



# Photo Composition

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Photography

Mountlake Terrace High School

~ Vince DeMiero, instructor

# Composition Guidelines

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- Simplicity
  - The Rule of Thirds
  - Lines and S-Curves
  - Balance
  - Framing
  - Mergers
  - Patterns
  - Depth of Field
  - Motion
  - Creative use of Light
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# Simplicity

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- Which photo is more aesthetically pleasing?
- What's the subject of the picture?
- How can you draw the viewer's eyes to the primary subject?



# Simplicity

- What did the photographer do to improve the composition?
- What simple thing can you do to improve your composition?



# Simplicity

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- Where is your eye drawn?
- What simple thing can you do to improve this composition?



# Simplicity

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- Is this better?
- What simple thing did the photographer do?



# Simplicity

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- What makes the shot on the right more aesthetically pleasing?
- What did the photographer do to make these changes?
- Can you do this?



# Simplicity

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- How did the photographer simplify this composition?
- What would this photograph have looked like if it had been taken from a lower angle?





# Simplicity

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- What makes this photo simple?
- What is implied by the composition?



# Simplicity

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- What makes this photo simple?



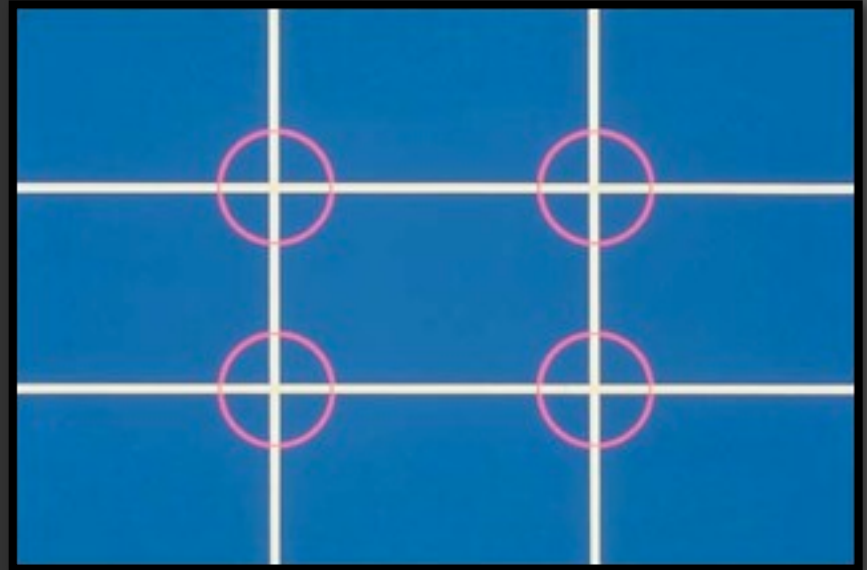




# Rule of Thirds

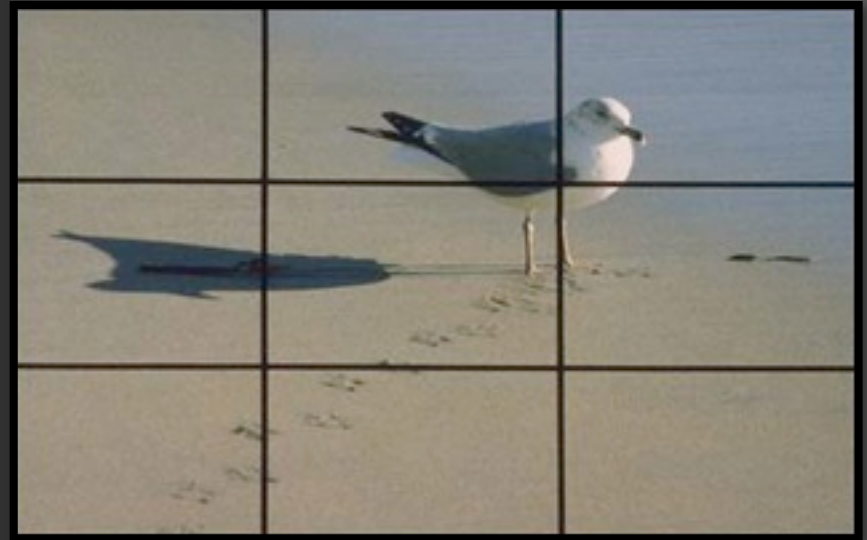
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- One rule of aesthetics suggests that the most pleasing points for your subject are the areas where the lines intersect.
- What do you think?



# Rule of Thirds

- Here, the bird is placed in the upper right hand third intersection point.
- Often, the upper right area is associated with external space, while the lower left area is internal space.



# Rule of Thirds

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- If the lighthouse had been placed directly in the center of the shot, how would the composition have been different?
- Why is this placement effective?



# Rule of Thirds

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- By placing the boat in the lower left intersection facing right, the implication is that the boat is moving to the right.
- How can you use this approach in your shots?





# Rule of Thirds

- So, which photo is composed more effectively?
- Why?
- Are there strengths and weaknesses to both shots?
- What would you do?



# Rule of Thirds

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- How does this photo adhere to the rule of thirds?



# Lines and S-Curves

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- Lines and curves can help direct your viewers' eyes to your subject.
- Notice that this shot also follows the Rule of Thirds.
- The high angle also lends itself to simplicity.



# Lines and S-Curves

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- What lines lead to the effective composition of this shot?
- What kind of lines do you see in your environment that might work well for photographs?



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# Lines and S-Curves

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- Where does your eye start and end in this shot?
- What path does your eye take through this photo?



# Lines and S-Curves

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- Sometimes the curves and lines are more obvious.
- By taking advantage of curves and lines in natural space, photographs can become much more dynamic.





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# Balance

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- Having equal “weight” throughout a photo can lead to a more pleasing composition.
- Here the dark areas on the right are balanced with the light areas on the left.



# Balance

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- The perceived “weight” of the objects in the frame can impact the composition.
- Here, the boat is balanced with the dock. Light and darkness is also balanced.



# Balance

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- This is a great example of balance, and the concept of symmetry



# Balance

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- This is a great example of balance, rule of thirds and our next concept – framing





# Framing

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- Framing can be external or internal in a photograph.
- Here, internal framing is illustrated by the dark areas surrounding the subjects.



# Framing

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- The subject in this shot is framed by the tree trunks.
- This shot also is consistent with the Rule of Thirds and the concept of Balance.



# Framing

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- The subject in this shot is framed by the tree trunks.
- This shot also is consistent with the Rule of Thirds and the concept of Balance.



# Framing

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- The subjects in this shot are framed by the windows.
- What else makes this a compelling photo?



# Framing

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- Okay, so this is taking things a bit literally.
- However, using picture frames to frame your subject can be fun and effective.
- What else makes this a compelling photo?







# Mergers

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- Most mergers can, and should, be avoided. Usually, mergers are the result of poor planning.
- Rarely, mergers can be clever and effective. That's not the case in the shot on the left, however.





# Mergers

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- Most mergers can, and should, be avoided. Usually, mergers are the result of poor planning.
- Okay, so sometimes you can actually have fun with mergers.



# Mergers

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- Yeah, so this one is kind of fun, too.



# Mergers

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- As is this one...



# Mergers

- Most mergers can, and should, be avoided.
- And sometimes you get suckered into doing a merger shot by your cheesy parents and then they use it as a Christmas card.



# Mergers

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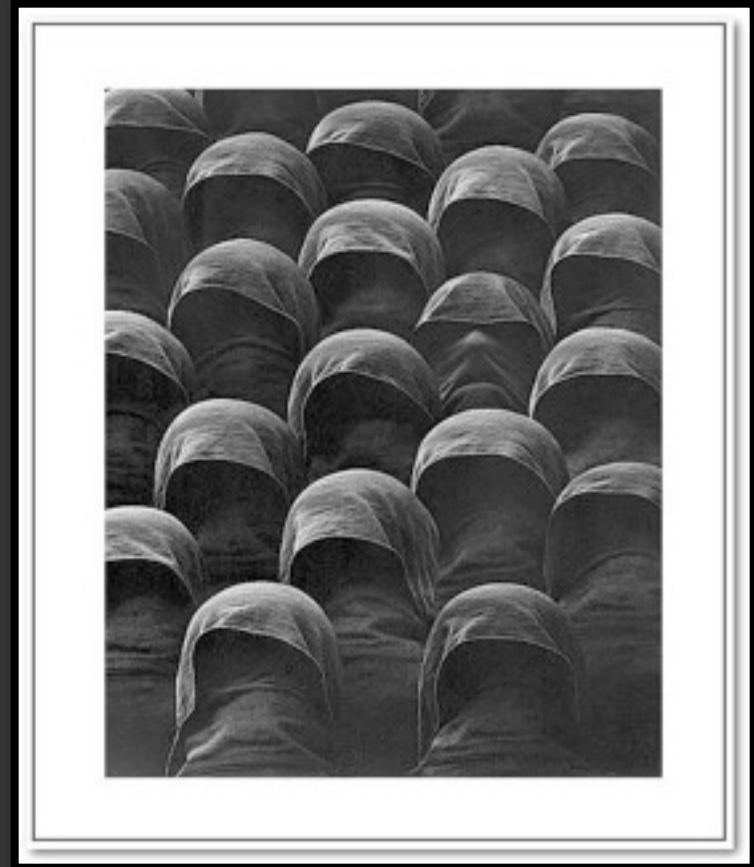
- Here's a merger that doesn't seem to be a problem.
- What did the photographer do to lessen the impact of this merger?
- What can you do?



# Patterns

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- Repetition of elements can be a fascinating composition element.
- What is strong about this shot?
- Where is your eye drawn?



# Patterns

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- Repetition of elements can be a fascinating composition element.
- Where can you find patterns and repetition?



# Patterns

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- Repetition of elements can be a fascinating composition element.
- Where can you find patterns and repetition?





# Patterns

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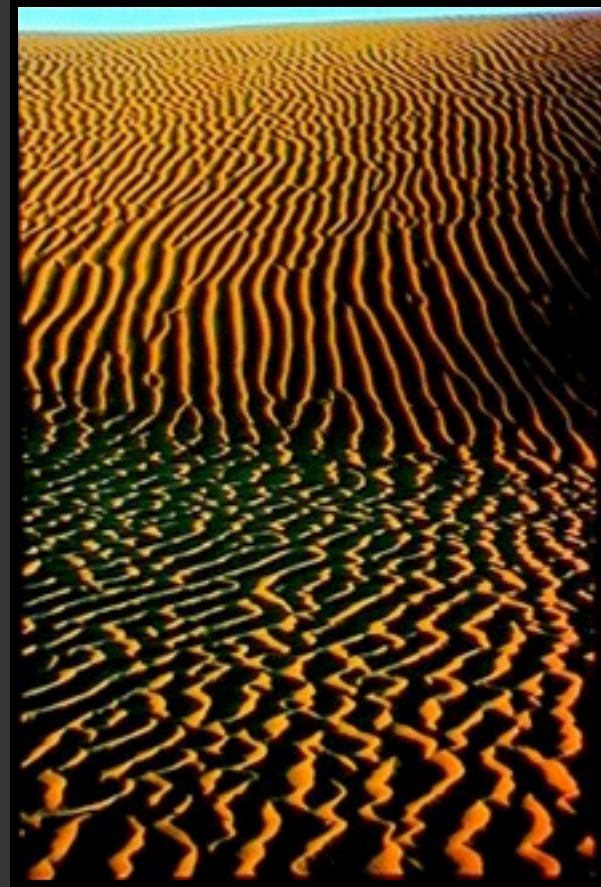
- Finding repetition in nature can be interesting and compelling.



# Patterns

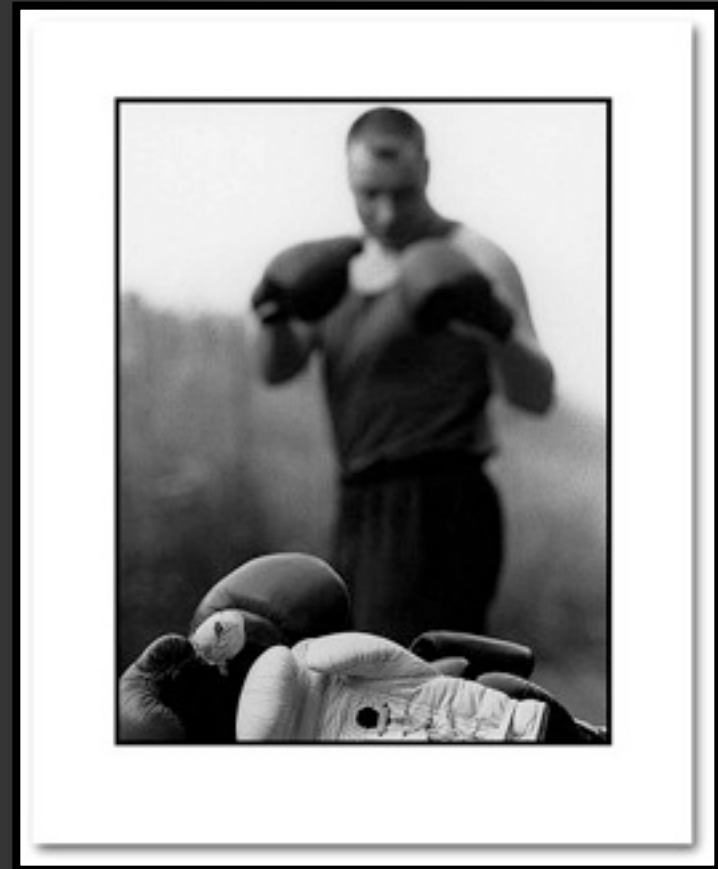
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- Finding repetition in nature can be interesting and compelling.



# Depth of Field

- The two extremes of depth of field are shallow and deep.
- This is a shallow focus shot.
- How does shallow focus impact composition?



# Depth of Field

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- Here's another shot with a shallow depth of field.
- What makes this an effective shot?
- What do you think about how the photographer cropped this photo?



# Depth of Field

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- Here's another shallow depth of field.
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of this shot?



# Depth of Field

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- What are the strengths and weaknesses of this shot?

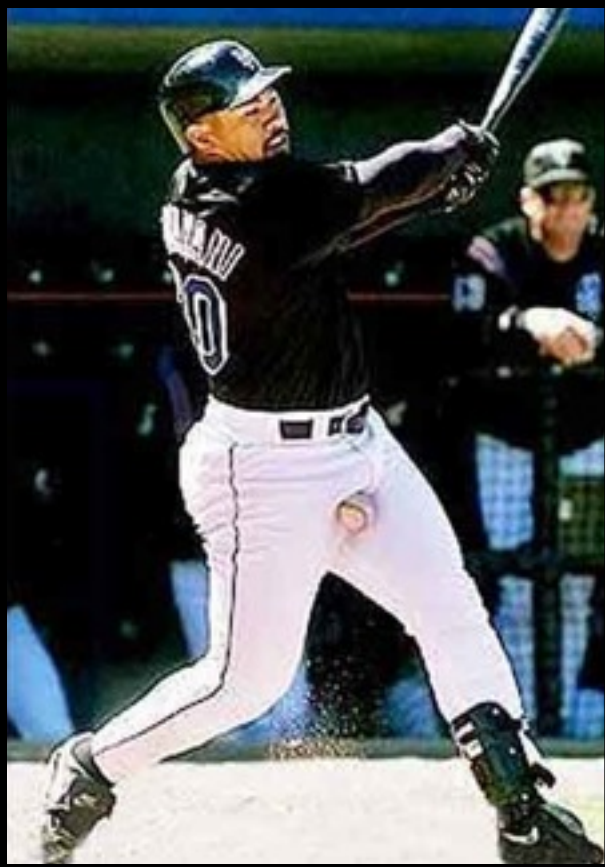


# Depth of Field

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- Here's another depth of field shot that demonstrates depth.
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of this shot?







# Motion

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- Capturing motion can be highly interesting. A photographer can either stop motion (fast shutter speed) or reveal motion (slow shutter speed).
- What kinds of shots have you seen for each approach?



# Motion

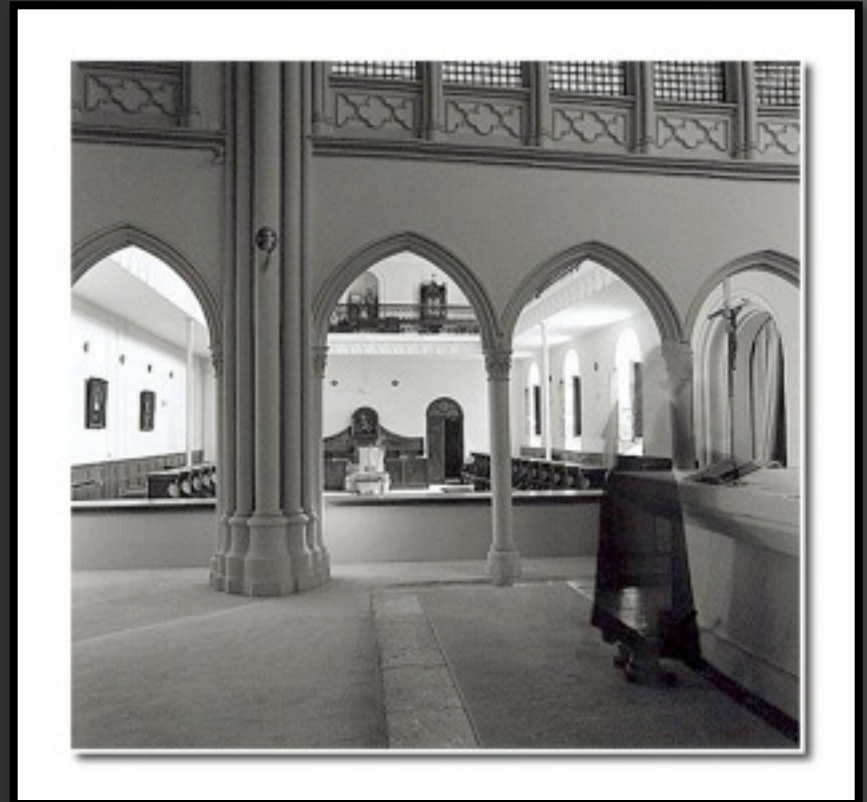
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- Here's a shot revealing motion.
- How was this shot taken?
- What settings were probably used?



# Motion

- What's going on with motion in this shot?
- How was this taken?
- What kinds of things can you do with this technique?



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# Motion

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# Creative Light

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- What's going on with light in this shot?
- How and when was this taken?
- What kinds of things can you do with this technique?



# Creative Light

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- What's going on with light in this shot?
- How and when was this taken?
- What kinds of things can you do with this technique?



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# Creative Light

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- What's going on with light in this shot?
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# The End

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- For more information, see Mr. DeMiero's website:
- [teachfreespeech.com](http://teachfreespeech.com)

