

COMPOSITION QUICK REFERENCE FIELD GUIDE



#1: WHAT IS YOUR "WHY"

Why are you standing where you're standing. You need a why in your photo. If you don't know why the photo is being taken don't expect anyone else to.

#2: THE 1/3 | 2/3 RULE

In general, your photo should consist of 2/3 foreground and 1/3 sky. Feel free to break the rule, but for the most part this will hold true.



#3: DIAGONALS AND TRIANGLES

Look for diagonals and triangles in the scene. They may not always present themselves to you while looking with your naked eye, but look on the back of the camera after you take the photo and recompose if possible.

#4: AVOID HORIZONTAL BLOCKADES

Avoid too many strong horizontal lines crossing your photo. Are you behind something that's serving as a blockade in to the photo.



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#5: THE "RIGHT" THIRD

Can you position your key focal point on the right third of the frame? If so, try to do it. Or at least try photographing it both ways (left third and right third).

#6: FIND FOREGROUND

First, find some foreground to help ground your viewer. Then, see if you can shape the foreground with the middle ground in your photo. Be careful not to let the foreground elements intrude in to a key focal point too.



#7: SUN OR MOON?

Can the sun or moon add to your photo? Is there anything that would lend itself to also having a large sun or moon, or even sun star, in the photo?

#8: PATTERN OR TEXTURE

Stand back... look around. Is there a strong pattern or texture in your scene? If there is, can you use it? Can you use a difference lens to show it off more? Is the light low right now? If it is, look for shadows that define patterned and textured areas different.



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#9: CAN YOU GET REALLY LOW?

Remember that getting really low takes whatever is in your foreground and makes it really big? Is there a small puddle, texture or pattern on the ground that will help serve as foreground or even a main element in the photo?

#10: BACKLIGHT?

Stop and look around at what the sun is behind? Is it back or side lighting anything in a way that makes it glow? If so, can you move to a spot to really showcase that light/glow around the edges?



#11: DEPTH OF FIELD

Can you use a more shallow depth of field to showcase something in the photo. Can you use a low f/stop number and focus on the foreground or background to blur part of the photo?

#12: FRAMING

Is there any place you can stand in your scene that will allow you to frame a key element in the photo with other natural elements (frames) around it?

