PRACTICAL EBOOK AND WORKBOOK

Beginner Photography Composition

Learn to see and arrange a stronger photograph with any camera or phone, through clear principles, diagrams and 21 practice assignments.

SAMPLE

Digital Bundle House

Edition 1.0 · 2026 · Guide + workbook

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How to use this book

Composition is a skill you build by looking, shooting and reviewing. This book gives you a structure for all three.

Each chapter introduces one or two composition principles with a diagram and a short exercise. Read a chapter, go out and shoot the exercise, then review your photos using the critique form in Part Two. Twenty-one daily assignments in Worksheet 1 take you through all the principles in three weeks.

Equipment

Any camera works, including the phone in your pocket. Composition is about where you stand and what you include, not how expensive your camera is. Two settings help: turn on the grid overlay in your camera app (most phone cameras offer a 3 x 3 grid), and learn how to lock focus and exposure by tapping or half-pressing the shutter.

A three-week plan

Week	Chapters	Focus
Week 1	1 to 3	Subject, simplicity, placement and lines
Week 2	4 to 5	Framing, patterns, space, depth and viewpoint
Week 3	6 to 7	Light, storytelling and reviewing your own work

> **Shoot more, delete more**
>
> Take several versions of every scene: move left, right, closer, lower. Then keep only the best one. Comparing versions is how you learn what works.

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CHAPTER 1

Start with a subject and simplify

Before asking where to put things, ask what the photo is about.

Most weak photographs share one problem: it is not clear what the viewer should look at. Before you press the shutter, name your subject in a few words: "the red door", "my daughter laughing", "the single tree on the hill". If you cannot name it, the viewer will not find it either.

Three questions before every shot

1. **What is my subject?** Name it.
2. **What is distracting from it?** Look at the edges of the frame and the background: bins, signs, bright patches, poles growing out of heads.
3. **How can I remove the distractions?** Move closer, change angle, zoom, or wait for people to pass.

Fill the frame

Beginners often stand too far away. Try taking one step closer, then another. Filling the frame with your subject removes clutter and shows texture and detail. With phones, moving physically closer usually gives better quality than digital zoom.

Check the edges

Run your eye around the edges of the viewfinder before you shoot. Small objects poking into the corners pull attention away. Either include them deliberately or recompose to leave them out.

> **Exercise: one subject, five versions**
>
> Choose an everyday object, such as a mug, a bicycle or a houseplant. Take five photos: one from where you first stood, then four more that each remove one distraction or move closer. Compare the first and last photo side by side.

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WORKSHEET 1

21-day composition assignment plan

One assignment per day. Shoot at least 10 frames, choose your best one and tick it off. Note what you learned.

Day	Assignment	Best shot (file / note)	Done
1	Name the subject: one object, five versions		
2	Fill the frame with a single subject		
3	Clean edges: remove every distraction		
4	Subject on a third line		
5	Horizon low, centred, high		
6	Lead room for a moving or looking subject		
7	Centred subject on a plain background		
8	Leading line to a subject		
9	Diagonals only		
10	S-curve or winding line		
11	Frame within a frame		
12	Symmetry or reflection		
13	Pattern, then break the pattern		
14	Negative space		
15	Foreground, middle, background		
16	Low angle		
17	High angle / overhead		
18	Scale: a person in a big scene		
19	Side light on texture		
20	Silhouette or back light		
21	Decisive moment: compose, then wait		

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