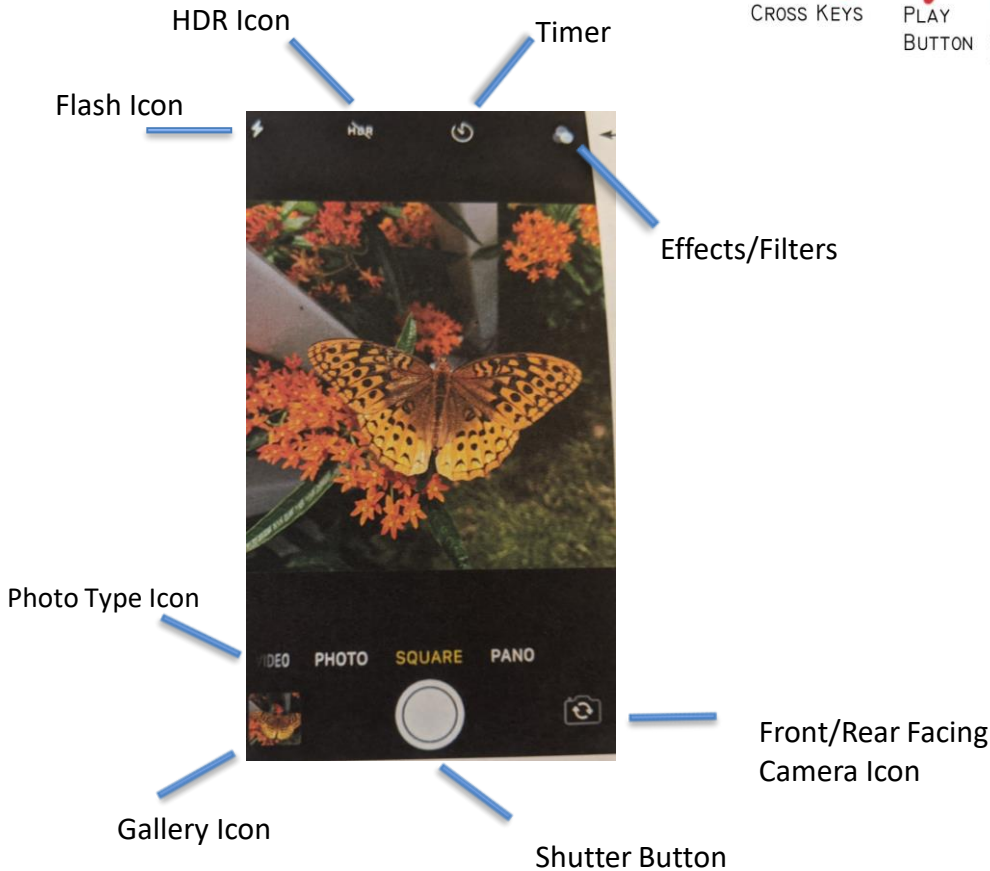
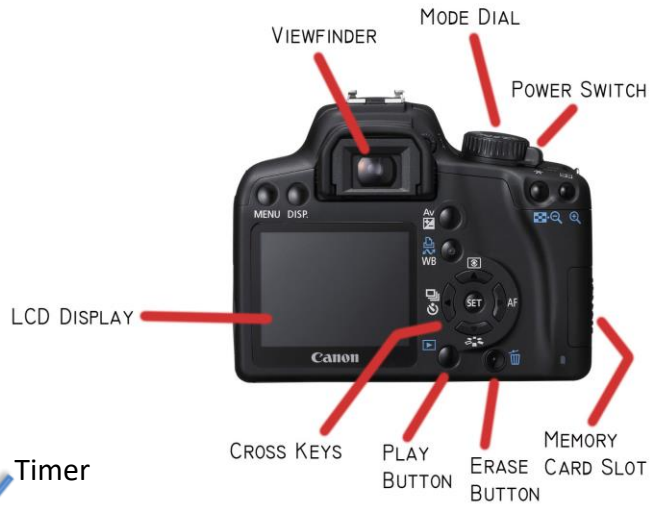
- | | |
|----------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Clarity | 6. Lighting |
| 2. Composition | 7. Appeal |
| 3. Color | 8. No Distracting Elements |
| 4. Focus | 9. Photo Tells a Story |
| 5. Exposure | 10. Rule of Thirds |

***Training Idea** – Select four photographs that are related in subject matter based on one of the categories listed above. Have members rank the four photos provided based on the composition and criteria of what makes a good photograph. Encourage members to explain their reasons for ranking the photographs as they did.*

Parts of a Digital SLR Camera and Smart Phone Camera (Juniors Only)

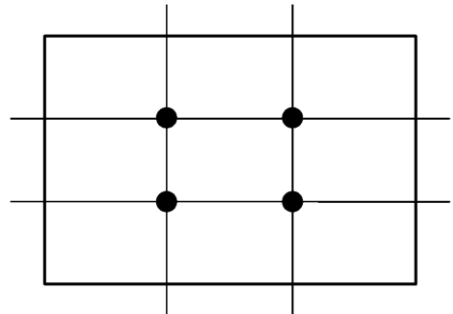
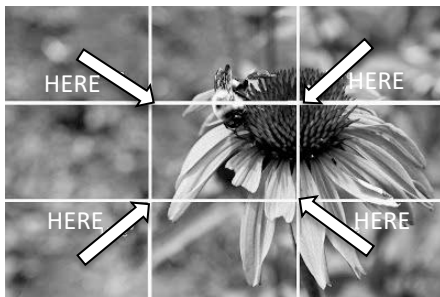


SLR Camera
Parts and
Controls



Composition

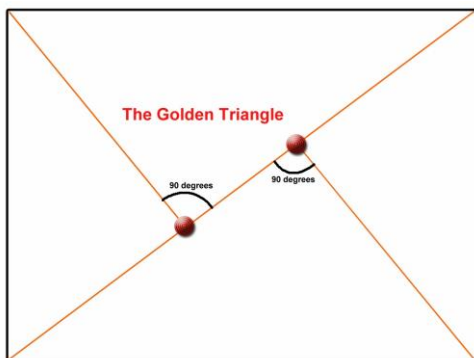
1. **Rule of Thirds** – Image can be divided into nine equal parts by two equally-spaced horizontal lines and two equally-spaced vertical lines. (Imagine a grid drawn over your photograph that divides into thirds, like a tic-tac-toe grid. Now picture that middle square of the grid; the four corners of that square will mark the locations of your areas of interest.) The four points formed by the intersection of these lines can be used to align features in the photograph. Proponents of this technique claim that aligning a photograph with these points created more tension, energy and interest in the photo than simply centering the feature would.



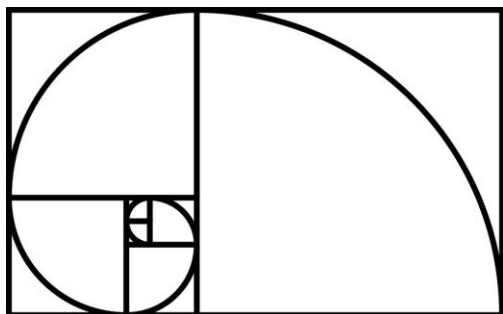
The theory is that if you place points of interest in the intersections of along the lines that your photo becomes more balanced and will enable a viewer of the image to interact with it more naturally. Studies have shown that when viewing images that the people's eye usually go to one of the intersection points most naturally rather than the center of the shot – using the rule of thirds works with this natural way of viewing an image rather than working against it.

2. **Golden Triangle**

Draw a diagonal line from one corner to the opposite corner. Draw a second line from another corner and intersect the line at a right angle. Frame your shot so that it fills one of these 3 triangles. Another way to use this rule is to make sure that there are three subjects of equal sizes in each of the three triangles.



3. Golden Rectangle – Draw a line that divides the photo (rectangle) into a square and another rectangle. Divide the new rectangle into a square and rectangle. Divide this small rectangle into another square and rectangle. Continue drawing inside these tiny “golden rectangles” until you have a spiral that circles in and gets smaller and smaller. The spiral that is created has a way of leading your eye from the focal point outwards.



4. Lines – The lines that can be found in images are very powerful elements that with a little practice can add dramatic impact to a photograph in terms of mood as well as how they lead the viewer into a photo. Learning how to use lines in photography doesn’t just happen. It takes time and practice to become good at it.



A good way to practice is to go back through older images that you’ve taken and look for lines that worked well, and ones that didn’t. Before you frame your image consciously ask yourself what lines are in front of you and how you might use them to add something to your next shot by working with them, rather than against them. Also, ask yourself whether the lines form any interesting patterns that you might be able to accentuate to add a further layer of interest in the image. Types of lines include horizontal, vertical, diagonal, and s-curves.

5. **Lighting** – Lighting is also an important creative element of composition. By controlling the light and directing it where you want it, you can subdue objects or distracting elements in the scene to give more emphasis to the main point of interest. For photography composition done well, you must develop an awareness of how changes in lighting can affect the appearance of things around you. Light and shadows can be used in composition to create mood, to draw attention to an area, to modify or distort shape, or to bring out form and texture in the subject. Shadows are key to apparent form in photographs; without shadows the subject looks “flat” there is no texture, curvature, or form. From a compositional standpoint, black shadows can be very useful in balancing a scene and directing attention to the point of interest. Harsh shadows can also be excellent for emphasizing texture and form, for creating interesting patterns and for directing attention to the main point of interest. However the same elements can also obscure detail and reduce form. When the lighting is harsh, such on clear, sunny days, shadows have sharply defined edges and are probably very dark, sometimes to the point that they appear stronger than the primary subject and attract attention to themselves. “Sweet light” is a term just to define the light just as the sun is going down, or coming up. It makes shadows softer and it gives your subject, rather than be a person or a landscape, an orange glow that can be absolutely beautiful when executed correctly!



6. **Simplicity** – Simplicity is the key to most great photographs. The simpler and more direct a photo is, the more clear and stronger the photo turns out. There are several things to be considered when we discuss simplicity. First, select a subject that lends itself to a simple arrangement; for example instead of photographing an entire area that would confuse the viewer, zoom in on some important element within the area. Second, select different viewpoints of camera angles. Move around the scene or object being photographed. View the scene through the camera viewfinder. Look at the foreground and background, try high and low angles as well normal, eye-level viewpoints. Only after considering all possibilities should you take the picture. See beyond and in front of your subject. Be sure there is nothing in the background to distract the viewer's attention from the main point of the picture. Likewise, check to see if there is anything objectionable in the foreground to block the viewer's eye into the photo. Last point of simplicity tell *only one story*. Ensure there is enough material in the picture to convey an idea, but only one idea.



7. Balance – Balance in photographic composition is a matter of making photographs look harmonious. Each element in a photo has a certain amount of value in respect to all the other elements. Every tone, mass, shape, tree, rock figure, building, line, or shadow contributes a certain amount of weight that must be arranged correctly in the composition to give the impression of balance. The subjects placement within the photographs area is in a factor that must be carefully considered.

- *Symmetrical or Formal Balance* – This is achieved when elements on both side of the photo are of equal weight. The idea of formal balance can be related to a seesaw. Photographs with formal balance may look static and unexciting; however they do present an air of dignity. Formal balance does not always mean a photo has to have the seesaw in perspective.



- *Asymmetrical or Informal Balance* – This type of balance is usually much more interesting than symmetrical balance. In asymmetrical balance the imaginary central pivot point is still presumed to be present; however, instead of mirror images on each side of the photos area, the subject elements are notably different in size, shape, weight, tone, and placement. Balance is established by equalizing forces in spite of their differences.



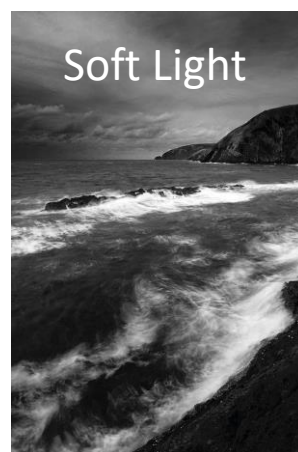
8. Framing – Framing is another technique photographers use to direct the viewer's attention to the primary subject of a photograph. Positioned around the subject, a tree, an archway, or even people can create a frame within the photographed area. Subjects enclosed by a frame become separated from the rest of the image and are emphasized. An element used as a frame should not draw attention to itself. Ideally, the frame should relate to the theme, or story, of the photo. Not only is framing an effective means of directing the viewer's attention, it can also be used to obscure undesirable foregrounds and backgrounds. The illusion of depth can be created in a picture by the effective use of framing.



9. Pattern – Creating your photos around repeating elements or patterns provide your photo with unity and structure. Pattern repetition creates rhythm that the eyes enjoy following. When lines, shapes, and colors within a photo occur in an orderly way, they create patterns that often enhance the attractiveness of photographs. When pattern is used as a supporting element, it must be used carefully so it does not confuse or overwhelm the viewer. Photographs that are purely pattern are seldom used, because they tend to be monotonous. Patterns should be used to strengthen and add interest to your subject, and not overpower your photograph.



10. Texture – This process helps to emphasize the feature and details in a photograph. By capturing “texture” of objects being photographed, you can create form. When people observe a soft, furry object or a smooth, shining surface, they have a strong urge to touch it. You can provide much more of the pleasure people get from the feel of touching such objects by rendering texture in your photos. Texture can be used to give realism and character to a photograph and may in itself be the subject of a photograph. When texture is used as a subordinate element within the photo, it lends strength to the main idea of the photograph. Texture and lighting go hand-in-hand. Hard lights and shadows can make things look very textured and sharp, soft lighting can make things look more flat and less two-dimensional.



Still Life Photography – SENIORS ONLY

Still Life Photography usually refers to an attractive arrangement of nonmoving objects. Often, the photographer will take much more time setting up the exact composition, placement of items, and lighting than they will actually spend taking the photograph. Flower and food arrangements are popular still-life subjects, but you can try any objects you wish. Still life can include one item or dozens of items, there are no rules! If you choose to include multiple objects, typically they be show how related to each other so that the still-life scene reflects a common theme. Once you have the items placed where you want them, you may need to make adjustments for lighting either by adding some type of light source like a lamp or waiting for light to enter the area through a window.

