

# CLICK IT! – Photography Workshop

Compiled by Chris McKenna  
Casey Youth Services



*You know when you see a good photo  
but how can you take one yourself?  
There is more to it than meets the eye.*

Photography is the art of capturing light with a camera, usually via a digital sensor or film, to create an image. Although you may not realise it photography has shaped the course of history and continues to do so today. Photography captures a moment in time and images are a universal language anyone can understand. They have many uses such as to tell a story, capture history or send a message and they can help us see beauty in the world around us.

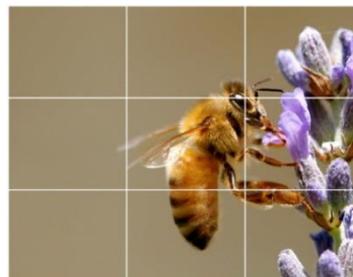
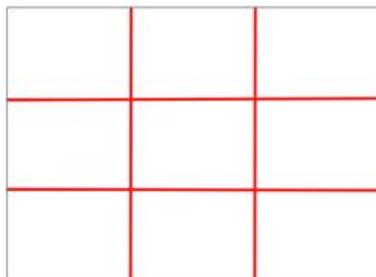
To be inspired check out this brief history of photography.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aqE3X-iospE>

## How to take a GOOD photo

The key to good photography is composition. Here are a few basic rules to follow to make your photos POP!

### The Rule of Thirds

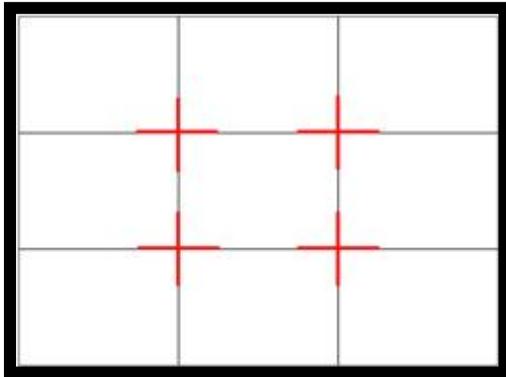
The basic principle behind the *rule of thirds* is to imagine breaking an image down into 'thirds' (both horizontally and vertically) so that you have 9 parts.



As you're taking a photo, you do this in your mind as you look through your viewfinder or LCD display that you use to frame your shot. With this imaginary grid, the 'rule of

thirds' now identifies four important points in the frame that you should consider placing points of interest in as you frame your shot.

Not only this – but it also gives you four 'lines' that are also useful positions for elements in your photo.



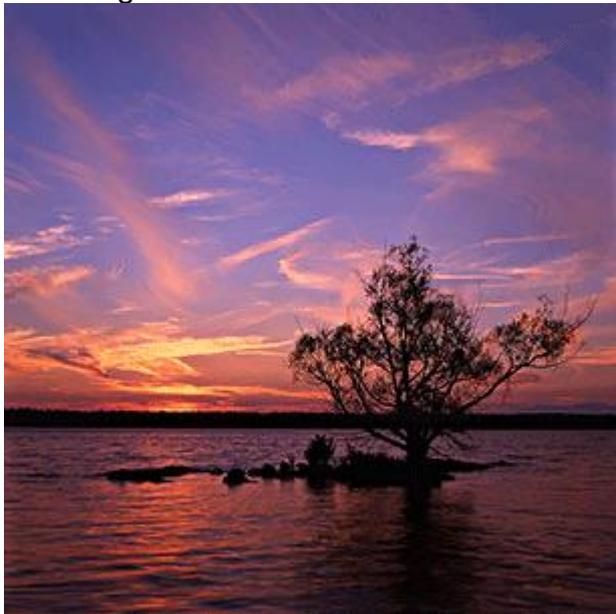
The theory is that if you place points of interest in the intersections or along the lines, your photo becomes more **balanced** and more **visually interesting**.

This enables a person viewing the image to interact with it more naturally. People's eyes instinctively go to one of the intersection points rather than the centre of the shot. Using the Rule of Thirds works with this natural way of

viewing an image rather than working against it.

Notice how the bee's eye becomes the point of focus in the above image by placing it on one of the cross sections.

Look at the below image. It has visual impact partly because of the vibrant sky and reflecting water but also because of how the photographer has **composed** the shot.



Notice how the photographer has placed the tree on the bottom right intersection of the imaginary Rule of Thirds grid. Notice also how the horizon line, where the water and sky meet, is placed low in the picture. If you imagine the rule of thirds grid being placed over the image you will see that the horizon is placed on the bottom line of the grid. This is another important element in composing a good photo. Instead of dividing the photo in half by placing the horizon in the centre, the photographer has increased the visual impact by skilful use of the Rule of Thirds.

Consider the two images below. Both are of the same subject.



But which looks better? Why?

Using the Rule of Thirds comes naturally to some photographers but for many of us takes a little time and practice for it to become second nature. So, practice practice practice!

When learning how to use the Rule of Thirds, the most important questions to be asking of yourself are: **What are the points of interest in this shot?**  
**Where am I intentionally placing them?**

As with all the creative arts, these rules can be broken. Ignoring the Rule of Thirds doesn't mean your images won't be good, however a wise person once said, "*You have to know what the rules are before you can break them*". So, don't be afraid to experiment!

### Other 'Good to Know' Composition Tools

#### **Rule of Odds**

Put simply the 'Rule of Odds' suggests that an odd number of subjects in an image is more interesting than an even number. For example, a group of three people is visually more interesting than a group of four. So, if you have more than one subject in your picture, the suggestion is to choose an arrangement with at least three subjects. An even number of subjects produces symmetries in the image, which can appear less natural.



Related to the Rule of Odds is the observation that **Triangles** are an aesthetically pleasing shape within an image. This does not mean you go around taking photos of triangles! Just bear it in mind when placing objects in the frame. For example. If you are photographing 3 people. Try placing one person at the top of the frame with the other two at the bottom. Viola! Instant triangle.

#### **Leading Lines**

'Leading lines' refers to a technique of composition where the viewers' attention is drawn to lines that lead to the main subject of the image.

A leading line paves an easy path for the eye to follow through different elements of a photo. Usually they start at the bottom of the frame and guide the eye upwards and inwards, from the foreground of the image to the background, typically leading toward the main subject.

## Rule of Space

This rule is used to imply movement. This can be achieved, for instance, by leaving space in the direction the eyes of a portrayed person are looking, or, when picturing a runner, adding space in front of him rather than behind him to indicate movement.



## Perspective

Don't take every photo at eye level and/or front on. Get down low, get up high, move to the side. Change perspective. Try a bird's eye view, try an ant eye view! Experiment!

## Fill the Frame

Quite simply, get in close to your subject. A close-up of a face is more interesting than a shot taken further back.



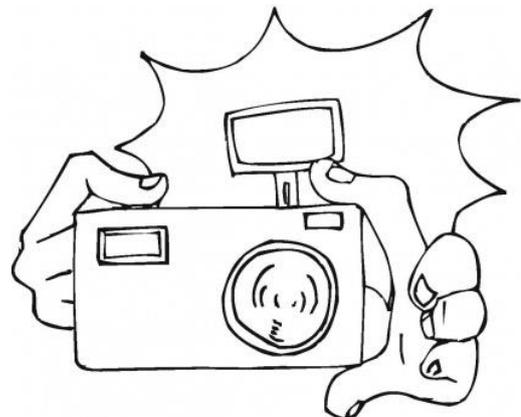
## Slow down

Take time to think about what is going on in the viewfinder before pressing the shutter. How are you going to compose the shot? Don't jump straight in without giving it some thought first.

## Break the Rules!

Again, you can break these rules, but they are useful to know, and you should at least experiment with them. Your photos will improve dramatically if you do. So, get clicking!

## And most important - Have Fun!



*Casey Youth Services offer free personal development and recreational programs for schools including online sessions. Please contact Chris McKenna, Casey Youth Services 97055200 for more information.*