Composition & Camera Techniques

Balance

Can be achieved by using symmetry, using a visual counterweight for a large mass, use of color palette, or by specific arrangement of large masses within the frame.

Framing

Fill the frame! Decide what needs to be in the frame, and what needs to be out. Don't treat your subject like a bullseye. Do a walk-around and try framing your subject matter from every height, angle, and focal length you can think of.

Foreground / Background Relationship

Use something in the foreground to provide scale, guide the viewers eye, or give more information about the subject in the background. An overhanging archway or branch in the foreground will add depth to an image, and guide the viewer's eye deeper into the frame.

Leading Lines

Leads the viewer's eye on a path through the image. Use them to direct attention towards the subject. Shadows, roads, paths, or even implied leading lines such as a gaze, will do the trick.

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The Rule of Thirds

Helps achieve balance within the frame and avoids centering subjects. Divide the frame into thirds vertically and horizontally. The 4 intersections are ideal locations to place subject matter. The horizon is best placed at the upper or lower third, rather than the center of the frame.

Shape & Form

Emphasize shape by contrasting it against a plain background or using backlighting. Emphasize form (3-dimensionality) by using light sources that are not from the same direction as the camera Side-lighting, butterfly lighting, work well for this.

The Decisive Moment

The timing of when you snap the photo. A composition in which each element is in balance, in context and an essential part of a scene. The idea is to see the "moment" about to happen and have the presence of mind to have your camera at hand to capture it!

ISO Settings

Use a higher ISO for low-light situations (400, 800, 1600, 3200) , and use a lower ISO for brighter lighting (50, 100, 200). Remember, the higher the ISO, the higher the digital noise, so it's a trade-off.

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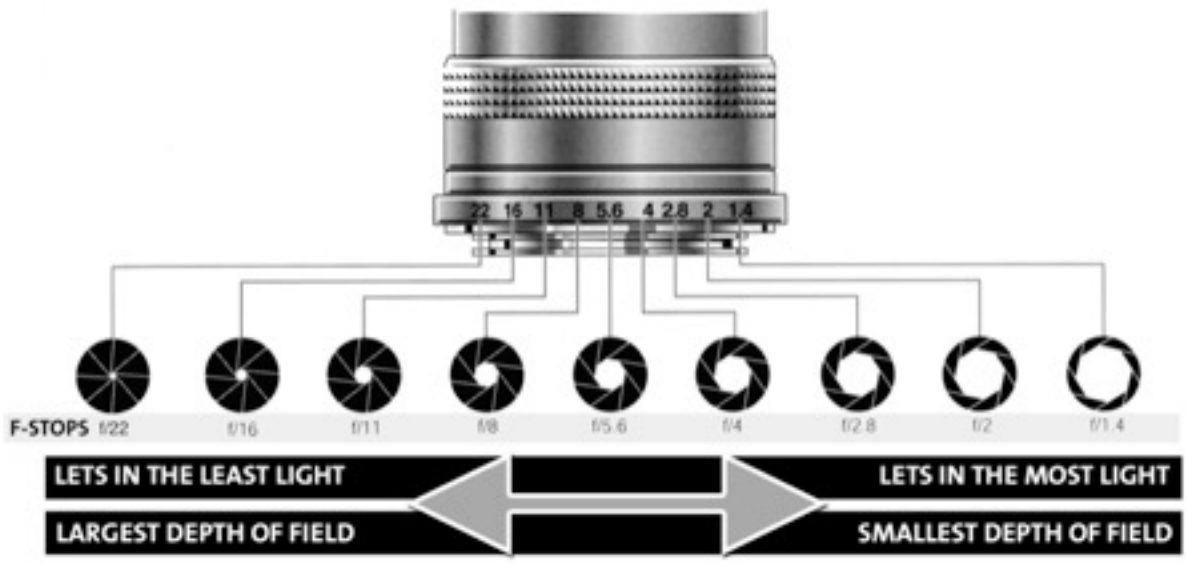
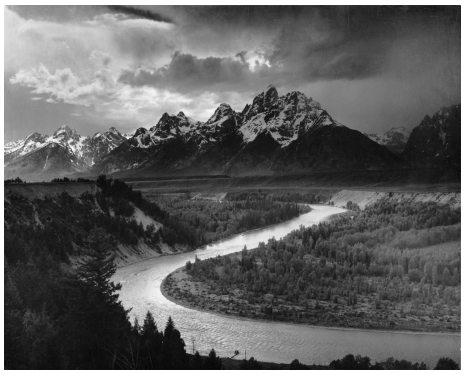


The Aperture & F-stop Setting

The Aperture is the iris of your lens that allows light to enter the camera. The measurements of the width of the aperture are called f-stops. Use the Aperture Priority or Manual mode on your camera to select the f-stop you would like to use. The larger the f-stop number, the less light will enter and the deeper the depth of field. The smaller the f-stop number, the more light will enter and the shallower the depth of field will be. ***Note:*** *F/stops are fractional measurements, so f/2 is a larger opening than f/22. To visualize, replace the "f" in the f-stop with a 1. Example: 1/2 is larger than 1/22.*



Small/Shallow/Narrow Depth of Field

By using your aperture setting to allow a small depth of field, only a small range of the image will be in focus, which you can use creatively to focus your composition on a particular detail. The effect is more dramatic with the use of a telephoto lens (zoomed in).

Large/Deep/Wide Depth of Field

By using your aperture setting to allow a large depth of field, much of the image from the foreground to background will be in sharp focus, revealing a large amount of detail in your image. The effect is more successful with the use of a wide angle lens (zoomed out).

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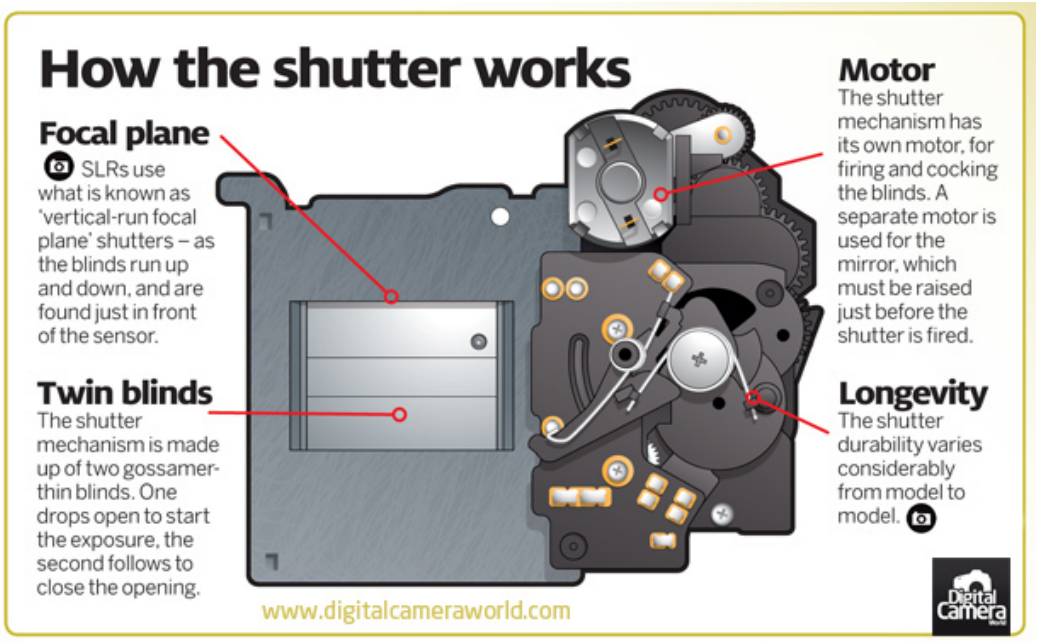

The Shutter & Shutter Speed Setting

The Shutter controls both the exposure and how motion is captured in an image. The longer the shutter speed, the more light is captured and thus more motion (ex. night photography). The shorter the shutter speed, the less light that is captured and thus less motion (ex. a bright summer day). Use the Shutter Speed Priority mode (Tv) or the Manual mode setting to control your shutter speed.

Capturing Motion Blur

Use Shutter Speed Priority (Tv) mode or Manual mode to select a long/slow shutter speed. To have some parts in focus, while revealing motion in others, you MUST use a tripod. This exposure was likely several seconds long with a tripod. ***Note**: anything set to 1/40 sec and below will have some degree softness due to motion blur.*

Freezing Motion

Use Shutter Speed Priority (Tv) mode or Manual mode to select a fast shutter speed. How fast? Depends on the speed of your subject matter. Experiment with various speeds and compare the motion capture in each. This one was shot at 1/8000 sec.