

Photographs tell a Story



Introduction

Photographs capture a moment in time in the form of an image. We take pictures to record important events in our life, make memories and just for fun. With the mobile phones having powerful cameras, it has become easier to take photographs. Digital technology also allows us to take as many photographs we like and delete what we do not want.

As important they are for our memories, photographs can tell a good story of a social issue, happening or capture a moment for historical purposes. But for that to happen, the photographer needs to have an 'eye' for the possible story and capture it in the best way possible. The photographer needs to keep in mind some of the technical aspects of capturing a good picture. For eg. the light, focus on the subject, distance, framing etc.

YRE steps: Investigate, Research Solution, Report, Disseminate
Curriculum Linkage: Science/ Environmental Studies/Social Science



Students can work on their photography skills to take photographs that can tell a story.

The activity is intended to provide the students with a hands-on experience in photo-journalism using 'littering behavior' as a subject.

To see more examples, visit

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/552e4b07e4b0d43bb9fe3f42/t/56c5ea6cd210b8884d3fod53/1455811182226/YRE+handbook+-+part+3.pdf>



What makes a good photograph – Fundamental pointers:

1. Does your photograph tell a story? Is it raising an issue, or suggesting a solution? Would a photograph be the best way to tell the story? Is it talking about a local issue but able to connect to a global context?
2. Plan your photo to show a story visually and not tell.
3. Lighting – plan to take photos when you have the best light available. It is generally good to take photographs with the sun behind you. You may play with other types of lighting, until you find the kind of effect you like. Best pictures can be taken just after sunrise or before sunset when the daylight is softer compared to when the Sun is at its highest in the sky during 11 am to 4 pm.
4. Depth of field – Frame the photograph to adjust at least two objects at different distances. The human eye will automatically process the distance and generate an optical perception of depth. You could also just move close to the closest object. Don't use the Zoom, just use your feet.
5. Perspective – Often a change of perspective can get you a good photo. You may get close to the object and do whatever it takes to get the way you want the photograph to be. You could also take shots from a variety of perspectives such as wide shots, close ups, full frontal shots etc. and then choose which one tells the story better. You can then re-shoot using this perspective.
6. Compose your photo - Check out the Composition rules in the YRE Handbook (Page 14).
7. Enjoy yourself – follow your instinct.
8. Don't forget to Use a Caption - Write a catchy caption, make it impressive, snappy but not descriptive. It should not describe a photo but be able to convey the story.
9. Remember Journalistic Ethics and Editing – It is important to never alter or manufacture the contents or context of a photograph. Ensure that the photo is an ethical, accurate portrayal of reality. Under no circumstances should it ever alter reality.

Objectives:

Students will be able to

- identify a photo-opportunity and demonstrate critical observation.
- take a photograph capturing a possible story.
- critically analyse, present the story through the photograph.

Time required/ Duration:

- **Classroom session 1:** 45 minutes for introducing students to different ways in which photographs are taken, stories they tell through classroom discussion. Use the YRE Handbook “Photography Case Study page 28-29”.
- **Home assignment:** Seven days for students to identify an issue in the context of Littering Behavior and take a picture.
- **Classroom session 2:** 90 minutes (Two classroom sessions of 45 minutes each) for group work and classroom discussion on the key aspects of what makes a good photograph.

Resources Required:

- Student stationery including notepads and writing material
- Internet
- Students' Laptops/computers to be arranged for group activity
- Camera/phone camera
- Projector
- Handbook “Photography Case Study 1 and 2” to conduct this exercise.
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Activity

Classroom session 1

- Show the students slides of different kinds of photographs and introduce through a discussion the different facets of a good photo that tells a story and one that does not. For example, a photograph of just a dump of waste would not tell a story but it might if there is an element of the consequence that it leads us to imagine.
- Show the students the winning photograph from the YRE campaign. Discuss what struck them in the photo which makes it a good photo? Ask the students to identify and list the various facets of a good photo that tells a story. Discuss their observations. Use the YRE Handbook “Photography Case Study 1 and 2” to conduct this exercise.
- Ask them to write a story caption that they think it is suggesting.

Home Assignment 1

- Guide the students to identify and observe one issue related to waste management near their homes.
- Some of the issues which students may observe could include:
 - Waste disposal practices in their households - segregation systems/collection systems.
 - Littering in their locality (where people litter the most – local shopping center, park, streets, empty plot of land etc.)
- Ask students to take photographs of specific moments which could tell a story about “Littering behavior” of people. Obviously they would need to follow ethical practice and not take pictures of little children or if people object to being photographed.
- They may compose a photo creatively to tell a story.
- They would need to caption the photograph.

Classroom session 2

- 90 minutes (Two classroom sessions of 45 minutes each). Divide the students into groups of 5-8. Ask each group to share their photographs with other members of the group and tell a story to the other members of the group. The other member of the group will then try to connect the photographs and their respective stories with Sustainable Development Goals. If the students are familiar to SDG’s they can be asked to take photographs related to litter and different SDG’s.
- Reiterate to the students, the Journalism Basics “Who, What, Where, When, How, Why” and the Photography tips as a framework to analyse the photographs.
- Have a discussion in the class during the last 30 minutes touching on the key points using the students’ observations and analyses of the photographs taken. Also discuss the challenges faced and discuss ways to overcome these.
- Discuss what ethical practices and privacy issues need to be kept in mind while taking pictures.

Evaluation:

Identify if the main theme is getting reflected and amplified through the photographs along with clarity of picture, sharpness, focus on the subject, clean and not cluttered with too many things and creative use of photographing to tell a story.