JOURNEYS IN JOURNALISM
An exploration of photography
What is photography?

The word photography is derived from the Greek words “photo,” which means light, and “graph,” which means writing. Photography is literally “writing with light.”

Photographs are variously works of art, historical documents, windows into society, marketing tools and propaganda. They tell stories about our past and present. Learning to examine, analyze and interpret photographs is a skill that can – and should – be integrated into every core academic subject.

The history of photography is one of technological innovation, but also of democratization. The earliest photographs required a large, unwieldy camera, an exposure (the time needed for light to record the desired image) of up to an hour, and at least a working knowledge of chemistry. Each was a unique, one-of-a-kind object that could not be reproduced.

Technical innovations throughout the nineteenth allowed photographers to move photography from the studio to the outdoors; to duplicate their original images as many times as they wanted; to reduce exposure times from hours, to minutes, to seconds; and to hold their camera in the hand, rather than set it on a tripod. Documentary photography and photojournalism grew out of these tremendous technological advances.

By the turn of the twentieth century, affordable and easy-to-use box cameras brought photography to the masses. And, by the turn of the twenty-first century, digital cameras and camera phones mean that many Americans have a camera on them all the time, recording and documenting their lives as no generation before has done.

Visual literacy

Visual communication is a process of sending and receiving messages using images, and visual literacy is the ability to construct meaning from visual images. Sending messages with graphics, photographs or emojis is visual communication. Billboards, road signs, public art, streaming videos and, of course, photographs communicate a visual message. Dr. Anne Bamford, Director of Visual Arts from the Art and Design University of Technology in Sydney, Australia, has conducted extensive research on the subject of visual literacy and has discovered that “contemporary culture has become increasingly dependent on the visual especially for its capacity to communicate instantly and universally.” Bamford adds, “visual images are becoming the predominant form of communication across a range of learning and teaching delivered across a range of media and formats.” Keep a journal of the photographs in the Tampa Bay Times for a week. Write down the subject matter of the photo, the section of the newspaper and the page number. Also note if the photo belongs with a story or not. Study the context and content of the photos. In your journal, write down if the photo stands on it own to tell a story or if it needs more than a caption for an explanation.

What is a camera?

A camera has three basic elements: a lens, a light-sensitive surface and the camera body itself.

Lens

The first component of a camera is the lens. A lens is a curved piece of glass or plastic that focuses light bouncing off of an object to create an image of that object inside the camera.

Light-sensitive surface

The second component of a camera is a light-sensitive surface to record the pattern of light coming in through the lens. In a traditional film camera, the light-sensitive surface is film, which uses light-sensitive chemicals on a strip of plastic. In a digital camera, the light-sensitive surface is a sensor, which records light electronically.

Body

The third component of a camera is the body. The body of a camera is a sealed box with a lens through which light enters. An aperture opens and closes to let light into the camera, like the iris of an eye. Photographers can increase or decrease the size of the aperture to allow more or less light into the camera. A shutter is a device that opens and closes like a door between the lens and light-sensitive surface. The shutter speed controls the length of time light is allowed into the camera.

Sources: Encyclopaedia Britannica; How Stuff Works
**16TH CENTURY**

The principle of the camera obscura was probably known to the ancient Arabs, Chinese and Greeks more than 2,000 years ago. A camera obscura consists of a darkened room with a small hole in one wall. An inverted image of the scene outside the hole is cast on the opposite wall, retaining color and perspective. So, a subject posed outside could be traced on a piece of drawing paper by an artist. In 1490, Leonardo da Vinci recorded a detailed description of the camera obscura. By the 17th century, portable camera obscura devices consisting of a box with a lens on one side and a sheet of glass on the other had been developed.

**1826**

Joseph Nicephore Niépce invents the heliograph, or sun print, the first process where images were directly created by light. Niépce placed an engraving onto a metal plate coated in bitumen, and then exposed it to light. The shadowy areas of the engraving blocked light, while the lighter areas permitted light to react with the chemicals on the plate. When placed in a solvent, a copy of the engraving appeared on the metal plate. Niépce later produced the first successful photograph from nature using a camera obscura fitted with a pewter plate.

**1837**

Louis Jacques Mande Daguerre invents the daguerreotype, a process that “fixed” images created by a camera obscura onto a sheet of silver-plated copper. He polished the silver and coated it in iodine, creating a surface that was sensitive to light. Then, he put the plate in a camera and exposed it to light. After the image was created, Daguerre bathed the plate in a solution of silver chloride. This process created a lasting image, one that would not change if exposed to light. However, a lengthy exposure of up to an hour was necessary, meaning that moving objects could not be recorded and portraiture was impractical. In 1839, the French government purchased the rights to the daguerreotype and released the details of the process to the public.

**1841**

William Henry Fox Talbot invents the paper negative by sensitizing paper to light with a silver salt solution, placing objects such as a leaf or lace onto the paper and exposing it to sunlight. The background became black, and the subject was rendered in shades of gray—a negative image. Photographers could duplicate the original image as many times as they wanted by making contact prints, which reverse the light and shadows to create a detailed picture. Talbot called this a calotype.

**1851**

Frederick Scott Archer invents the wet plate, or the glass negative, by coating glass with light-sensitive silver salts. The glass wet plate created a more stable and detailed negative than paper. However, the wet plate needed to be prepared just before exposure and developed and fixed before it dried. In order to process the pictures quickly, the photographer had to carry a portable darkroom everywhere he or she went.

**1861**

Thomas Sutton and James Clerk Maxwell created the first color photograph by making three images of a tartan ribbon using red, green and blue filters in front of the camera lens, then superimposing the three images onto a screen.

**1871**

R.L. Maddox develops the dry plate, a glass negative plate coated with a dried gelatin emulsion. Dry plates could be prepared in advance and developed long after exposure, eliminating the need for a portable darkroom. Dry plates also were about 60 times more sensitive than wet plates, reducing the exposure time needed dramatically. The camera could now be held in the hand, rather than set on a tripod, allowing photographers to take instantaneous snapshots and action shots. In 1878, factory-produced dry plates became available, making photography accessible to photographers without any knowledge of chemistry.

**1878**

Edward Muybridge succeeds in photographing motion by using 12 cameras hooked to an electrical apparatus that tripped each camera’s shutter as a horse galloped past. Muybridge’s work, which produced sets of sequential photographs, was a precursor to motion pictures.

**1888**

The Eastman Kodak Company introduces the Kodak #1 camera and flexible roll film. The Kodak #1 was a simple box camera that came loaded with a 100-exposure roll of film. Film was lighter and sturdier than glass plates, and the use of a roll allowed photographers to take multiple pictures in quick succession. When the roll was finished, the entire machine was sent back to Kodak, where the film was processed and the camera was reloaded and returned to the customer. The ad slogan read, “you press the button, we do the rest.” The Kodak #1 retained for $22, which would be about $600 today.

**1900**

The Eastman Kodak Company introduces the Brownie, an affordable and easy-to-use box camera. The Brownie camera consisted of a box with an opening in the front for light to reach the film, a small viewing screen on top, and a switch to expose the film, which came on easy-to-load rolls. The Brownie cost only one dollar—about $30 today—plus fifteen cents for film. Kodak produced 125 different models of the Brownie over 70 years.
1907
Auguste and Louis Lumiere introduce the first commercially successful color process, the Autochrome Lumiere. The photographer covered a glass plate with a thin wash of tiny potato starch grains dyed red, green, and blue, thus creating a filter, with a thin layer of emulsion over that. When the plate was flipped and exposed to light, the resulting image could be developed into a transparency.

1925
The Leica I(A) camera, the first commercially available 35mm Leica camera, is introduced. The Leica, designed by Oscar Barnack, was an immediate success and was responsible for popularizing 35mm film photography.

1927
Paul Vierkotter invents the modern flashbulb.

1935
The Eastman Kodak Company introduces Kodachrome film, the first commercially successful amateur color film. In 1942, Kodacolor film, the world’s first true color negative film for still photography, was announced.

1972
The Polaroid SX-70 one-step instant camera is introduced by the Polaroid Corporation. It is the first camera to employ an instant film pack that included a built-in battery.

1975
The first digital camera is invented by Steve Sasson, an engineer at the Eastman Kodak Company.

1990
The Dycam Model 1 became the first digital camera to go on sale to the public. The Dycam Model 1 used a digital image sensor, stored pictures digitally and connected directly to a PC for download.

1997
The first commercially available mobile phone with a camera, the J-SH04, was released in Japan by Sharp. In 2002, Sprint's Sanyo 5300 became the first camera phone sold in North America.

2000
The first commercially available digital SLR D2H camera, allowing wireless image transfer.

2003
Nikon introduces the Wireless Transmitter WT-1, which could be attached to the digital SLR D2H camera.

2008
The first mirrorless camera commercially marketed was the Panasonic Lumix DMC-G1, released in October 2008. The camera does not have an optical mirror like a conventional digital single-lens reflex camera, but an electronic viewfinder which displays what the camera image sensor sees.

2012
Lytro introduces the light field camera, which allows images to be refocused after being taken.
Photographs have remarkable power to communicate information, sometimes in startling ways. You can learn to use questions to decode, evaluate and respond to photographic images. Find a photograph in the Tampa Bay Times and determine what information is being conveyed through that image. On a piece of paper, write down answers to the following questions: Who or what do you see? When was this photograph taken? What is happening in the photograph? Where was this photograph taken? Why was this photograph taken? Why did the photographer choose these elements to include in the photograph? What don’t you see? Did the photographer focus on certain elements and not others? Why do you think that is? Based on what is happening in the photo, can you infer what happens next or perhaps what happened before time stopped? How do light and shadows play a role in the photo and the viewer’s interpretation? Write a short essay based on your responses to these questions. Be sure to use specific examples from the image to support your ideas. Share your photo and report with your class.

Light

“In the right light, at the right time, everything is extraordinary.”
- Aaron Rose, photographer

Light is the central element of photography. Light can play an important part in composition, by directing the viewer's attention to certain areas of the composition, creating an effect of dimension and setting the mood of the photograph.

Landscape photographers and photojournalists typically make do with natural or ambient light, while studio photographers create their own light, with lamps, flashes and strobes.

- Is the light natural or artificial? How does the source of lighting affect the look of the image?
- Is the lighting coming from above, below, the side? At what angle? Does the direction of the light create an effect of dimension?
- Is the light soft or harsh? Warm or cold? Low or high? Strong or diffuse? How does the type of lighting affect the mood of the image?
- Are there any shadows? Are the shadows thin or thick? Do light and shadow make interesting patterns or shapes?

Point of view

“A good photograph is knowing where to stand.”
- Ansel Adams, photographer and conservationist

Point of view refers to how the photographer was positioned when he or she took a picture. Taking a photograph from a vantage point other than straight on can result in a much more interesting and compelling image.

- Was the photographer standing, crouching or lying on the ground?
- Did the photographer take the picture from above, below or the side?
- Did the photographer tilt the camera or keep it parallel to the horizon?

Point of view can also reveal how the photographer feels about the subject. In other words, sometimes how the photographer positions himself or herself in relation to the subject expresses their opinion. For example, a picture taken from above may give the impression of superiority, or from below, of inferiority.

- Where was the photographer when he or she took the picture?
- Can you guess what the photographer’s attitude is toward the subject?
- How does the vantage point affect the way you look at the resulting photograph?

Background and foreground

The background is the area behind the subject. The background provides valuable information on how to interpret the photograph because it sets the context. It can be a color, an out-of-focus blur or a highly detailed scene. The background should either complement the subject or be a part of it.

- What do you see in the background? Do you see mainly colors or shapes? Do you see details?
- What effect does the background create?
- How does the background connect to the subject?

The foreground is the area in front of the subject. The foreground also helps to set the context of the photograph, and can affect the mood of the image. For example, space in the foreground can create a feeling of depth or distance from the subject, while no space in the foreground gives the viewer a feeling of being close to the subject.

- What do you see in the foreground?
- What effect does the foreground have on how you see the subject?

Light and shadows

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Composition of a photograph

“Beauty can be seen in all things. Seeing and composing the beauty is what separates the snapshot from the photograph.”

- Matt Hardy, landscape and commercial photographer

Framing

Framing is a compositional technique that is similar to framing a picture for your wall. A frame is an object in the foreground that draws the viewer's attention to the subject and lends depth to the picture, such as a branch with leaves, the mouth of a cave, a window, a bridge or column, or an arch or doorway.

- What is included in the frame, and what is excluded?
- What do you imagine is outside of the frame?

Cropping

Cropping is a compositional technique that excludes a portion of the subject, foreground or background. For example, the frame may cut off a person's hat or arm, half of a chair, distracting background elements or simply empty space to create a more interesting composition or to emphasize certain elements of the image.

- What effect does cropping have on the graphic composition of the image?
- How does cropping help draw attention to what the photograph is saying?
- How does cropping affect your perception of the subject?

Shapes, lines and angles

In a photograph, shapes are forms created by objects, figures and shadows; lines are the borders between shapes; and angles are created by the intersection of lines and shapes. Shapes, lines and angles help to create balance and draw the viewer's attention in certain directions.

Leading lines

A leading line is a design element that directs the viewer's eye to the point of interest. A leading line typically begins at the bottom of the composition and extends into the heart of the composition. Examples of leading lines include railroad tracks, a fence, a road, a tree branch, a staircase or a river. Horizontal lines suggest serenity, while vertical lines can express power and diagonal lines often imply action.

- Can you find different shapes in the image? Look for circles, squares, rectangles, triangles and organic forms.
- How do the shapes in the image create balance and structure?
- What qualities do the lines in the photograph have (strong and bold; light and thin; curvy or straight; diagonal or circular)?
- What effect do the lines have on your visual experience of the image (exciting; calming; unifying)?
- What do the angles in the image lead your eyes toward? Do they draw your attention in or out of the frame?

Color and tone

Color is a very important element in composition. Contrasting colors create interest and draw the viewer's eye, while complementary colors can create depth. Colors also can give a warm or cold feeling to a photograph. For example, a winter scene can be enhanced by the use of blue in the picture to give a chilly feeling, while red, orange and golden tones can evoke a feeling of warmth.

In a black-and-white photograph, tone describes the various shades of gray from white to black. Composition, contrast, tone, texture and pattern are used to create visual interest, rather than color.

- Describe the colors or tones in the photograph.
- Do you see patterns of colors or tones?
- How do the colors or tones make you feel?
Choose one photo from the Tampa Bay Times and one photo from the All Eyes Photo blog at tampabay.com/photos to analyze using the composition elements on these pages: framing; cropping; shapes, lines and angles; leading lines; color and tone; patterns; depth and the rule of thirds. Study the photos you select carefully and, in your journal, respond to each of the questions noted on these pages for each category. Respond to each question in complete sentences. Share what you have analyzed and learned with your classmates.
**PHOTOJOURNALISM:** Form of journalism in which stories are presented mainly through photographs rather than words.

- Collins Dictionaries

**What’s the difference between news and feature photography?**

**News writing**
- Moves through the 5 Ws quickly
- Focuses on telling news immediately
- Tells about specific and timely events

**News photography**
- Taken at a specific event
- Represents something concrete that happened
- Informs viewers
- Has news value

**Feature writing**
- Storytelling is primary goal
- Focuses on capturing reader interest
- Talks about topics, emotions, issues or “slices of life”

**Feature photography**
- Captures a unique moment in the culture
- Represents a “slice of life” or issue
- Elicits an emotional response
- Has human interest

**Ethics of photojournalism**

One of the biggest differences between photojournalism and other types of photography is the need to retain the accuracy and integrity of the original image. In other words, the content of a news photograph – unlike, for example, a landscape photograph – should never be changed or manipulated. It should be an accurate representation of the event it portrays.

The development of digital photography has made the editing of photos much easier, but the ethical considerations remain the same.

Photojournalists and photo editors must also consider what photographs are appropriate to publish. Photographs of violence or disaster often are newsworthy; but does their newsworthiness outweigh the trauma that may be caused to the subjects and their families by publication?

**National Press Photographers Association Code of Ethics**

1. Be accurate and comprehensive in the representation of subjects.
2. Resist being manipulated by staged photo opportunities.
3. Be complete and provide context when photographing or recording subjects. Avoid stereotyping individuals and groups. Recognize and work to avoid presenting one’s own biases in the work.
4. Treat all subjects with respect and dignity. Give special consideration to vulnerable subjects and compassion to victims of crime or tragedy. Intrude on private moments of grief only when the public has an overriding and justifiable need to see.
5. While photographing subjects do not intentionally contribute to, alter, or seek to alter or influence events.
6. Editing should maintain the integrity of the photographic images’ content and context. Do not manipulate images or add or alter sound in any way that can mislead viewers or misrepresent subjects.
7. Do not pay sources or subjects or reward them materially for information or participation.
8. Do not accept gifts, favors, or compensation from those who might seek to influence coverage.
9. Do not intentionally sabotage the efforts of other journalists.
10. Do not engage in harassing behavior of colleagues, subordinates or subjects and maintain the highest standards of behavior in all professional interactions.
Choosing photographs for publication

How do editors choose which photos to publish?

These questions were written by Joe Elbert, former assistant managing editor for photography at The Washington Post and Karl Kuntz, chief picture editor at The Columbus Dispatch to help photo editors make wise decisions about visual content in a newspaper.

1. Does the photo communicate quicker, stronger, better or more eloquently than a simple sentence?
2. Does the photo have visual content or stop short of elevating the story?
3. Does the photo go beyond the trite or the obvious?
4. Does the photo have enough impact to move the reader?
5. Is the photo mindless documentation?
6. Does the photo communicate effectively? A good photo should move, excite, entertain, inform or help readers understand the story.

Sources: Encyclopaedia Britannica, New York Film Academy

Street photography

Street photography is a genre of photography that records everyday life in a public place. Street photographers capture candid pictures of strangers, often without their knowledge. Street photography shares many aspects of documentary photography and photojournalism.

Writing photo captions

A caption, also called a cutline, is the block of text that accompanies a photo. There are typically three parts of a caption:

1. In the first sentence, explain what is happening in the photo in present tense. Answer the 5 Ws. Identify everyone fully by first name, last name, year in school, or some other identifying information (unless the group is very large).
2. The second sentence is often past tense and gives background information about the photo or the situation. The focus should be on giving interesting information to readers and telling a story.
3. The third sentence should give a quote from a witness or someone who was involved in the activity.

Writing photo captions is challenging because it requires you to include a lot of information in a small space. When writing a caption, you should assume that the photo might be published by itself without an accompanying story. This means that the caption must include all the relevant information in no more than two or three sentences.

Visit the Tampa Bay Times' All Eyes photo blog at tampabay.com/photos. Choose three photos with one-sentence captions. Imagine what additional background information would be interesting to readers. Write a second sentence using your new information (it does not need to be true). Next, write an imaginary quote from one of the photo's subjects as the caption's third sentence.

Now look at the photos that accompany stories in the Tampa Bay Times. Imagine you must cut a story due to space issues, so you need to include all of the relevant information in the photo caption. Choose one photo and change the caption to include the important information in two or three sentences. Share one of the photos and captions with your classmates.

Source: Journalism Education Association
Photographs as primary sources

Primary sources are a window into the past (or the present) created by people who lived during that period. Primary sources include newspaper articles, interviews, diaries, letters, maps and, of course, photographs. They are different from secondary sources, such as textbooks or biographies, which are interpretations of events created by someone without firsthand experience.

When you work with primary sources, you are acting like a historian – directly analyzing and interpreting historical evidence to better understand the events, ideas and people portrayed.

Sources: Library of Congress; National Archives
Learning to see: How to examine, analyze and interpret photographs as primary sources

**Step 1. OBSERVE:** Identify and note details
- What type of photo is this (portrait, landscape, aerial/satellite, panoramic, action, architectural, event, family, documentary or photojournalism? Posed, candid or selfie?)
- Describe what you see. List at least 10 details.
- What do you notice first? Where is your eye drawn? Why does that stand out?
- What people and objects are shown?
- How are they arranged?
- What is the subject of the photograph?
- What is the physical setting? What is in the background and foreground?
- What is the photographer’s point of view?
- Describe the patterns, shapes, lines and colors or tones that you see.
- Find the pattern of light and shadow. What does the lighting draw your attention to?
- Describe what is in focus.
- What other photographic techniques do you notice?

**Step 2. REFLECT:** Generate and test hypotheses
- Why do you think this image was made?
- What’s happening in the image?
- When do you think it was made?
- Who do you think was the audience for this image?
- What tools were used to create this?
- What can you learn from examining this image?
- If someone made this today, what would be different? What would be the same?
- How does the photograph make you feel? What does the photograph make you think of?
- Why do you think the photographer made these artistic choices?
- What do you think the photograph is saying?

**Step 3. QUESTION:** What didn’t you learn that you would like to know about?
- What did you learn or find out from this photo that you might not learn anywhere else?
- What more do you want to know, and how can you find out?
- What other documents, photos or historical evidence might you use to help you understand this event or topic?


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**Character sketch**
Select one of the historical photographs on these pages. Analyze the image using the Observe / Reflect / Question steps. Write down your answers.

Next, use secondary sources, such as a history textbook or the Internet, to research the time period in which the photograph was taken. Be sure to document your sources.

Choose one person from the photograph and write a character sketch of him or her. Be sure to reference the time, place, events and whatever else is known or could be realistically assumed about the person and time period.

Finally, write a newspaper article based on the photo. Be sure to include the 5 Ws (Who, What, When, Where and Why). Use the articles in the *Tampa Bay Times* as models.

Source: Oregon History Project
**The viewer’s eye**

Photographic images often are analyzed by trying to discern the photographer’s point of view. In other words, how did he or she feel about the subject? What was he or she trying to express through the image?

But, the meaning of photographs also depends on the viewer. The viewer’s identity, point of view, life experience and biases will affect how he or she “reads” and responds to an image.

For example, a photograph of a crowd at a political rally might be viewed very differently by people of different political views. A photograph of shoppers on Black Friday might make one viewer happy about the holiday season, while another sees it as an indictment of consumerism. A photograph of a protest might be described as democracy in action by one viewer and as a riot by another.

**How we respond to images**

In the video, “How we respond to images,” journalists, media professionals and a high school student discuss the different ways that people responded to a particular photo taken during a protest following the fatal shooting of African-American teenager Michael Brown by police in Ferguson, Missouri in 2014.

Watch the video at facinghistory.org/resource-library/video/how-we-respond-images. Pause the video at 1:00 when it reaches the reflection question, “How do you think different members of the community reacted to this image when it was published?” Write down your response and compare your answers with a partner. Share your ideas with the class. What do you think David Carson means when he says people view the image through personal biases? How many possible interpretations of this image can you think of?

Watch the rest of the video. Were you surprised by the different responses to the photo? How could confirmation bias play into these interpretations? (Confirmation bias is the tendency to interpret new evidence as confirmation of one’s existing beliefs or theories.) Do you agree or disagree with Carson that this is a highly successful photo? Do you think it was a good one to put on the front page of the newspaper? Why or why not?

Compare the front pages of the *Tampa Bay Times*, *Los Angeles Times* and *St. Louis Post Dispatch* from Friday, Aug. 15, 2014. Each of these newspapers chose very different images and headlines for their front page stories about the events in Ferguson. What lead image and headline is used in each case? What is similar and what is different among the approaches and their impact?
Analyzing portraits

A portrait is a likeness or image of a person or people that is created by an artist.

When an artist creates a portrait, he or she makes choices that illuminate both how the artist sees the subject and how the artist wants the subject to be seen by others. When you analyze a portrait, consider the following elements:

- **Facial expression**: What emotion(s) does this expression convey?
- **Pose**: What is the artist trying to say about the sitter?
- **Clothing**: What clothing is the sitter wearing? What might clothing tell us about the sitter’s profession, personality, social status or place in history?
- **Hairstyle**: Why would hairstyle be an important element of a portrait?
- **Setting**: What is the setting of the portrait? What might the setting tell us about the sitter? Consider if the setting is real or imagined.
- **Objects**: What objects are in the portrait? Objects function as symbols. What might they be telling us about the sitter?
- **Color**: What is color conveying in this image? How does color set the tone and mood of the portrait?
- **Medium**: What medium was used to create the portrait? Why is medium important as we read portraiture?
- **Scale**: What effect does the size of this portrait have on the way we view the sitter?
- **Artistic style**: How does this artist’s particular style tell us something about the sitter?
- **Other questions**: What does the portrait imply about the subject’s personality, character or the way the person lives in the world? Why was the portrait created? What purpose did it serve? Do you think the portrait’s way of showing this person reinforces or fights stereotypes? What does the portrait say about American life at the time it was created?

**Sources:** National Portrait Gallery; Teaching Tolerance

**GOING BEYOND the TEXT**

**Analyzing portraits**

For Labor Day 2019, *Tampa Bay Times* photographers set out to capture portraits of men and women at work. Go to the photo gallery at tampabay.com/gallery/2019/09/01/hands-on. Choose one portrait to analyze and study it carefully. Write down your answers to the questions posed in the “Analyzing portraits” article. Share your answers with your class.
Photographs as advertising

Photographs have been an important advertising tool since the early part of the twentieth century. Because images convey both information and emotion, they can be a very persuasive tool to tell us how to feel about a product.

Source: National Museum of American History

Techniques of persuasion

The Consortium for Media Literacy has identified 10 techniques of persuasion that are often at the core of sales pitches.

- Humor (Funny or crazy images)
- Macho (Strong, tough, powerful. May have weapons!)
- Friends (Groups together, smiling, buddies, pals, friendship)
- Family (Mother, father, children or family)
- Intergenerational, possibly
- Fun (Everyone is happy, smiling and laughing. Images of fun times by self too, or with others)
- Nature (Outdoor settings. May or may not include people)
- Sexy (Emphasis on physical, usually female, perhaps with revealing clothing or flirting through attitude or body language)
- Cartoon (People or animals as drawings or animation, often humorous)
- Celebrity (Influencers or athletes, musicians, politicians, “stars”)
- Wealth (Expensive or elegant places and things. Big houses, new cars, jewelry, designer clothing, etc.)

Use the Tampa Bay Times to find advertisements with photographs in them. Try to find at least one example of each of the ten techniques. Explain why each advertisement is a good example of that particular technique.

Adapted from: Consortium for Media Literacy, “Seeing the Pitch: Techniques of Persuasion in Action”

Interpreting advertisements

Look at the photographs in advertisements in the Tampa Bay Times. How are the photographs in advertisements different than news photographs? What is the purpose of the photographs in the advertisements? Study one advertisement and focus on the composition of the advertisement and photo. What appeals are being used and why? Are these appeals effective? Write down your thoughts in complete sentences in your journal and discuss your ideas.

Photography as propaganda

Propaganda is a persuasive message intended to influence thoughts and actions. Propaganda can be used to promote a wide variety of causes, some of which many would consider “good,” and some of which many would consider “bad.” Many of the techniques used in propaganda are the same as those used in advertising to sell or promote goods and services. Like advertising, propaganda often appeals to emotions or gut reactions instead of logic or reason.

Sources: American Historical Association; Newseum

Public Service Announcements – “good propaganda”

Public service announcements (PSAs) are intended to raise awareness of certain issues and change consumer behavior. PSAs became a mandated part of advertising with the Communications Act of 1934, which required broadcasters to serve the public interest. Campaigns such as the Truth Campaign, which aimed at eliminating teen smoking in the United States, use the tools of commercial advertising to “sell” good habits.

Source: National Museum of American History
Leslie Thomas is the founder of Art Works Projects, which uses photography to raise awareness of human rights concerns and spur action. “My goal is to be the most emotionally manipulative person possible,” she told the New York Times’ Lens blog in 2012. “Then I want to forge an emotional connection and get you to call or write and do something.”

Photography can be an extremely effective persuasive tool. Photos can be used to document activism; educate the public; raise funding; and inspire social or political action.

This aspect of photography is nothing new. In the 19th century, Sojourner Truth sold carte-des-visites (small photographs mounted on cards) to fund her anti-slavery efforts. In the early 20th century, photographer Lewis Hine’s devastating images of child laborers were essential to changing public opinion on child labor and eventually led to its abolition.

Later in the 20th century, photographs of prisoners taken by soldiers liberating Nazi concentration camps at the end of the Second World War brought home the horror of the Holocaust to the world; while photographs showing the graphic nature of the Vietnam War played a large part in 1960s anti-war activism.

More recently, images of protests in Russia, Iran, Egypt, Spain, Hong Kong and many other countries have brought international attention to activists’ causes. Photographs of injured or abused animals are used to raise funds for shelters and wildlife advocacy groups. And images documenting issues such as poverty or environmental degradation help to educate the public and raise awareness.

Sources: New York Times; World Press Photo Foundation

Photographs as advocacy

Study the two photographs above. In small groups, analyze the photographs. For each photo, discuss:

- What details do you notice about this photo?
- What do you think the photographer’s purpose or intent is in taking this photo?
- How does this photo capture a kind of activism?
- What seems to be the major issue that people in this photo are protesting for/against?
- How is this photo an example of a type of activism in action? (For example, demonstration, boycott, hunger strike, sit-in, civil disobedience, petition drive, etc.)

• What is the mood of the people in this photo?

Visit the Tampa Bay Times photo blog at tampabay.com/photos and look for photos depicting activism. How are they similar to the photos above? How are they different?

Individually, decide which photo out of all of the photos you have seen during this activity is the most persuasive. Write a short persuasive speech arguing why this photo is the best example of activism. Evaluate the speeches using the Read Write Think Persuasive Speech Rubric at readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson414/rubric.pdf.

Source: Adapted from Teaching Tolerance, “Using Photographs to Teach Social Justice – Advertisements Promoting Activism”
About the Cornelia T. Bailey Foundation

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The Cornelia T. Bailey Foundation was founded in 2008 due to the generosity of Mrs. Cornelia Tarrant Bailey and is dedicated to the memory of Cornelia Bailey and her husband Glenn.

The mission of the Cornelia T. Bailey Foundation is to promote the arts, education and initiatives that seek to better our world utilizing nature and the sciences. Their vision is to help ensure that communities, children and future generations have access to the arts and a quality education and to support organizations seeking to enhance the arts, improve the environment and promote quality healthcare and medical research.

To learn more about the Cornelia T. Bailey Foundation, visit ctbfoundation.org.