

Chapter 5 – Composition

The most important part about shooting is how you are framing the visual – be it an interview sound bite or beautiful scenery. It is through your lens that we look through the camera and see the world.

Achieving a sense of composition is something that will happen over time, but there are basic guidelines to follow in order to start visualizing, composing and shooting better looking images with an interesting ‘perspective.’

TIPS:

- Pay attention to detail around you.
- Pay attention to the lighting and if its not very good natural light, consider re-shooting when there is better natural light (plan the shot!)
- Framing – a composition is made even stronger by framing it with natural objects and architecture around it.

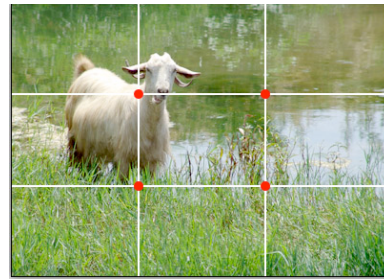
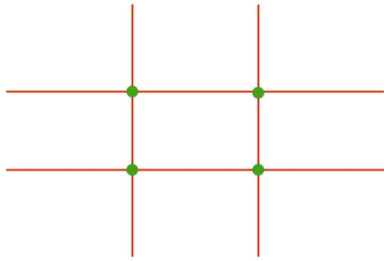
GUIDELINES:

1. Balance in the Frame - An unbalanced object or scene causes discomfort in a viewer, so, unless this is a desired effect, we should strive to ensure that our images are balanced.

- You can use horizontal and vertical axes for symmetrical or asymmetrical balance. Asymmetrical balance is always more interesting – see *Rule of Thirds* below.
- You can use color as a way to balance the image. The eye is more attracted to color than to a neutral image, so a small region of color, especially a bright color, can balance a larger neutral or dull colored region. Adjacent complementary colors weigh more than adjacent similar colors.
- You can focus on interesting shapes as a small, complicated shape can balance a large simple shape. Also, a large uncluttered area can balance a small busy area containing many shapes. We can minimize busy areas by placing them in shadow or enhance them by lighting them well.
- You can use distance as a way to balance out the image. A smaller object farther away from the center will balance a larger object that is closer to the center. Even if we cannot move an object in a scene, its visual weight can be affected by the lighting – see *Depth of field* below.

2. Rule of Thirds - A visual guideline that image-makers use to help compose shots that are both pleasing and balanced to the human eye. Divide your

view-screen into thirds both horizontally and vertically. This results in 9 boxes, with 4 main intersection points.



- Placing your subject along one of the inner lines or intersection points may generally make your shot more visually pleasing.
 - This rule applies for images taken horizontally (the way digital format video shoots) or as vertical shots. Just keep the grid in mind!!
- 3. Space in direction of eye line** – If the character/people in the frame are looking towards the right, there should be more space on the right side of the frame. Using the rule of thirds, the person should not be positioned smack in the middle, so with that in mind, there should be more room in the direction of the eye line.



- Positive Space – is where the shapes and forms exist.
 - Negative Space – is the space around and between the subject(s) of an image.
- 4. Head space** – When composing a shot for an interview or focusing on subjects, make sure there is enough room above the head and the face is not cropped. Unless you are trying to show a gritty image of the person, you should always leave 1-2 inches above the person's head.



5. Flow of Lines, Elements and Space – Always follow the flow and shoot in the direction where you can capture the direction the movement is towards.



- In this image, if you were shooting this and everyone is walking towards the right, you must walk backwards or figure out a way to position yourself so you can shoot them walking towards you.



- In this image, the direction of the movement is upwards as the boys are bouncing balls above their heads. So the use of a low angle shot works here more than the rule of thirds. It is about balancing out the image.

4. Depth of field – is the portion of a scene that appears acceptably sharp in the image. Oftentimes this can be created by lighting in the composition that will illuminate what is in focus.

