

Getting the Right Shot

Once you have your lights and equipment ready, it's all about composition and your subject.

Composition – This is what the photograph is made up of – what is in it and how they are placed.

Subject – The thing or person that you are taking a picture of.

Taking a good photo

1. Find the right situation. Keep your eyes peeled for a good situation. Is someone really enjoying something? Is someone sitting in a really nice setting? Is it a special event? A good photographer always has their eye out for a good shot.
2. Decide what to include. What needs to be in the shot? Obviously, the subject (people or things) but what else? Do you really need that shopping bag in the background? Is there something relevant in the background? If there is, include it. If in doubt, include it and you can crop your photo later if you need to get rid of things on the edge.
3. Is it better portrait or landscape? Have a look at what you want to include and decide if it is better landscape or portrait. This is all to do with which way round you hold the camera. If in doubt, take your photo both ways round and see what looks better later.



This lady sitting at a table looks better in portrait.



This building is wide, so it looks better in landscape.

4. Be natural. There's nothing worse than an awkward-looking photo where people look really self-conscious. Be cheery and make people feel at ease. If someone doesn't want their photo taking, respect how they feel and don't include them.

5. Experiment with angles. Don't just take a photo from where you are standing. This might be right for some situations but you can be more adventurous with your shots. Try a shot while squatting down or holding your arms up high and shooting down on the subject. Try from one side or the other, or even from behind. You may be surprised at how much better a photo can be just by varying the angle.



Taking this photo from low down means that we see more of the striking bridge above.

6. Choose your focus. You need to decide which bit of your photo is the most important and make sure that this bit is in focus and not blurred. Most digital devices automatically focus on the centre of the screen but you might have to tell your device where to focus if your subject is at the side.

You might also want to change some settings to decide whether you want the background in focus or blurred. Look at how it can change a shot.



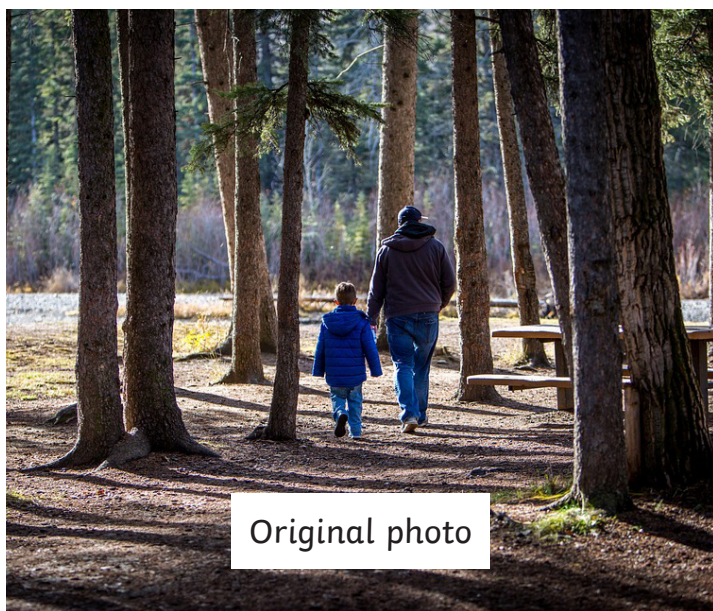
Here the background is blurred, which is called a small 'depth of field'. This means that we really focus on the dandelion.



Here the background is in focus so we can see the busy street behind and get a better sense of location.

7. Take some photos. As we have mentioned before, take lots of photos and decide which to keep later. Try a few different angles or positions.
8. Edit your photographs afterwards. Most people will be taking digital photos which will be on a computer or device after you have finished shooting. Take time to really have a detailed look at what you have taken. See what they look like in black and white too. Make copies of the photographs and experiment with cropping the edges to change the composition and start to choose the best photos.

Look how different cropping changes this photo.



9. Choose your final shots. Have a final look through your photos and check that you've done all that you can to make them as good as possible. Ask the opinion of a friend or trusted adult if you really can't decide between two photos.

