



Overview

Black & White Photography is a powerful medium that emphasizes light, shadow, and texture, stripping away color to reveal the emotional core of a scene. This assignment aims to deepen your understanding of how to effectively capture compelling black and white images through careful consideration of composition, lighting, and camera settings.

Learning Objectives

- Understand the importance of contrast and tonal range in black and white photography.
- Learn to compose images that emphasize texture and form without color.
- Master camera settings and techniques specifically for black and white photography.

Related Reading

Before you start, read these related blog posts to deepen your understanding:

[Black And White Photography For Beginners](#)

[What Is Contrast In Photography](#)

Before You Shoot

- Choose a subject that has strong textures and contrasts, such as a weathered building or a portrait with dramatic lighting.
- Scout locations with varying light conditions to see how shadows and highlights interact.
- Decide on the time of day to shoot; early morning or late afternoon often provides the best light for black and white images.
- Prepare your camera by ensuring it is set to shoot in RAW format for maximum post-processing flexibility.
- Familiarize yourself with your camera's monochrome mode and how it affects the histogram.

Assignment Tasks

1. Capture a portrait using natural light at f/4, 1/100s, ISO 100 in aperture priority mode, focusing on the subject's facial textures.
2. Photograph a landscape scene at f/11, 1/250s, ISO 200 in manual mode, ensuring the sky has dramatic cloud patterns.
3. Shoot a close-up of an architectural detail at f/2.8, 1/60s, ISO 400 in shutter priority mode to emphasize texture and form.
4. Create a long exposure of flowing water at f/16, 1/2s, ISO 100 in manual mode to smooth out the water while capturing surrounding rocks.
5. Photograph a street scene at f/5.6, 1/125s, ISO 800 in aperture priority mode, focusing on the interplay of light and shadow created by buildings.
6. Capture a still life arrangement at f/8, 1/60s, ISO 200 in manual mode to highlight the textures of different materials.

Stretch Tasks

- Create a series of black and white images that tell a story, using a consistent theme and technique across all photos.
- Experiment with infrared photography in black and white, using an appropriate filter and settings to create unique tonal contrasts.



DO / DON'T

DO

- ✓ Do explore different lighting conditions to see how they affect your black and white images.
- ✓ Do experiment with different focal lengths to find unique perspectives.
- ✓ Do use post-processing software to fine-tune contrast and tonal range.
- ✓ Do study the work of classic black and white photographers for inspiration.
- ✓ Do practice viewing scenes in terms of light and shadow before capturing them.

DON'T

- ✗ Don't rely solely on color images; pre-visualize how a scene will look in black and white.
- ✗ Don't ignore the importance of composition; leading lines and framing are crucial.
- ✗ Don't shoot at too high an ISO, which can introduce noise and degrade image quality.
- ✗ Don't forget to check your histogram to ensure a balanced exposure.
- ✗ Don't shy away from high contrast scenes; they often yield the most striking black and white images.

Reflection Questions

- What emotions do you want to evoke in your black and white photographs?
- How does the absence of color change your perception of the subject?
- In what ways can you improve your composition for future black and white shots?
- What challenges did you face while capturing black and white images, and how did you overcome them?

Technical & Creative Focus

Technical:

- Use aperture settings like f/8 to achieve a good depth of field while maintaining sharpness across the frame.
- Set your shutter speed to 1/125s to freeze motion while capturing details in dynamic scenes.
- Adjust ISO to 200 for optimal image quality in well-lit conditions, avoiding noise in your black and white images.
- Utilize spot metering to ensure your highlights are correctly exposed, especially in high-contrast scenes.
- Set your white balance to daylight to maintain consistency in tones, even when shooting in black and white.

Creative:

- Look for leading lines in your composition that draw the viewer's eye through the image.
- Experiment with high contrast scenes where shadows dominate to create dramatic effects.
- Incorporate patterns or textures to add depth and interest to your black and white images.
- Use negative space effectively to highlight your subject and enhance the emotional impact.
- Consider the emotional tone you want to convey; softer contrasts can evoke calmness, while stark contrasts may suggest tension.