



PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY TIPS

Piper's Activities

Piper would have used a Kodak Eastman film camera to take her photos. Today, we have digital cameras that save time and money. If you're feeling particularly artistic, why not ask your parents if they have a film camera lying around? You might be surprised at your results! Piper had a natural eye for photography—but not all of us are so lucky. Follow these tips and you'll be a shutterbug before you know it.

Things You'll Need:

A digital camera
Friends, family, or pets to photograph

Directions:

Start out by looking your subject in the eye. Direct eye contact is as engaging in a picture as it is in real life. When you're taking a picture of someone, hold the camera at the person's eye level to unleash the power of those magnetic gazes and mesmerizing smiles. All by itself, the eye level angle will create a personal and inviting feeling that pulls you into the picture.

Use a plain background. A plain background shows off the subject you are photographing. When you look through the camera viewfinder, force yourself to study the area surrounding your subject. Make sure no poles grow from the head of your favorite friend and that no cars seem to dangle from her ears.

When taking photos outside, be mindful of bright sunlight. Sunlight can create unflattering facial shadows. Get rid of the shadows by using your flash to lighten the face. Make sure you review your results on your digital camera's screen. On cloudy days, forget the flash! Cloudy weather produces some of the most beautiful photographs. Some photographers enjoy shooting during the "golden hour" or "magic hour." This refers to the hour before sunset and the hour after sunrise. Try shooting some photos then.

Move in close. If your subject is smaller than a car, take a step or two closer before taking the picture and zoom in on your subject. Up close you can reveal telling details, like a sprinkle of freckles or wise wrinkles. But don't get too close, or your pictures will be blurry! The closest focusing distance for most cameras is about three feet, or about one step away from your camera. If you get closer than the closest focusing distance of your camera, your pictures will be blurry.

The Fences Between Us

1.

Portrait Photography Tips



PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY TIPS *(continued)*

Piper's Activities

Center stage is a great place for a performer to be. However, the middle of your picture is not the best place for your subject. Bring your picture to life by simply moving your subject away from the middle of your picture. Start by playing tic-tac-toe with subject position. Imagine a tic-tac-toe grid in your viewfinder. Now, place your important subject at one of the intersections of lines.

Next to the subject, the most important part of every picture is the light. It affects the appearance of everything you photograph. On a great-grandmother, bright sunlight from the side can enhance wrinkles. But the soft light of a cloudy day can hold back those same wrinkles. Don't like the light on your subject? Then move yourself or your subject.

Take some vertical pictures. Is your camera vertically challenged? It is if you never turn it sideways to take a vertical picture! All sorts of things look better in a vertical picture. So next time out, make a conscious effort to turn your camera sideways and take some vertical pictures.

Be a picture director. Take control of your picture taking and watch your pictures dramatically improve. Become a picture director, not just a passive picture-taker. A picture director picks the location: "Everybody go outside to the backyard." A picture director adds props: "Girls, put on your pink sunglasses." A picture director arranges people: "Now move in close, and lean toward the camera." Most pictures won't be that involved, but you get the idea: take charge of your pictures and win your own best picture awards.

Ask a grown-up for help when using knives and other sharp objects, and when using candles. Be sure to use pot holders when handling warm wax.

The Fences Between Us

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