Composition

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- Rule of Space
- Focal Point
- Showing Scale
- Balancing Weight
- Leading Lines
- Symmetry and Patterns

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Rule of Thirds

- Instead of centering your subject in the frame, place your subject one-third of the way through the frame.
- First discovered by Greek artists
Off Center
Rule of space
(lead room)

- Give your subject room for movement.
- If the subject is moving, or looking in a direction other than the camera, leave room in front of them to prevent the picture from feeling crowded.
- If the subject is not looking directly to the camera, or looks out of the frame, there should be enough space for the subject to look into.
Rule of space

- Present the moving object with more active space and less dead space:
  - The active space is the area where the object is facing.
  - The dead space is the area behind the subject.

- Builds impact, shows the expression that the object is actually moving and has a destination.

- Allows viewers to instinctively look to where the object is heading, thus, building excitement within the image.
The Focal Point

- Often, the focal point is obvious (e.g. a child, a bird)
- Difficult with landscape, nature, and architectural photography. Without a focal point, the eye simply disregards the scene as background.
- The subject does not simply need to be a person or object, e.g. the excitement of the crowd, or the happiness of the winning team.
- Simplify :
  - Eliminate distracting elements from the picture.
  - Move around the subject to find a non-distracting background, move closer, zoom in, or crop the picture.
  - Blur the background using a short depth-of-field.
Showing Scale

- When the subject’s size is important—such as with babies, puppies, monster trucks, and giant redwoods—you need to include something of a known size in the frame.
- e.g. portraits of newborn babies being held in the father’s hand.
Balancing Elements

- Placing your main subject off-centre can leave a void in the scene.

- Balance the "weight" of your subject by including another object of lesser importance to fill the space.
Leading Lines

- Place lines in your composition to pull the viewer into the picture, towards the subject, or on a journey "through" the scene.

- There are many different types of line - straight, diagonal, curvy, zigzag, radial etc - and each can be used to enhance photo composition.

- Can be architectural elements such as railings or walls, geographical elements such as shorelines or horizons, or organic elements such as trees or people.
Lines

- Converging parallel lines create a vanishing point (a concept created by Renaissance artists) creating depth and perspective.
- Horizontal lines give a sense of quiet and peace.
- Vertical lines feel powerful, solid, and permanent.
- Diagonal lines are more dynamic, conveying movement and change.
- Straight lines feel formal, deliberate, and man-made.
- Curved lines, especially an S-shape, feel casual and add sophistication, nature, and grace.
Symmetry and Patterns

- We are surrounded by symmetry and patterns, both natural and man-made
- Can make for very eye-catching compositions, particularly in situations where they are not expected.
- Break the symmetry or pattern in some way, introducing tension and a focal point to the scene.
- When the pattern continues off the frame, the composition implies that the pattern continues forever.
Symmetry

- Symmetry shows geometric precision and simple beauty.
- When showing symmetry, alignment is critical. The picture must be perfectly centered, vertical lines must be straight, and the horizon must be completely flat.
- Need to disregard the rule of thirds and perfectly center the subject in the frame.
Viewpoint

- Rather than just shooting from eye level, consider photographing from:
  - high above,
  - down at ground level,
  - from the side,
  - from the back,
  - from a long way away,
  - from very close up, etc.
Background

- Often, final image lacks impact because the subject blends into a busy background.
- Look around for a plain and unobtrusive background and compose your shot so that it doesn't distract or detract from the subject.
Depth

- Photography is a two-dimensional medium
- Need to convey the sense of depth that was present in the actual scene.
- Create depth by including objects in the foreground, middle ground and background.
- Can use overlapping, where you deliberately partially obscure one object with another.
Framing

- The world is full of objects which make perfect natural frames, such as trees, archways and holes.
- By placing these around the edge of the composition you help add depth and isolate the main subject from the outside world.
- The result is a more focused image which draws your eye naturally to the main point of interest.
  - Frames can be trees, doorways, window frames, or anything that surrounds your subject.
Cropping

- Often a photo will lack impact because the main subject is so small it becomes lost among the clutter of its surroundings.
- By cropping tight around the subject you eliminate the background "noise", ensuring the subject gets the viewer's undivided attention.
Experimentation

- Digital photography allows experimenting with composition
- Fire off tons of shots and delete the unwanted ones later at absolutely no extra cost.
- Take advantage of this fact and experiment with your composition - you never know whether an idea will work until you try it.
Sources

• http://www.photographymad.com/pages/view/10-top-photography-composition-rules
• http://www.picturecorrect.com/tips/rule-of-space-in-photography/
• Tony Northrup's DSLR Book: How to Create Stunning Digital Photography by Tony Northrup
Assignment

- Take pictures illustrating:
  - Rule of Thirds
  - Rule of Space
  - Focal Point
  - Showing Scale
  - Balancing Weight
  - Leading Lines