

# EFFECTIVE STORYTELLING PHOTOGRAPHY CHECKLIST



## GET STARTED

Do I have time to reflect on the storytelling aspect of this shot?

☐ Yes!

Examine the scene. Determine as specifically as possible the story that you wish to tell with this image.

☐ No!

Shoot your picture and then move to the next step. Attempt a 2nd shot with a story.



What camera position will best convey your story?

Explore...

☐ Raise the camera position

☐ Lower the camera position.

☐ Examine the scene from all possible sides and angles

Pick the camera position



What lens should you use? Ask yourself: Can you change your lens?

☐ Yes!

- Consider these possibilities.
- Compressing the scene – telephoto
- Expanding the scene – wide angle
- Normal field of view
- Depth of field
- Including or excluding background elements

☐ No!

Re-evaluate the camera position, and then move to the next step.



What camera settings should you use?

☐ **ISO:** Is your story better told with a super crisp image or with some noise?

☐ **Shutter Speed:** Is your story better told with some blur or should it be tack sharp?

☐ **Aperture:** You have already considered depth-of-field

- How does your choice of aperture affect the shutter speed and ISO options?

☐ **Color Balance:** Could a color balance adjustment enhance your story?

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## What composition considerations can you employ?

- Have you directed the viewer's eyes right toward your subject?
  - ☐ Is the subject placement within the frame the best it can be?
  - ☐ Can you make use of leading lines, frames, or contrast to further highlight your subject?
  - ☐ Is the story surrounding your subject clear and concise?
  - ☐ Is the story surrounding your subject simple- so that the vast majority of viewers will understand your story?



## Do you have storytelling concepts in your image?

- ☐ Does my shot include a dramatic element?
- ☐ Am I addressing one of the storytelling needs of humanity?
  - Entertainment
  - Explain the physical world
  - Belief in a higher power or supernatural forces
  - Communicate an experience
  - Fulfill an aesthetic need for beauty, regularity, and self-expression
  - Record history



## How can I use post-production to enhance my story?

- ☐ Have I employed localized selective focus?
- ☐ Does increasing or decreasing color saturation help reveal my story?
- ☐ Could I crop my image to better place my subject for the story?
- ☐ Does the contrast in my image support my subject, composition, and story?
- ☐ Could advanced photo editing such as grunge effects or compositing increase the story value of my shot?



## Have all of decisions above produced the simplest story possible?

- ☐ Yes!  
You rock!
- ☐ No...  
Don't worry. Start over!