



Photographer

“The camera is a remarkable instrument. Saturate yourself with your subject, and the camera will all but take you by the hand and point the way.”

—Margaret Bourke-White,
American photojournalist and
first female war correspondent

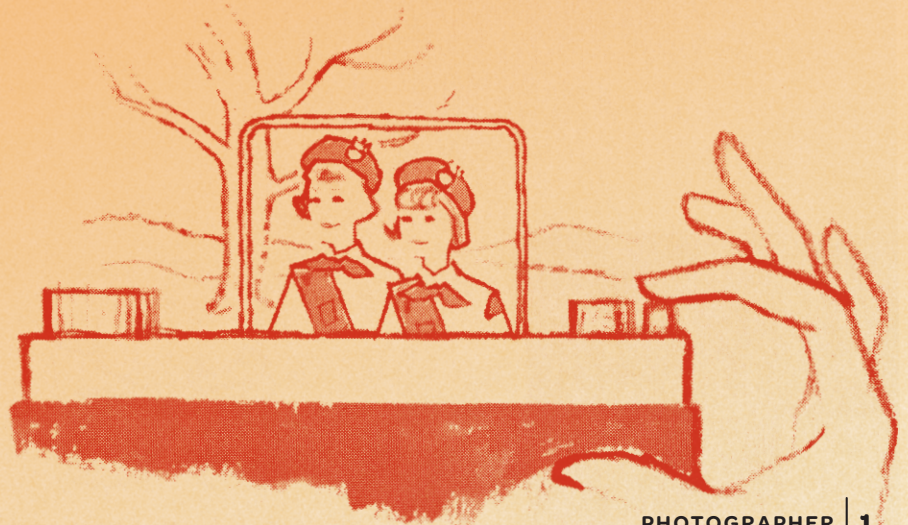
Your photos show others how you see the world. The focus in this badge is on honing your artistic skills with any type of camera and presenting the world through *your* eyes!

Steps

1. Explore the power of photography
2. Focus on composition: Shoot five landscapes
3. Focus on light: Shoot five portraits or still lifes
4. Focus on motion: Shoot five action shots
5. Tell a story with photography

Purpose

When I've earned this badge, I'll know how to capture my vision of the world in photographs.



Every step has three choices. Do ONE choice to complete each step. Inspired? Do more!

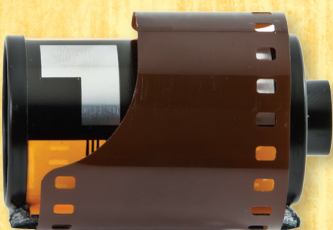
"I simply want people to see the Earth as it is today, as faithfully as possible. What motivates me is the impact a photograph can make within the framework of environmental preservation. The great novelty of our time is that mankind has the power to change its environment, and I want my photos to testify to this fact so people can realize this."

—Yann Arthus-Bertrand,
French photographer, on his
inspiring collection of large-
scale aerial photography titled
Earth From Above

Which do
you prefer?



OR



Tips Before Takeoff

- ▶ **Decide on digital or film.** Some pros prefer traditional film, but you might enjoy the ease of instant digital files. Traditional film requires more patience and processing—though it might be fun to develop film yourself.
- ▶ **Become familiar with your camera.** Read the camera manual, and get to know the basic setup and buttons, settings for light and exposure, etc. A point-and-shoot camera is fine.

STEP 1 Explore the power of photography

Your goal in this badge is to tell a story important to you through photos. So before you delve into the technicalities of your camera and learn basic skills, use this step to explore the stories that photography can tell.

CHOICES — DO ONE:

- ☐ **Go to a photography exhibit.** Look at each photo without reading the accompanying text and see if you can “read” the story it tells. Note what makes at least 20 photos powerful, so you can try the techniques. If you can, gather reproductions of your favorites to keep for reference.

OR

- ☐ **Create a photography timeline.** Make a timeline to show how photography has changed over the years, including at least 10 major moments in photography history. Then, find 10 or more photographs that are especially meaningful to you, research who took them and when, and add them to your timeline. Choose photos whose stories will help you develop ideas of your own.

OR

- ☐ **Get into photo ethics.** What does it take to capture and tell a strong story of conflict, nature, or people? Find 20 photographs from newspapers or magazines and talk with others about the ethics involved in capturing, editing (do you think anything was altered?), and publishing them. Keep what you learn in mind as you take your own photos.

More to Explore

Talk to a pro. Visit a professional photographer to discuss what you’ve found out about photography. Ask the photographer how they got started in the field of photography, what kind of photos they take, and what advice or mentorship they could offer you in this badge.

PICTURES THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

Just as words can inspire people and bring change to human conditions, these three famous shots made a difference.

>>> Migrant Mother, Oklahoma, 1936

Photographed by Dorothea Lange

BACKSTORY: This photograph of Florence Owens Thompson, a poor 32-year-old migrant worker and mother of seven children, depicted the heartbreak of the Great Depression. Thompson had just sold her tent to get food for her children.



>>> Footprint on the Moon, Apollo 11 mission, July 20, 1969

Photographed by astronaut Buzz Aldrin

BACKSTORY: Apollo 11 astronaut Buzz Aldrin's left-boot footprint on the rocky moon surface brought home the enormity of "one giant leap for mankind."



>>> Gandhi at his Spinning Wheel, 1946

Photographed by Margaret Bourke-White


BACKSTORY: Bourke-White was granted rare access to Mohandas Gandhi and photographed him at the spinning wheel, a symbol of India's struggle for independence. However, Gandhi insisted that Bourke-White learn to use a spinning wheel before being allowed to take pictures of him. This is one of Gandhi's final portraits.



“Everywhere you go, you are likely to find people with cameras busy photographing their friends, the scenery, their pets, or anything they enjoy. Almost everyone knows how to take pictures, but it requires knowledge to take good pictures.”

—*Girl Scout Handbook*, 1953

More to Explore



Consider composition in this Photography badge activity from 1963. Take a series of

pictures that are purely artistic—that create a feeling of mood through the use of different textures and/or lighting effects.



STEP 2 Focus on composition: Shoot five landscapes

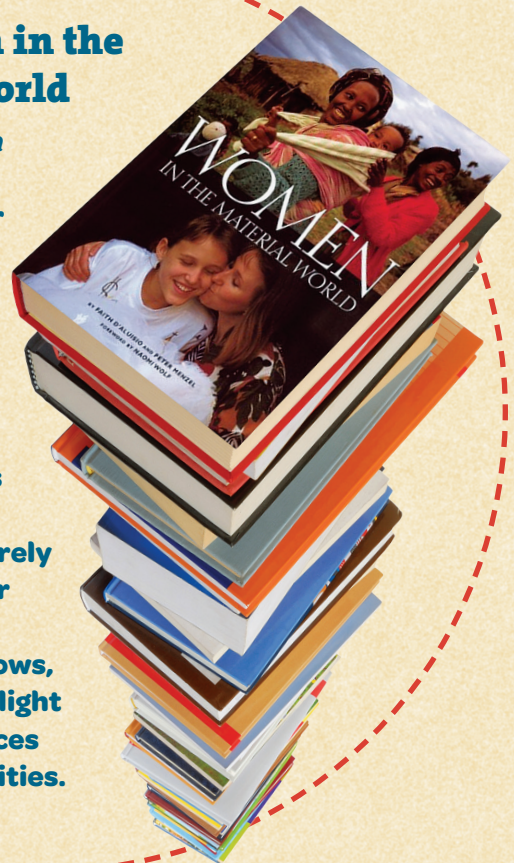
Now, it's time to get into photo basics! Do a little research into the four elements of composition: the “rule of thirds,” framing, depth, and lead lines. When you photograph your landscapes, keep the composition guidelines in mind.

CHOICES — DO ONE:

- ☐ **Capture a day in the life.** Shoot one scene at five intervals throughout one day. If there are people in the scene, how can you turn them into part of the landscape?
- OR ~~~~~
- ☐ **Photograph weather patterns.** Is a storm coming in? Take five photos at different stages—before, during, and after the storm.
- OR ~~~~~
- ☐ **Take five photos from a different vantage point.** Try to shoot images from above, below, or at some other angle. You might capture the landscape in a 360-degree panorama.

Women in the Material World

In their book *Women in the Material World*, Faith D’Aluisio and Peter Menzel share stories and images of women in 20 countries: An Ethiopian woman shares her life in an arranged marriage; a Russian teacher struggles to exist after her husband’s murder; and an Albanian mother cares for her severely disabled young son. Their portraits reveal the women’s hopes, sorrows, and joys, and shed light on our differences and similarities.



“Painting” a Landscape

Squint to blur details. This will allow you to see blocks of colors and shapes.

It can be fun to think of a landscape like a painting. Try these tips to help you see things a little differently.

Don't let your foreground distract from the bigger picture. Are you focused on the entire scene?

Use your hand or cardboard to block the sun.



>>> Common Camera Terms

- **FOCUS:** Adjusts sharpest focus on your desired subject.
- **AUTO FOCUS:** Some cameras include multiple auto-focus points in the viewfinder.
- **APERTURE:** Adjusts lens opening, measured with an f-number, which controls amount of light that passes through the lens. Higher f-numbers mean smaller openings and less light, offering longer depth of field (the part of a scene that looks sharp in the image) and allowing you to shoot objects at a wide range of distances.
- **EXPOSURE:** The total amount of light allowed to fall on the subject during the process of taking a photograph.
- **SHUTTER SPEED:** Can be used to control the light speed for each exposure to create or avoid blurring.



CAREERS TO EXPLORE

Photojournalist

Photo technician

Portrait photographer

Scientific photographer

Industrial photographer

Medical photographer

Digital photo imaging specialist

Photo restorer

Archivist

Animator

Crime scene photographer

Lighting technician

Graphic designer

Photo stylist

Videographer

Museum photo curator

Picture framer

Photo historian

STEP 3 Focus on light: Shoot five portraits or still lifes

What features do you want to capture about a person: her fashion sense, her love of serenity? What features of an object do you want to showcase: a vase's smooth surface, a cactus's spiny texture? As you take five portraits or still-life scenes, experiment with light to see how it can help you emphasize the features you choose. Try flash, natural light, using a flash outdoors, or a light source you create.

CHOICES – DO ONE:

- ☐ **Invite friends to a shoot day.** Set it up with fun locations, wardrobe, and props, and play around with the placement of people and objects to create your five shots.

OR

- ☐ **Capture the same person or object from five different perspectives.** You might play around with more than light: What about distance from the object(s), zoom, and angle? If you're taking portraits, experiment with posed and candid shots.

OR

- ☐ **Grow your image.** Start small and photograph one person or item, then begin to add others, so your image "grows" in each of your five photos. See how the light affects its shadows and shapes, and how different textures and colors interact.

Tip: A black-velvet background absorbs unwanted light and reflection. You might also try a white piece of paper as a background, but watch for shadows.



Portrait Tips

- Alternate between full-body poses and close-ups
- Prevent red-eye by having your subjects look slightly away from the camera—turn on room lights to help shrink pupils
- Crack your friends up to get a natural smile instead of a forced one!



STILL-LIFE IDEAS

Pick a song you like and find objects to illustrate it.

Tell an emotional story—a romance or a tragedy—through the objects you select.

Choose several objects that represent you—your interests, your values, your outlook on life—and create an autobiographical still life.

Pretend to be a product photographer, and take pictures of household or fashion items as they might look in a catalog.

Pick a number or shape, and photograph it everywhere you see it.

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STEP 4 Focus on motion: Shoot five action shots

Try to stop motion and retain a strong sense of movement by doing one of the choices below.

CHOICES – DO ONE:

- ☐ **Take photos of a group or an individual in motion.** A group could be a sports team, a dance company, or your friends running. Capture an individual in five stages: maybe a pole vaulter picking up her pole, running, taking off, going over the pole, and landing ... or five quick shots at the top.

OR

- ☐ **Take photos of faces in motion.** Capture five different faces in action, or the same person with five different active expressions—perhaps a growing smile, a nod, a wink, a blink, or a vigorous head shake.

OR

- ☐ **Take photos of objects in motion.** Shoot five different objects, or one object in five different stages of motion—perhaps a basketball, a fast car, a falling leaf, or a festive spritz of bubbles.

PRO TIP

If you're not using a tripod, hold your breath when you press the shutter; that helps keep the camera steady. If you are standing, brace your elbow against your chest. If crouching, use your knee to support your elbow.



Secrets of Food Stylists

Remember that photograph of a delicious-looking hot-fudge sundae? It was probably motor oil poured over mashed potatoes. Shooting real food is almost impossible: Hot food gets cold, frozen foods melt, and fruit turns brown. Here are some food-styling secrets from the pros (remember, don't try this at home!).

When shooting a drink, use acrylic cubes instead of real ice cubes.

A blowtorch browns the edges of raw hamburger patties and hot dogs.

Paint brown shoe polish on raw meat to make it look succulent.

To make lettuce look fresh, spritz it with water from a misting bottle.

Spray deodorant on grapes to give them a frosty veneer.

Soak and microwave cotton balls, then place in a bowl to make a dish look steaming hot.

Camouflaged toothpicks hold sandwiches together.

Use white glue instead of milk in cereal photos. It keeps the flakes in place.

Motor oil looks like syrup in a photograph, so it's often poured over pancakes.

Hungry yet?



How to
share?



or



STEP 5 Tell a story with photography

Use your new skills to tell a photographic story that means something to you. Do you want to show others a cause close to your heart, or create the story of you for a résumé or college application? Take your photographs, then share them in one of these ways.

CHOICES – DO ONE:

- ☐ **Stage a photo exhibit.** Show your photos at home, school, or at a community center.

OR

- ☐ **Make a digital slide show.** Post your photographic story in a private online space for family and friends.

OR

- ☐ **Create a photo album or scrapbook.** Share your creation with others.

More to Explore

Explore your community in photos. Pretend you're a

Girl Scout from 1963, and do this activity from their

"Your Community—Yesterday,

Today, Tomorrow" project: Compare old photographs of your community—"Main Street," schools, historical sites—with

current photographs. What changes have been made in transportation? Have new

industries replaced old ones? Has there been a shift in the central business district? Have

supermarkets, shopping centers, airports, and superhighways changed the mode of living?

Collect all your "yesterday, today, and tomorrow" pictures, drawings, facts, and predictions and work them into an attractive exhibit. Offer to display it in a local library, high school, or lobby of a civic building, bank, or newspaper office building.



SIX HINTS FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS

>>> Avoid common mistakes:



1. BOUNCE LIGHT

Reflected light from light buildings, pavements, or water areas can be bounced against your subject to supplement the direct source of light.

2. BEWARE NOON SUN

Sunlight directly overhead causes deep shadows under eyes, nose, and mouth. Snap people during midmorning and afternoon for flat, flattering light.

3. KEEP YOUR DISTANCE

If you're using autofocus, it sometimes won't allow for sharp pictures up close. Step back, or see if there's a macro setting if you want to close in on your subject.

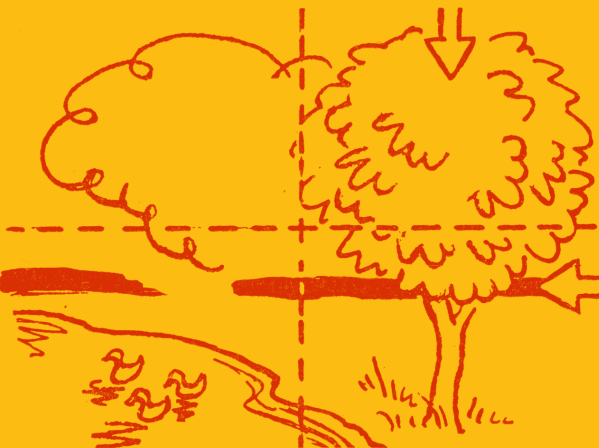


4. USE FLASH OUTDOORS AS WELL

If it's a cloudy day, shoot with your flash on to add contrast. Or try the flash when sunlight is at the side to fill in shadows on people.

5. CAMERA ANGLE

Move the camera around and get high or low. Try to change the way you hold your camera when it's appropriate — vertically instead of landscape. Sometimes you can even use the camera on a diagonal angle to produce some interesting results.



6. AVOID DEAD CENTER

Draw or imagine crosslines midway on your viewfinder. Keep horizon well below (or above) center and the main subject off-center for composition.

Look for opportunities to be creative and think of unexpected ways to photograph your subjects using light, positioning, composition, or movement to your advantage.



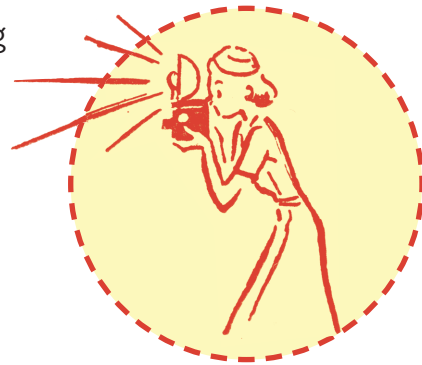
Add the Badge to Your Journeys

All your Leadership Journeys invite you to do a Take Action project. Photography skills will come in handy. You might:

- Show before and after shots of how you made a difference
- Use photos to motivate people to help you
- Thank all those who helped you with photo gifts

Now that I've earned this badge, I can give service by:

- Educating and inspiring others by using photographs to support a cause
- Documenting an important event for my family or community
- Giving a basic photography course to other Girl Scouts



I'm inspired to: