

Notes based on the Kodak Photography Tutorial on Composition

See the full tutorial on <http://asp.photo.free.fr/Composition/photoProgramCompMainClass.shtml> for examples of these guidelines for improving composition.

Tips for improving composition

1. Simplicity

Choose the centre of interest and give it the most attention. Avoid busy backgrounds which detract from the subject. Decide how much of the subject to include and whether it should be framed vertically or horizontally. Sometimes placing the subject off-centre is more dynamic.

2. The rule of thirds

Imagine the picture area divided into thirds horizontally and vertically. The intersections of these imaginary lines are options for placing the centre of interest in a photograph for strong composition. Generally placing the horizon high or low works better than in the middle. The same applies to verticals.

3. Lines

Use different angles to strengthen the lines in a picture. Diagonal lines can draw the eye to the main subject of a photo. An S curve can be used for strong composition, as can geometric shapes.

4. Balance

Balance is about arrangement of shapes, colours and light and dark. Balance can be symmetrical or non-symmetrical.

5. Framing

Framing the centre of interest with objects in the foreground, giving a feeling of depth.

6. Avoiding mergers

e.g. a head merging with trees, cutting people in half or cutting off feet or heads. Near mergers steal attention from the centre of interest.

Also of interest: Digital Photography Master class on www.telegraph.co.uk/hpmasterclasses