

Exploring Composition in Photography

Taking a photograph is a selection process because the photographer has to make choices. They must think about the subject, decide what is most important, and how they will photograph the subject. Photographers also strive to achieve interesting compositions by considering **light** and **shade, shape, texture, scale, and line** in their image.

The **viewfinder** is the part of a camera that you hold close to your eye, to allow you to see what's being photographed. A photographer looks through the viewfinder to compose a picture. When they decide on the limits and boundaries of the scene, they create the frame and capture the image.

Choose a photograph in the galleries (or online if completing this activity at home) to answer the following questions. Use the back of this sheet if necessary. Write the title and artist here:

Did the photographer arrange the picture (pose it) or was it taken as the events happened (candid shot)? How do you know this? Explain your answer.

What do you think is happening outside the frame?

What might have been the conversation between the subject(s) and the photographer?

Where was the photographer positioned when the picture was taken?

Look at other work by the same artist in the galleries (or online), if available. What kinds of scenes did this photographer focus on?

How did the photographer use light and shade, vertical and horizontal lines, and texture in their composition? Where did the photographer place the center of interest?

Choose an area of a photograph that you find interesting. Pretend you have a viewfinder of your own to “frame” your image. Draw this section of the photograph below, concentrating on **value** (range of black to white) in your work.

