

Arranging the structure of a photograph

A photographer works within a frame; the choice about what to include or exclude depends on what the photographer is trying to communicate.

The **central focus** is what appears most prominently and/or most clearly focused in a photograph.

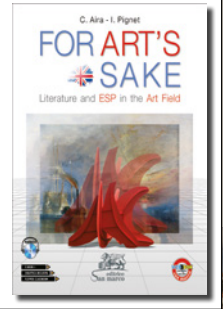
Each object has a **contour** or outline. The **setting** is the scenery which can be real or artificial.

Prominent objects are placed in the **foreground**, the part of the scene nearest to the viewer, while objects of secondary relevance are usually located in the **background**, the part of the scene farthest from the viewer.

Composition

The **composition** of a photograph is the arrangement or structure of the formal elements that make up¹ an image. There are no strict rules on how to compose a photograph, but the following guidelines, which can be used in combination or alternatively, lead the photographer to obtain better results.

- **Rule of thirds:** if we divide a photograph with a grid of nine sections, this rule states that objects should be placed along the lines or where they intersect, so as to obtain a more interesting and balanced perspective.
- **Balance:** if the subject is not placed at the centre of the photograph, this may create a void that should be filled by including another object in the foreground in order to balance the image.
- **Symmetry:** symmetry is a golden rule to follow in order to obtain a clean and classical perspective.
- **Lines:** lines can be straight, diagonal, curved or zig-zag (for example in streets, paths, walls, etc.) and give dynamism to a scene.
- **Viewpoint:** it can be at eye level, lower or higher (as it is in aerial photography).
- **Background:** it should be chosen to enhance the subject, in that it must not distract or disturb the viewer's attention.
- **Depth-of-field:** the sense of depth in a scene is crucial to overcome the two-dimensionality of the medium.
- **Framing:** photographing a scene through a frame (for example a window, a door or surrounded by tree branches) helps to draw attention to the subject.

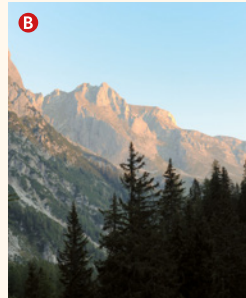


ACTIVITIES

Reading comprehension

1 Which rule is followed in the compositions of the photos below? Match each rule with the corresponding photograph.

- 1 Symmetry
- 2 Framing
- 3 Depth-of-field
- 4 Leading lines
- 5 Viewpoint
- 6 Background



Listening comprehension

2 Listen to the description of the photo below and fill in the blanks with the missing words.

SEASCAPE AT SUNSET

The subject of the photograph is a landscape, more precisely a 1 with cliffs and rocks. In the 2 the rocks form a sort of 3 through which the photographer looks at the sea. It is like a 4 on the panorama that introduces the viewer into the 5, where a promontory appears. The depth or profundity of the photograph is given by the 6: in this case the light at the 7, like a star, guides the eye of the viewer giving the idea of an infinite space where sea and sky mix together and have no 8

The light is in the 9; it lights up both the horizon and the cliff in the foreground and creates a 10 with the dark promontory in the background.



Writing

3 Write your impressions about the photo above examining the contrast between light and darkness and the depth.