

PHOTOGRAPHY RESOURCE

Photography Composition Field Guide

A compact pre-shutter reference for clearer subject choice, framing, balance, leading lines and deliberate variations.

SHOOT / LOCATION

SUBJECT

DATE

GOAL FOR THIS SET

Before you press the shutter

- ☐ Describe the subject or visual idea in one sentence.
- ☐ Check what your eye goes to first.
- ☐ Scan all four edges and corners for distractions.
- ☐ Check the brightest area and background.
- ☐ Move your position before relying on digital zoom.

Composition tools

- ☐ Try the rule of thirds when off-centre placement improves the frame.
- ☐ Use leading lines only when they guide attention toward something useful.
- ☐ Use natural or architectural framing to simplify the scene.
- ☐ Consider centred symmetry when it better suits the subject.
- ☐ Use negative space deliberately for calm, scale or direction.

People and portraits

- ☐ Keep distracting objects from appearing behind the head.
- ☐ Leave space in the direction the person is looking or moving when appropriate.
- ☐ Check hands, feet and joints near the frame edge.
- ☐ Look for clean separation between subject and background.

Landscape check

- ☐ Check the horizon and vertical lines.
- ☐ Include foreground only when it adds depth or context.
- ☐ Look for a clear route for the eye through the frame.
- ☐ Wait for cleaner light or a less cluttered moment when possible.

Take deliberate variations

- ☐ One wider frame.
- ☐ One tighter frame.
- ☐ One horizontal and one vertical version.
- ☐ One higher or lower viewpoint.
- ☐ One deliberate alternative composition that breaks your first choice.

Quick review

- ☐ Where does your eye go first?
- ☐ Is the subject clear?
- ☐ Are the edges clean?
- ☐ Does the background support the subject?
- ☐ What one compositional decision made the best frame work?

Use with the full guide

Use this sheet as a creative prompt, not a rigid rulebook. Respect privacy, property restrictions and safety when photographing.

Guide: first-notification.com/guides/photography/complete-guide/