



UM PRINTABLES
PREMIUM EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

— A 2-WEEK UNIT · GRADES 6-10

Photojournalism & Visual Storytelling

A project-based, ethics-infused curriculum that teaches students to capture, analyze, and sequence images to tell compelling, truthful stories.

SMARTPHONE-FRIENDLY

PROJECT-BASED

ETHICS-INFUSED

CCSS & ISTE ALIGNED

DIFFERENTIATED

10 Lessons | 50 Minutes Each

Composition Rules · Photo Ethics · Captioning
Sequencing · Photo Essay Project · Exhibition

Premium Mega Bundle — Edition 2.0

MEGA BUNDLE

v2.0



FOUNDATIONS

Unit Overview & Standards

This comprehensive two-week unit introduces students in grades 6–10 to photojournalism and visual storytelling. Over ten 50-minute lessons, students learn to capture, analyze, and sequence images to tell compelling, ethical stories—using the smartphone cameras they already carry.

10

LESSONS

2

WEEKS

50

MINUTES / LESSON

6–10

GRADE BAND

Unit Objectives

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- Define photojournalism and articulate the role, responsibility, and ethical obligations of a photojournalist in a democratic society.
- Apply foundational composition rules—Rule of Thirds, Leading Lines, and Framing—to capture intentional, visually balanced photographs using a smartphone.
- Analyze photographs for context, perspective, bias, and emotional impact using the See-Think-Wonder visible thinking routine.
- Navigate complex photo ethics scenarios, including subject consent, image manipulation, and the ethical implications of cropping and framing.
- Write clear, concise, and informative journalistic captions using the ABCD model (Accurate, Brief, Clear, Dateline/Details).
- Sequence a series of 5–8 images to create a cohesive visual narrative with an establishing shot, action shot, and detail shot.
- Produce a final photo essay demonstrating mastery of composition, ethics, captioning, and sequencing—and curate that essay for a public audience.

Learning Standards Alignment

This unit is aligned to **CCSS-ELA**, **ISTE Standards for Students**, and **NCSS** thematic strands. Teachers in non-CCSS states will find these transferable to state-specific frameworks.

FRAMEWORK	STANDARD	ADDRESSED IN
CCSS.ELA	CCRA.R.7 — Integrate/evaluate content in diverse media. CCRA.W.2 — Write informative texts. CCRA.W.6 — Use technology to publish. CCRA.SL.1 — Participate in diverse conversations.	Lessons 1, 6, 8 (media analysis); Lesson 7 + final captions (informative writing); Lessons 9–10 (publishing); Lessons 4–5, 10 (academic talk).
ISTE	1.3 Knowledge Constructor — Critically curate resources. 1.6 Creative Communicator — Communicate creatively. 2.2 Digital Citizen — Safe, legal, ethical behavior.	Photo Analysis Set + final photo essay curation (1.3); Final photo essay project (1.6); Lessons 4–5 consent & manipulation (2.2).
NCSS	Theme 8: Science, Technology, & Society — Examine media technology and social impact.	Discussions of manipulated photos and misleading crops throughout Lessons 4–5.

Assessment Overview

Formative: daily participation, composition practice checks, caption worksheets, exit tickets (one per lesson), peer feedback.

Summative: Final Photo Essay Project, evaluated using the 4-category rubric (Composition, Storytelling, Captions, Ethics) on page 47.



PLANNING

2-Week Pacing Guide

This day-by-day pacing guide assumes 50-minute class periods, Monday through Friday, for two consecutive weeks. Adjust the schedule to fit block schedules, hybrid models, or shorter class periods by combining or extending the lessons as needed. Each lesson includes built-in buffer time for transitions and technology setup.

DAY	LESSON / TOPIC	KEY ACTIVITY	ASSESSMENT
Mon · Wk 1	Lesson 1 — What is Photojournalism?	Hook: Power of a single image; Photo Sort activity; Photojournalist's Oath drafting.	Oath draft
Tue · Wk 1	Lesson 2 — Rule of Thirds & Framing	Direct instruction on composition; Scavenger Hunt photo practice; pair feedback.	Exit ticket
Wed · Wk 1	Lesson 3 — Leading Lines & Angles	Direct instruction on lines/angles; Perspective Shift photo practice; gallery walk.	Exit ticket
Thu · Wk 1	Lesson 4 — Ethics: Consent & Manipulation	Real-or-Fake hook; ethical framework instruction; small-group Ethics Discussion Cards.	Discussion rubric
Fri · Wk 1	Lesson 5 — Ethics Deep Dive	Cropping Experiment; collaborative Classroom Code of Ethics drafting and signing.	Signed code
Weekend	Optional Extension	Students capture 3–5 "everyday moment" photos at home using composition rules.	Sharing on Mon
Mon · Wk 2	Lesson 6 — Reading a Photograph	See-Think-Wonder instruction; Photo Analysis Activity Set in small groups.	STW worksheet
Tue · Wk 2	Lesson 7 — Art of Caption Writing	ABCD model instruction; Caption Writing Worksheet practice; peer review.	Worksheet
Wed · Wk 2	Lesson 8 — Sequencing a Photo Story	Comic-strip hook; three-shot framework; Sequence Reconstruction activity.	Sequencing task
Thu · Wk 2	Lesson 9 — Photo Essay Workshop (Extended Block, 60–90 min)	Project brief distribution; storyboard planning; teacher-approved shooting begins.	Storyboard check
Fri · Wk 2	Lesson 10 — Exhibition & Reflection	Setup of gallery walk; peer evaluation; written reflection exit ticket.	Summative rubric

BLOCK SCHEDULE ADAPTATION

For 80–90 minute block schedules, combine Lessons 1–2 (Day 1), 3–4 (Day 2), 5–6 (Day 3), 7–8 (Day 4), and use Days 5–6 for the Lesson 9 Workshop and Lesson 10 Exhibition. This compresses the unit into a single week of block scheduling while preserving instructional sequence.

LESSON 01 • DAY 1 • WEEK 1

What is Photojournalism?

• 50 Minutes • Grades 6–10 • Hook • Direct Instruction • Activity • Wrap-up

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Define photojournalism and distinguish it from other types of photography.
- Understand the power of images to inform, persuade, and evoke emotion.
- Identify the core responsibilities of a photojournalist in a democratic society.

HOOK**10** MIN**DIRECT INSTRUCTION****15** MIN**ACTIVITY****15** MIN**WRAP-UP****10** MIN**HOOK** The Power of a Single Image

10 min

Display a famous, impactful photograph—for example, the raising of the flag at Iwo Jima, Steve McCurry's "Afghan Girl," or a modern event photo relevant to your students' lives. Ask students to write down three quick responses in their notebooks: *What is happening in this photo? How does it make you feel? Why do you think this photo is famous?* After two minutes of silent writing, take three to four volunteer responses to surface the emotional and informational power of a single frame.

DIRECT INSTRUCTION Defining the Field

15 min

Explain that **photojournalism** is a particular form of journalism that employs images to tell a news story. It is different from **fine art photography** (which is about aesthetic expression) and **advertising photography** (which is about selling a product). Emphasize the journalist's three core duties: *to tell the truth, to be objective, and to bear witness* on behalf of the public. Introduce the vocabulary terms **photojournalism**, **composition**, and **caption** from the glossary.

ACTIVITY Photo Sort

15 min

Provide pairs of students with a mix of ten printed images—some photojournalism, some fine art, some advertising. In pairs, students categorize each image and write a one-sentence justification using the definitions discussed. The teacher circulates, asking probing questions: *What story is this image telling? Is it trying to inform me, make me feel something, or sell me something?*

WRAP-UP The Photojournalist's Oath

10 min

Have each student draft a two-sentence "Photojournalist's Oath" in their notebook, summarizing the primary responsibility of someone capturing images for the public. Collect or photograph these oaths—they will resurface in Lesson 5 when the class drafts its Code of Ethics.

★ TEACHER TIP — LOW-TECH ALTERNATIVE

If students don't have devices today, use printed images for the Photo Sort. This is a great low-tech way to start the unit and ensures all students can participate equally before smartphone cameras enter the workflow.

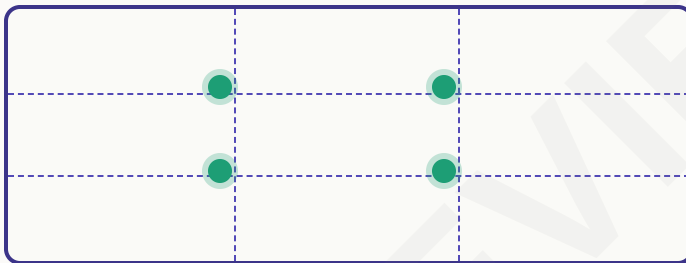
— PRINTABLE REFERENCE

Composition Rules Guide

Keep this guide handy when shooting your assignments. Great photojournalism relies on intentional composition to guide the viewer's eye and tell the story effectively. Print on cardstock for durability.

1. The Rule of Thirds

Imagine your frame divided into nine equal boxes by two horizontal and two vertical lines. Instead of placing your subject dead center, place them along these lines or at the points where the lines intersect. This creates a more dynamic, balanced, and visually pleasing image. It also allows the subject room to "look" or "move" into the frame, which feels natural to the viewer's eye.



Green dots mark the four intersection points—the most visually powerful spots to place your subject.

2. Leading Lines

Use natural or architectural lines within your scene—like roads, fences, rivers, hallways, or rows of trees—to draw the viewer's eye directly toward your subject. Leading lines create depth and a sense of journey. They can point inward from the edges of the frame, form curves that gently guide the eye to the focal point, or converge at a vanishing point in the distance.

3. Framing

Use elements within your scene to create a "frame within a frame." Shoot through windows, doors, archways, or tree branches. This technique isolates your subject from a busy background, adds depth, and instantly tells the viewer exactly where to look. It also adds context to the story—a student framed by a classroom door implies learning or entering a new space; an athlete framed by stadium lights implies competition.

4. Angles & Perspective

The angle you shoot from changes the entire message of the photo. **Eye-level:** Neutral, objective, standard—the default journalistic angle. **Low angle:** Makes the subject look powerful, imposing, or heroic. **High angle:** Makes the subject look vulnerable, small, or overwhelmed. As a photojournalist, choose your angle intentionally based on the truth of the story you are telling—not just for a cool effect. The angle itself can become an ethical choice.



— SEE · THINK · WONDER

Photo Analysis Activity Set

Because this is a printable resource, actual photographs are represented by descriptive scenarios. Teachers may use these descriptions to find similar images online, or students can use the descriptions to practice visual analysis by visualizing the scene. For each scenario, complete the **See, Think, Wonder** framework.

TEACHER SETUP TIP

For maximum impact, project each scenario description on the board while reading aloud, then give groups 4–5 minutes to complete the See-Think-Wonder grid before discussing. Alternatively, print and cut the scenarios into "image cards" that groups can pick from a deck.

1 The Crowded Lunchroom

VISUALIZATION PROMPT: A student sits alone at a long cafeteria table, eating a sandwich. The table next to them is packed with laughing students. The lonely student is placed on the left third of the frame, with the blurry crowd on the right.

SEE

THINK

WONDER

2 The High Shelf

VISUALIZATION PROMPT: A small child stands on their tiptoes, reaching for a brightly colored book on the top shelf of a library. The shelves form strong leading lines converging toward the child's hand.

SEE

THINK

WONDER

3 The Sidelines

VISUALIZATION PROMPT: An athlete sits on a bench on the sideline, head in their hands. In the background, slightly out of focus, their teammates are celebrating on the field. The frame is shot through a chain-link fence in the foreground.

SEE

THINK

WONDER

4 The Concrete Garden

VISUALIZATION PROMPT: Two pairs of hands are pressing a small green plant into the dirt of a cracked city sidewalk. The hands are dirty, and the contrast between the green leaves and the gray concrete is striking. Shot from a high angle looking straight down.

SEE

THINK

WONDER

DISCUSSION ACTIVITY

Photo Ethics Discussion Cards

Print, cut out, and distribute to small groups for ethical dilemma discussions. Read the scenario on each card. As a group, discuss the ethical implications using the principles of photojournalism: **seek the truth, minimize harm, and act independently**. Be prepared to justify your decision to the class.

The Unaware Subject

You are working on a photo essay about teenage stress. You capture a powerful image of a student crying in the hallway. They don't know you took the photo. Do you include it in your essay? Why or why not?

The Misleading Crop

You take a photo of a school protest. Most students are standing peacefully, but you crop the image tightly on the one student who is shouting angrily. It makes the protest look violent. Is this ethical? Why or why not?

The Dramatic Filter

You are photographing a weather story about a recent rainstorm. You use a photo editing app to dramatically increase the contrast and add a dark, moody filter to make the clouds look more ominous than they really were. Is this acceptable for photojournalism? Explain.

The Staged Scene

You need a photo of students studying in the library for the school paper, but the library is empty. You ask two friends to sit at a table and pretend to read for a photo. Is this photojournalism? Why or why not?

The Social Media Post

You take a funny but unflattering picture of your teacher tripping over a cord in the classroom. Your friends dare you to post it on social media. The teacher did not give you consent. What do you do?

GRADING TOOL

Photo Essay Grading Rubric

This rubric is used for both teacher evaluation and peer evaluation (Lesson 10). Each category is scored 1–4. Total possible score: 16. Multiply by 6.25 for a 100–point scale.

CATEGORY	4 — EXEMPLARY	3 — PROFICIENT	2 — DEVELOPING	1 — BEGINNING
Composition & Visual Quality	All photos are highly intentional and visually striking. Rule of Thirds, Leading Lines, and Framing are expertly utilized. Images are crisp and well-lit.	Photos are clear and intentional. Required composition rules are used effectively. Most images are crisp and well-lit.	Some photos show intentionality, but required composition rules are missing or poorly executed. Some images are blurry or poorly lit.	Little to no evidence of intentional composition. Required rules are absent. Multiple images are blurry or unusable.
Storytelling & Sequencing	The narrative arc is powerful and clear. The sequence of 5–8 photos flows logically, featuring a strong mix of establishing, action, and detail shots.	The story is clear. The sequence flows logically with a good mix of shot types, though the narrative arc may be slightly abrupt.	A story is present but disjointed. The sequence lacks logical flow, or there is an imbalance of shot types (e.g., all establishing shots).	No clear story is told. Photos appear random and disconnected. Little variety in shot types.
Captions & Context	All captions perfectly follow the ABCD model. They answer the 5 Ws accurately, add meaningful context, and are grammatically flawless.	All captions are present and generally follow the ABCD model. They answer most of the 5 Ws with minor grammatical errors.	Captions are present but incomplete. They frequently miss the 5 Ws, lack context, or contain significant grammatical errors.	Captions are missing, purely descriptive without context, or fail to follow the ABCD model entirely.
Ethics & Professionalism	All subjects consented. No image manipulation. Project demonstrates a deep understanding of journalistic truth and minimizing harm. Consent forms complete.	All subjects consented. No image manipulation. Project demonstrates a solid understanding of journalistic truth.	Consent is questionable or missing for one subject. Minor ethical lapses (e.g., slightly misleading crop) but no digital manipulation.	Consent is missing. Images are digitally manipulated to alter reality, or ethical guidelines are completely ignored.

Score Conversion

16 points = 100% (A+)

14–15 = 88–94% (B+)

12–13 = 75–81% (C)

Below 12 = Needs Revision

★ TEACHER NOTE — PEER EVALUATION WEIGHT

The peer evaluation (using this same rubric) counts for 20% of the final project grade; the teacher's evaluation counts for 80%. This balance gives students an authentic audience while preserving teacher judgment.



PREMIUM MEGA BUNDLE

What's Inside the *Full Unit*

This preview showcases 8 key pages. The complete resource contains everything below – ready to print and teach.

59

TOTAL PAGES

10

LESSONS

2

WEEKS

6–10

GRADES

— COMPLETE BUNDLE CONTENTS

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Unit Overview & Standards

CCSS, ISTE, NCSS alignment

2

2-Week Pacing Guide

Day-by-day lesson calendar

3

Materials & Prep Checklist

Teacher + student supplies

4

Vocabulary Glossary

24 key terms, 2 pages

5

Differentiation Guide

ELL, IEP, Gifted strategies

6

10 Lesson Plans

Each with exit ticket

7

Composition Rules Guide

Printable student reference

8

Smartphone Pro-Tips

Printable student reference

9

Photo Analysis Activity Set

10 scenarios + answer key

10

Caption Writing Worksheet

5 scenarios + answer key

11

Ethics Discussion Cards

10 cards + teacher guide

12

Photo Essay Project & Rubric

4-category grading rubric

13

Subject Consent Form

Printable ethics template

14

Storyboard + Checklists

Pre-submission + exhibition

15

Self & Peer Evaluation

With honor code prompts

16

Extensions + Resources

Enrichment + reading list

GET THE COMPLETE UNIT

59 Pages of *Print-&-Teach* **Curriculum**

59

TOTAL PAGES