



# KODAK

## Self-Teaching Guide to Picture-Taking

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The exercises in this booklet are designed to teach you how to take very good pictures. All you need is a camera, a few rolls of film, and the time to go through these exercises carefully and thoughtfully. The best way to learn anything is by doing it: Practice. This is just as true of photography as of anything else; and that's the principle on which this booklet is based. Read each exercise; do it; examine the results; and paste your best examples in the spaces indicated. In doing each exercise, be sure to apply the lessons you have already learned in the ones before it. If you are faithful to this booklet, follow the instructions, and complete all the exercises, you'll have a good command of picture-taking.

This is a self-teaching booklet. That means you are both the student and teacher. So be critical of yourself. Ask yourself what each picture is supposed to be demonstrating and how well it does it. Analyze your own pictures and if need be, do the exercise over to improve.

In pasting your pictures in this booklet you can use double-faced tape, common white glue, or one of the spray adhesives sold for picture albums. Pictures can be square, horizontal, or vertical.

When you're finished, save this booklet. Not only will it contain some very nice pictures, but it will be handy to review now and then to refresh your memory on good picture technique.

One more thing before you start. Be sure your camera lens is clean. You can't get a clear view through a dirty window and the same is true for your camera. Carefully blow away any grit or dust, or brush it away with a camel's-hair brush; then gently wipe the surface of the lens with a clean, soft, lint-free material such as KODAK Lens Cleaning Paper. If moisture is needed, either breathe on the lens before wiping or moisten the cleaning tissue with a drop of clean water and gently wipe the lens.

**CAUTION:** Never use a treated cleaning material that you would normally use on eyeglasses for cleaning lenses on photographic equipment. The chemicals contained in these cleaning materials can remove the special coating on photographic lenses.

## **Steady Camera = Sharp Pictures**

The purpose of this set of pictures will be to show you how sharp the pictures taken with your camera can be and how important holding the camera steady is when taking a picture.

Set the camera on a solid, flat surface and take a picture of a solid subject that has some detail (small parts) in it. Be sure that everything shown in the picture is at least 5 feet away from the camera. If you are using flash, be sure that the subject of your picture is no farther away from the camera than 9 feet. Try to avoid anything that might move, such as tree branches, people, or animals. You want both camera and subject to be absolutely still. Be sure that you do not move the camera in any way when taking the picture.

(Put your example here.)

Results: This picture should be clear and sharp with good detail. This will show you the sharpness you can get with your camera when it is held steady.

Now take a picture of the same scene holding the camera in your hands. Stand with your feet firmly on the floor or ground and your weight distributed evenly so that you're not balancing on one foot. Now press the shutter release as smoothly as possible—don't jab at it. A firm grip on the camera is important. If possible, brace your camera against your head to help keep it steady. Many cameras can be held so that one finger of your right hand is on the shutter release and your right thumb is on the bottom of the camera. When you press the shutter release with this grip, you will be making a smooth, pinching motion with your right hand. The shutter will work just as fast when you press it smoothly as when you jab at it. So just remember: ALWAYS HOLD THE CAMERA ROCK-STEADY AND PRESS THE SHUTTER SMOOTHLY.

(Put your example here.)

Is this picture as sharp as the one on the first page?

Holding the camera steady is the most important thing for you to learn.

### **Optional Exercise**

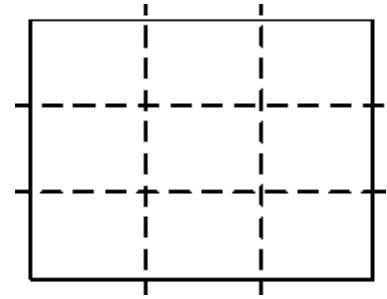
This exercise will demonstrate a good way to practice holding the camera steady. Tape a small mirror to the front of an empty camera. Stand so that the sun strikes the mirror and the reflection is thrown into a shaded area, such as a wall, where it can be seen easily. Notice how the patch of light does not move much when the camera is held steady. But notice how much the light moves when the shutter release is jabbed sharply or carelessly. Now practice pressing the shutter release with a smooth, gentle finger movement to cause the least possible movement of the reflected light.

This exercise can be done indoors by using a flashlight, slide projector, or other strong, directional light source in place of the sun.

## Rule of Thirds

Here is a handy rule to follow that will help you to compose a super picture almost every time. In your mind, divide the picture area into thirds, both horizontally and vertically.

Place the most important part of your picture, your center of interest, at one of the four places where the lines cross. A person who is the center of interest should look or appear to be moving toward the center of the picture.



Try to place horizon lines on one of the dotted horizontal dividing lines. If you are taking a picture of a house and yard, place the house on the center third.

(Put your example here.)

## Level Horizon

One very simple thing that is easy to overlook in taking a picture, but very important in viewing it afterwards, is to keep the horizon level.



This example shows what can happen if you don't. Take a few pictures that have a strong horizon line (sunset, open field, lake) and practice keeping it level with the top and bottom of the viewfinder. Also get used to placing the horizon line  $1/3$  from the top or  $1/3$  from the bottom.

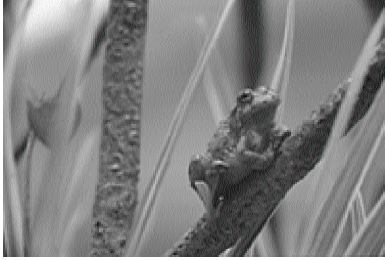
(Put your example here.)

Incidentally, the same idea holds true when taking pictures indoors. Floors, walls, and ceilings shouldn't tilt.



## Fill the Frame

Always move in close enough so that your subject fills the viewfinder.



Instead of this ....



**TRY THIS!**

If you are showing people doing something, be sure that you are close enough to see what they are doing.

(Put your example here.)

(Put your example here.)

(Put your example here.)

Also, be sure to compose pictures of people so that you use all of the picture. Don't put the subject's head right in the center of the picture.



Try several pictures using each of these examples. For instance, practice by taking several pictures of people in which the whole picture is filled with just the head and shoulders of your subject.

(Put your example here.)

(Put your example here.)

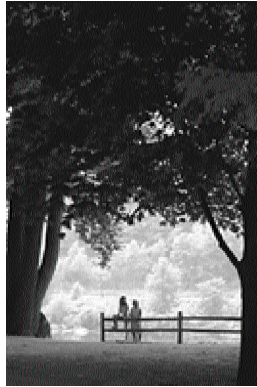
(Put your example here.)

### **Optional Exercise**

Take a roll of pictures of people (or animals) in which the whole picture is filled with just the head and shoulders of your subject. (If you are showing a small pet, show more than head and shoulders, but it should fill the picture.) Remember to have the camera no closer than 4 feet from your subject.

## **Framing**

Here is one very simple trick that will make people think you're a professional. It's called framing. Use tree branches, bushes, part of a building, or even a person to frame your subject.



In the illustration above, we used tree branches to give added interest and depth to the picture. Some professionals have been known to cut a branch of leaves from a bush and hold it in front of the camera to achieve the framed composition they wanted.

Framing is particularly important on those overcast days when the sky is all white or gray and just plain uninteresting. Position yourself so that a branch or something else fills most of the sky.

Indoor pictures can benefit from this too.

Try some comparisons both without and with framing and put your best set on the next page.

(Put your example here.)

(Put your example here.)

### **Optional Exercise**

Take a whole roll of pictures in which every picture shows your main subject framed by something—a person, object, piece of furniture, tree branch, part of a building—or take your pictures through a window, door, fence, flowers, bushes, bicycle wheel, etc. Move around and let your imagination run free.

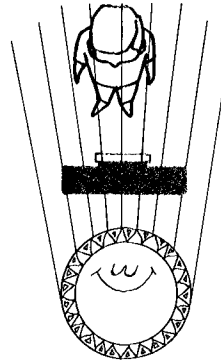


## Lighting

Light, along with a camera, film, and a subject, is a basic ingredient for photography. No light, no picture. But by thinking about light, you make a whole variety of pictures possible.

### Frontlighting

Most pictures use frontlighting, where the light falls directly onto the subject. This kind of light generally provides good, bright, well-exposed pictures.

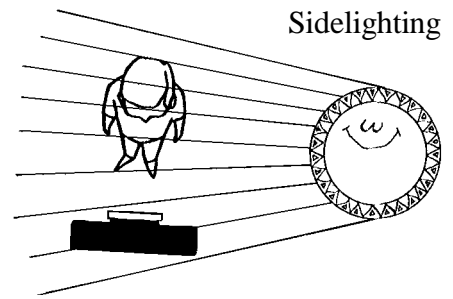


Frontlighting

(Put your example here.)

### Sidelighting

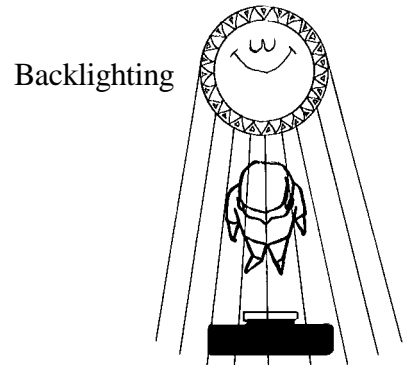
Just as it sounds, sidelighting means that the subject is lighted from the side. This kind of lighting generally casts shadows on half of the subject and produces what photographers and artists call modeling, where the surface of the subject reveals any ripples, bumps, or hollows.



(Put your example here.)

## Backlighting

In this case, the light is in back of the subject. You probably won't get much detail in the subject, but backlighting will provide a strong silhouette and sometimes a sort of halo effect. Backlight can be very dramatic especially in early morning or late in the day when the sun is low. Indoors, silhouettes in front of a window can be interesting.



(Put your example here.)

## Flat Light

When the sky is hazy or thinly overcast so that it appears all white or light gray rather than blue, and shadows are very fuzzy or there are practically no shadows at all, we call the light flat. What we really mean is shadowless light. There's no particular direction to the light; it is coming from all over the sky. This is a perfect time to take close-up pictures of faces. Flat light is very flattering. Furthermore, since it is softer than bright sunlight, you'll get natural smiles without causing your subjects to squint. Try other subjects in flat light too. (It's also a good time to practice framing to cover up the white sky.)

(Put your example here.)

On a bright, sunny day, you can still get some soft, flat-lighted pictures in the open shade. But watch the background: If it is bright, you may end up with the background bright and your subject just a dark silhouette.

On overcast days, you may end up with underexposed pictures if the light is too dim. With most simple cameras, putting a burned-out flash in the flash socket will slow the camera shutter and let in more light. When the sky is bright but you can't see your shadow, use the burned-out flash.

In most outdoor pictures, the light comes from the sun. That means the direction of the light changes throughout the day as the sun moves across the sky. If you are going to take pictures of your home or any other fixed object, watch for the best time of day when the sun lights up the important features or shadows add drama to the picture. By just taking pictures of a building or a statue or a tree at different times of day, you can get an opportunity to study frontlighting, backlighting, sidelighting, toplighting, and on an overcast day, flat-lighting. Try it.

(Put your example here.)

(Put your example here.)

(Put your example here.)

## **Point of View**

There is no law that says all pictures have to be taken from eye level. Different angles can give you some very special pictures.

Lie down on your stomach once in a while and take a few pictures. This way you can get bright flowers in the foreground. (They don't even have to be in focus since the color is what is important.) Even some weeds or a curb in the foreground can help set the scene. You also can avoid a cluttered or ugly background by looking up at people, with trees or a blue sky as your background. If you are taking pictures of small children or pets, getting the camera down on their level can improve your results. The worm's-eye view can be pretty interesting.

(Put your example here.)

Now, climb up on a few things and look down on the world. A high point of view offers lots of different opportunities. With people looking up at the camera, you'll see just their faces in the viewfinder without having to worry about posing their bodies or having the heads all lined up at one level. From up high you can also use grass or a bed of flowers for a background—it's another way to avoid a cluttered setting.

(Put your example here.)

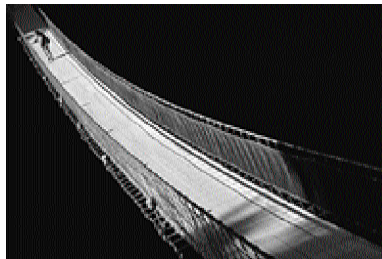


## Leading Lines

A leading line can be almost anything: a road, path, sidewalk, fence, river, stream, hedge, driveway, or shadow. You won't find strong leading lines in every subject, but you can look for them and if they're there, take advantage of them. Lines in a picture should lead into, not out of, the picture and they should lead your eye toward the main subject.

The road or fence will always be there; it's just a matter of choosing the right angle to make it lead into the picture. A shadow, however, is an ever-changing thing. There may be only one time in the day that is just right. So, be patient and wait for the best composition.

Starting a leading line from a corner of your picture will often improve the composition. Watch tree lines and tree tops, curbs, paths, or driveways, and have them lead in from the corners of your picture.



(Put your example here.)

## **Flash**

The light from your flash gets dimmer as you go away from the camera. At about 10 feet it is just barely bright enough to make a good picture with most cameras. Beyond 10 feet there probably won't be enough light. On the other hand, the closer you get to the flash, the stronger the light is and if you get too close, your subject will be all washed-out and white.

To demonstrate these possibilities and limitations of using flash with your camera, take the following picture outdoors at night in the dark. Have three people stand in a line in front of the camera, about 5 feet apart, with the first person about 3 feet from the camera and the last person about 13 feet from the camera. Stand so that you can see all of their faces and take a flash picture of them.

(Put your example here.)

Result: The person closest to the camera should be too light and the person farthest from the camera should be too dark.

Remember this lesson so that you don't try to take flash pictures in large rooms or auditoriums or at the ballpark. (Sometimes in rooms with light walls and low ceilings, enough light is reflected from the walls and ceiling to give you an acceptable picture at distances more than 10 feet. That's a result of good luck, however, so don't depend on it.)

Windows, mirrors, shiny walls, and pictures are some of the things that will cause glare in your flash pictures if you're not careful. To avoid glare, just be sure that you take your picture at an angle to the shiny surface. Try this comparison:

Take a flash picture of someone standing about 7 feet from the camera in front of a window, mirror, or shiny wall. Point the camera directly at the shiny surface.

(Put your example here.)

Now take the same picture but move the camera so that it is at an angle to the shiny background.

(Put your example here.)

This principle also works when you want to take a picture through glass (for example a window or a display in the museum or zoo). If you take your picture at an angle to the glass surface, you'll be able to see right through it without any glare from your flash.

Now that you have had some practice with these basic picture-taking principles, remember to use them in every picture that you take. Keep practicing these rules and you will find that your pictures will keep getting better and better.

Be sure to put your own pictures in this book to illustrate each section. Save the book and review it from time to time to refresh your memory.

And now, as a sort of graduation exercise, take another roll of film in which every picture uses the rules you have been practicing. It will be fun to show how much you have learned.

From now on, all your pictures should be good ones.

## **More Information**

For more information, contact Kodak in your Country.

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