

Tips for Teaching Nature Photography

The Equipment You Need

You do not need a fancy camera or big lenses to make compelling images. If you use your creativity and your observational skills, you can create beautiful images with any camera – even the one on your phone. Spend time learning about the settings available on your camera so that you know how to use it when you want to make an image.

How to Hold Your Camera

One of the most common issues beginning photographers have is taking out of focus or fuzzy images. Grip your camera with two hands and hold your elbows close to your body so that the camera is as steady as possible. If you can, lean against a doorframe, tree, or other firm structure to add additional stability while you take photos.

Focus on Your Subject

Decide what your subject is going to be and compose your image so that the subject is clear to your viewer. If you are photographing a landscape and your subject is the waterfall in the landscape, make sure the image highlights the waterfall. Similarly, if your subject is a person and there are a lot of people around, get close to the person you want to highlight and find a way to make it clear that you are focusing on them.

Find a Different Perspective

Look for new and exciting ways to photograph your subject. Look up and look down. You cannot always move your subject, but you can physically move around your subject to look at it from a new angle. Don't be afraid to get down on the ground to get a different perspective!

Find a Frame

Use elements in your image to frame your subject, just like you would put a frame around a printed photograph. Use a doorway to frame a person or trees to frame a mountain in the distance. These elements can add dimension to your images and help highlight your subject.

Composition: Leading Lines

Use lines in your composition to lead the viewer's eyes into your image. You could use a road going off into the horizon, a fence that leads up to a deer, or a line of trees that lead your eye to a barn. Move around and look for different elements that create this effect – diagonal lines work particularly well!


Shoot at a Subject's Eye Level


Instead of photographing your dog or cat or baby brother from above, get down at their eye level so that they are staring directly into the camera. Images are more compelling when the subject is looking directly at you.

Experiment

A lot of books and manuals will tell you the rules of photography. Rules can be helpful, but you should also feel free to break them and to experiment. Digital photography allows you to take countless images without having to pay for more film – this means that you can experiment with different angles, different lighting, and different techniques. Encourage your students to be creative and to have fun!

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