

# GCSE PHOTOGRAPHY (AQA)

## Course Structure.

Throughout year 10 you will be set two small projects that will allow you to explore camera settings, photography techniques and the visual elements. After this you will start your sustained (longer) project that will finish at the start of year 11. You will choose the topic of this project from a list of suggested themes.

Each week you will be expected to complete a photoshoot for the project you are investigating.

You **MUST** upload your images to your school google drive accounts before you arrive for the lesson.

## Learning Cycle 1: Visual Elements and Landscape

### Cycle 1 Homework:

1. Please take 30+ images of leading lines with a focus on landscape.
2. Photoshoot analysis
3. Please take 30+ photographs of a local landscape/natural forms capturing the rule of thirds and focal point (close up/aperture/depth of field).
4. Photoshoot analysis.
5. Please take 30+ photographs of a local landscape/natural forms capturing the rule of thirds and focal point (close up/aperture/depth of field).

Year 10

## Component 1:

Create a portfolio containing at least 2 projects.

(e.g. Visual Elements and Texture)



Online/ paper sketchbook.  
Photoshop, hand editing, studio  
lights, trips

Year 11

## Component 2:

Exam project

January 2025 AQA  
externally set paper given to  
you.

You choose a theme to  
respond to (create a project  
from your chosen theme -  
word).

10 hour exam.

# How are both GCSE Photography components marked?

**(AO1)**

## **RESEARCH**

Artist Research and the development of the project

24 Marks

**(AO2)**

## **EXPERIMENT**

Own trials and how you develop and refine your ideas

24 Marks

**(AO3)**

## **IDEAS**

Mind maps, photographs, annotations

24 Marks

**(AO4)**

## **RESPOND**

A personal and meaningful final piece

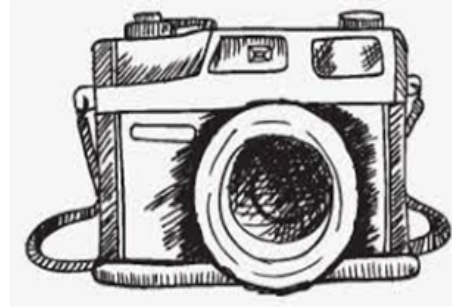
24 Marks

Grade boundaries June 2018

**9**=81 **8**=74 **7**=68 **6**=61 **5**=54 **4**=47 **3**=34 **2**=21 **1**=9

# How to complete your homework: TOP TIPS

Be organised and ensure you are keeping up to date with photoshoot homeworks so you have your images ready to edit in lesson time.



Be  
organised

Use your  
time  
wisely

Edit your images in lesson time. Upload photos to drive/ contact sheets at home to use Photoshop in school.

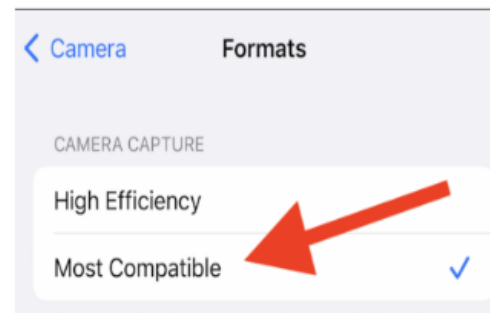
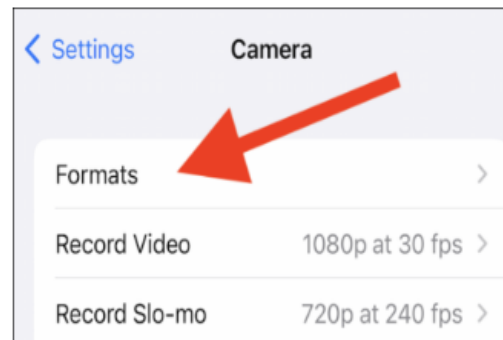
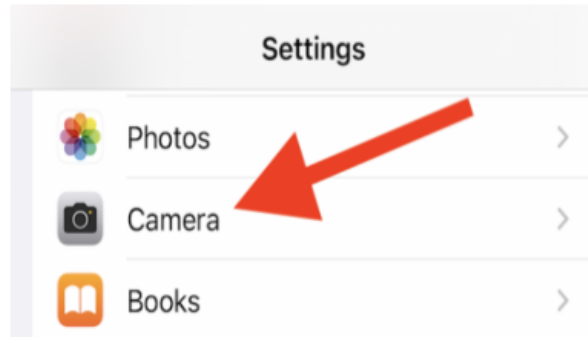
Contact your teacher if you have any issues before your homework deadline.

Contact  
Sheet  
(thumbnail  
images)

NOTE: If you are photographing using your phone, check your settings...

If you are using your phone to take photos for your project change the camera settings to get the most compatible file.

When you upload your photos they will be a jpeg and will open in photoshop and your files.



## 1. Settings

## 2. Camera

## 3. Formats

## 4. Most Compatible



## List of Visual Elements

*the 'things' that make up an image*

- Line** - actual or structural lines within the composition.
- Shape** - areas defined by their edges within the photograph.
- Form** - the three dimensional quality of an object or shape - its length, width and depth.
- Tone** - describes the darkness or lightness of a particular area in an image. Shading from light to dark tone is often used to emphasize the *form* (an object's 3D quality).
- Colour**- hues= different intensity and saturation of colours
- Space** - the space taken up by objects or the space in-between objects (sometimes called negative space).
- Texture**- surface qualities of the image.



LINE



COLOUR



SHAPE  
FORM



SPACE

TONE



TEXTURE





## Composition

The composition relates to how you wish to present your subject matter. You may need to eliminate certain distracting or displeasing elements – for example, a colour which stands out too prominently (obviously), or a particular shape which leads you out of the frame or doesn't sit well with the other patterns in the image.

Try to make your images inviting – encouraging viewers to really look – so even if they're unsure of the actual subject matter, they can still appreciate the shapes and forms which make up the image itself.



## Simplicity

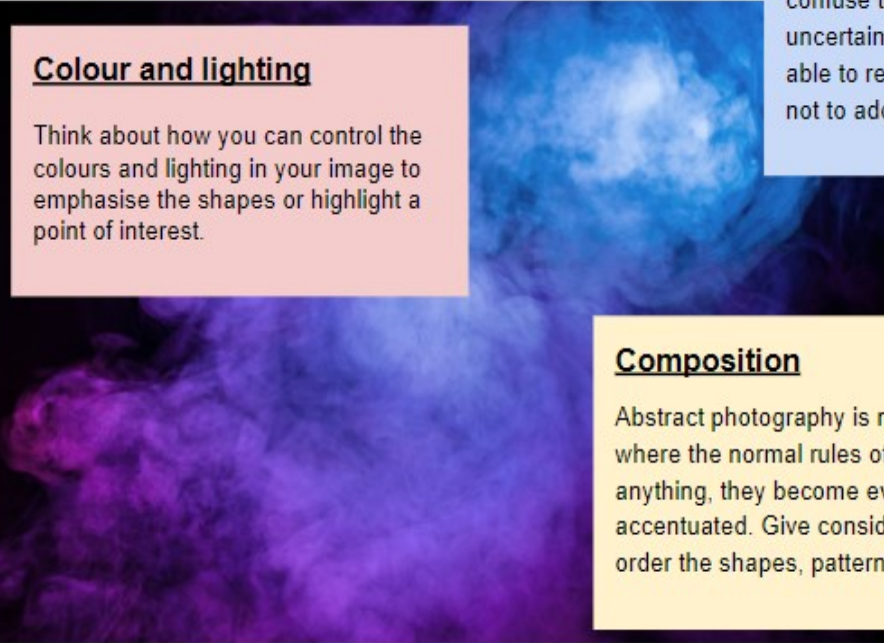
Remove any unwanted or distracting elements and don't confuse the viewer. There's likely to be an element of uncertainty in the viewer's mind already as they may not be able to recognise or determine the original subject matter. Try not to add to the confusion.

## Top Tips

- Start with everyday objects,
- Use elements of design to your advantage,
- Go macro (extreme close-up)
- Capture movement - shutter speed and leading lines
- Use lighting,
- Experiment with different shooting styles and angles,
- No distraction in the shot,
- Look for mood, mystery and intrigue!
- Be flexible and experiment!

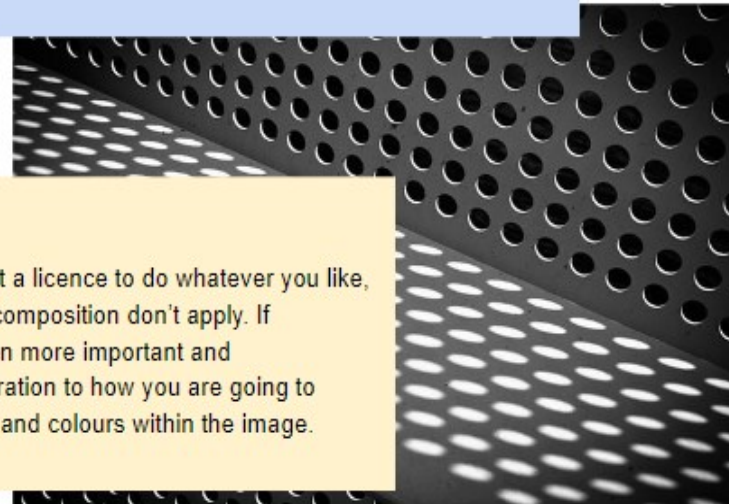
## Colour and lighting

Think about how you can control the colours and lighting in your image to emphasise the shapes or highlight a point of interest.



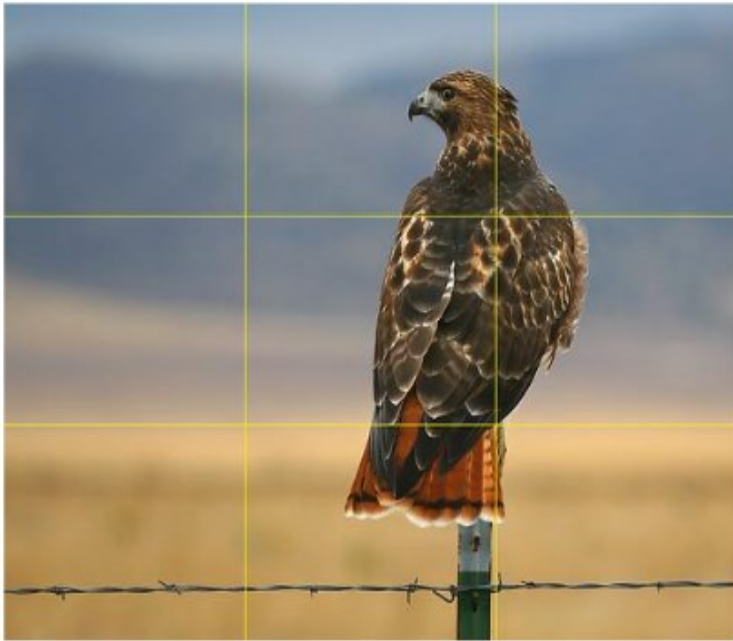
## Composition

Abstract photography is not a licence to do whatever you like, where the normal rules of composition don't apply. If anything, they become even more important and accentuated. Give consideration to how you are going to order the shapes, patterns and colours within the image.





# The Rule of Thirds



# Focal point



# Leading lines

# GCSE Photography keywords

## Formal Elements

Line  
Pattern  
Texture  
Form  
Shape  
Tone  
Colour

## Camera

Aperture  
Shutter Speed  
Depth of Field  
Focus  
ISO  
DSLR  
Lens

## Image

Light  
Shadows  
Composition  
Focal point  
Leading lines  
Subject  
Framing  
Angle of view

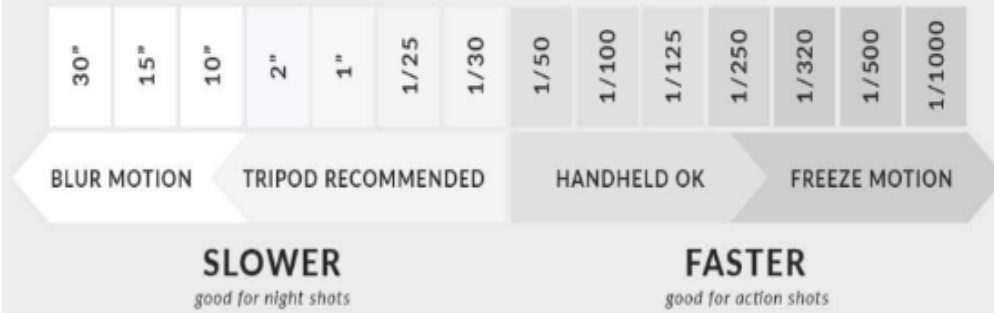
## Image

Blur  
Brightness  
Rule of thirds  
Geometric  
Negative space  
Balance  
Repetition

## Editing

Photoshop  
Adjustments  
Layers  
Curves  
Levels  
Crop  
Selection

## SHUTTER SPEED



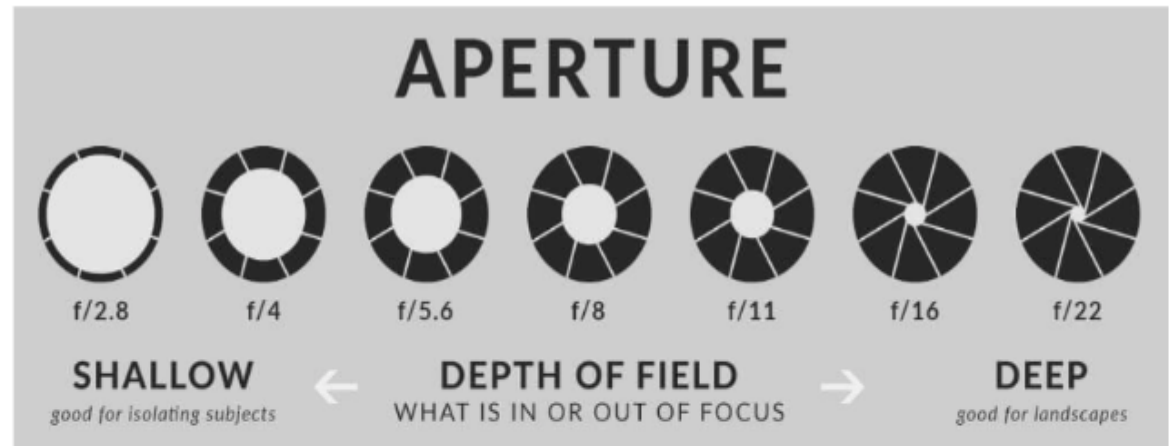
## SHUTTER SPEED

How clear do you want your photos? The shutter speed is controlled by a curtain that controls the time during which light reaches the sensor. Bulb allows you to control the shutter speed with the shutter button. You may need to use a tripod to stop camera shake.

## APERTURE

How much of the background do you want in focus (depth of field)? Aperture is measured in f stops. With a small aperture the camera will set a long shutter speed and you may need a tripod.

Low number= Large aperture=Shallow  
High number= Small aperture =Deep



100 ... 200 ... 400 ... 640 ... 800 ... 1600 ... 3200

LOWER  
*good for bright or outdoor shots*

LIGHT SENSITIVITY  
BASED ON FILM SPEED

HIGHER  
*good for lower light night shots*

## ISO

The ISO changes how sensitive the sensor/film is. The higher the ISO the the higher the risk of digital noise.





EXPOSURE- The amount of light allowed to hit the sensor; the lens aperture controls the amount of light and the shutter speed controls the amount of time the light hits the sensor.

SHUTTER-Blades or a curtain that controls the time during which light reaches the sensor.

F - STOP- A number that indicates the size of the lens opening . The common f-numbers on 35mm cameras are f1.4, f2, f2.8, f4, f5.6, f8, f11, f16, and f22. The larger the f-number, the smaller the lens opening, f22 is the smallest in this series.

DEPTH OF FIELD-The distance between the nearest and farthest objects that appear in focus in the photograph. Depth of field depends on the lens aperture, the focal length of the lens, and the distance from the subject.

NOISE- When the image produces unwanted grains in the picture. This is common when you use a high ISO setting in low light.

SENSOR-a camera's image sensor receives the light coming through the lens into the camera, and turns that light into an image.

FOCAL LENGTH-The focal length of the lens is marked in millimetres on the lens mount. 18mm lens has a shorter focal length to a 200mm lens.

# Photography Research

Your page must show an understanding of the photographer's work. For example if they edit in black and white, consider a black and white title and background.

## You must include...

- Photographers images
- Creative Title
- Key analysis analysis
- Own opinion
- Creative composition



RESEARCH (AO1)

EXPERIMENT (AO2)

IDEAS (AO3)

RESPOND (AO4)

**Photography: Learning Cycle 1**

# HELPSHEET: Analysing photographs

## 1) Content

- Describe the photograph as though you were explaining it to someone who can not see it. Explain how the image uses the visual elements. →
- What camera settings did you use? Explain the effect of these settings. →
- What is the subject matter? (What's your composition about?)
- Explain the effect of the photography techniques that have been used. →

## The visual elements:

- Line
- Tone
- Colour
- Form/Shape
- Texture
- Pattern
- Composition

- ISO
- Aperture
- Shutter Speed

- Focal point
- Leading lines
- Rule of thirds
- Depth of field
- Balance
- Viewpoints

## 2) Connections and Context

- What type of photography is the image?  
(portrait, landscape, abstract, advertisement, fashion, documentary, wildlife etc).
- How does it link to your project.

## 3) Review

- What do you like about the image?
- What has been successful?
- What inspiration can you take from this image to help you to create more successful images?



### 1. Context (background info).

- Photographers life:  
**Time of life-death:** What was happening at this time that has/does influence their work?  
**Where** were they living?  
**What** inspired their work?
- **What genre** (type) of work did they create e.g. landscape, portrait, documentary photography etc.
- **Compare** their work to another photographer who also works in the same genre.

### 2. Subject and meaning.

- **Describe** the image as if you are explaining it to someone who cannot see it.
- **Subject:** What is the image about? What is it trying to show or focus on?
- **Theme:** Is the image part of a bigger series from the photographer and if so what were they exploring?
- **Mood or message:** Does the image create a mood or emotional response? Does it portray(show) a message?

**KS4**

PHOTOGRAPHER'S  
NAME and SURNAME

Insert chosen image(s) of  
photographers work.

Label the image with it's  
*Title*, Photographer's name, year it was  
taken.

E.g. *Title*, Photographer's name, Year

### 3. Composition and technique.

- Describe the **viewpoint and composition** (Keywords: Framing, Rules of Thirds, Focus Point, Background/Foreground, Leading Lines, Balance, Symmetry).
- Describe the **visual elements** (Keywords: Line, Tone, Colour, Texture, Shape and Space, Form)
- Describe the **techniques** (Keypoints: Lighting, exposure, shutter speed, digital, darkroom). Has the image been edited?

### 4. Personal response.

- Explain how this image links with the theme of your own project and why have you selected it.
- Reaction: What was your first reaction to the piece? What did you notice first? What mood/feeling does it create? What do you like/dislike about the work?
- Inspiration: How can you use this image as a starting point for your own photography project?

## ASSESSING A PHOTOGRAPH

FOCUS	BACKGROUND	COMPOSITION	TOPIC	LIGHTING
<i>Is your photograph in focus?</i>	<i>Have you considered the background of the photograph? Are there any unwanted or distracting elements in the background?</i>	<i>Does the photograph have a composition that works? Does it have a focal point, or use the rule of thirds, or have leading lines?</i>	<i>You were given a topic/theme for this task. Does your photograph respond to the topic/theme?</i>	<i>Does your photograph use lighting to good effect?</i>
The photograph is not in focus.	There are unwanted distractions in the background.	A stronger composition needs to be considered.	The theme/topic is not evident in the photograph.	More consideration needs to be given to how the photograph is lit.
The photograph is slightly out of focus.	Some more thought could be given to the background.	Some consideration has been given to the composition.	There is some connection to the theme/topic in the photograph.	Some thought has been given to the lighting.
The photograph is in focus.	There are no distracting elements in the background of the photograph.	The photograph has a strong composition making use of a focal point and/or the rule of thirds, and/or leading lines.	The photograph clearly illustrated/responds to the given theme/topic.	Lighting has been carefully considered in the photograph.

# Photography challenge

## - half term A-Z

Experiment with your camera angles and settings by photographing

the alphabet for your

Photography mini project.

Use your camera to find shapes and patterns that resemble the physical shapes of a letter. Be creative with your viewpoint, getting low or high to view objects and structures from another angle.

Your project must contain the following:

Select one photograph for each letter of the alphabet and add to your slides.

Some handy hints to remember when composing your photographs: Move all around your object or location get high and low to ensure you have the best vantage point. Once you have selected your viewpoint consider the frame. Filling the frame gives the viewer more to look at; however having very little in the frame can be equally as interesting. Consider the foreground and background. Colour will have a massive impact on your photograph too. All this should be considered for each of the 26 letters.

