Keep Scotland Beautiful

Young Reporters' Scotland

Tips for Reporting
~Photography~

Using photographs to report on an issue can be an extremely powerful way to tell a story. Here are a few things you may wish to consider:

Planning is Key:

♦ As with all journalism, you should always try and plan ahead. Try and think about the kind of issue you would like to report on and where might be the best place to capture a photo or series of photos that highlights it.

♦ What time of day would be best to take your photos so that you have the kind of light you need.

♦ Think a photo through, come up with interesting ideas of how to make your photo different. If you know you can capture a unique moment or you can create something special through a photo, then do it. Don't be afraid to try as many ideas as possible to relay something special through your photo to your audience.

Knowing Your Equipment:

♦ Getting to know your equipment in advance will help ensure things run smoothly when you come to taking your actual photos.

♦ Taking some practice shots in advance and making sure you are familiar with how your camera works can pay off.

♦ Make sure your equipment is fully charged and you have back up batteries if you are in an environment where charging equipment is not an option.

Standing Out from the Crowd:

♦ People often make the mistake of taking photos from the same perspective, mostly straight on. Photos become more interesting if they are taken from a different angle which shows a different perspective. Try taking photos at a slight downward angle or from the ground for example

♦ If you are taking a photo from a distance, it's often tempting to zoom in. Actually, its best not to zoom. Get closer to the subject instead if you can. Your photo can always be cropped later to focus on the area of interest.

- When considering using a flash or not, Smartphone photos with flash on are often not the best. Usually they are over exposed and the colours don't look right. If you have friends with you, get them to use their phone lights to cast light on the area you want to photograph, or use any source of natural light to avoid using flash.
- Sometimes it is impossible not to use flash, just try and get an interesting perspective or the best possible angle to make photo as good as it can be.
- Capture the little things that you wouldn't normally think of. These can sometimes make the best photo. Keep an eye out for textures, patterns, bright colours

Your Chosen Photo(s):

- You may choose to edit your photo. How much a photo should be edited is an ethical debate within photojournalism. Cropping an image to highlight a specific part can be useful and is sometimes essential, however, where possible, you should avoid overly editing your photograph using programmes such as Photoshop.
- There are lots of mobile phone apps out there than can help improve your photo. Here are some examples of good free apps:
  - VSCO Cam
  - Snapseed
  - InstaCollage
- Try to think of a caption for your photo that enhances it and explains what is happening.
- Photo captions should include WHERE the photo is taken.
- Try to make the photo captions short. The story should come from the photo, not the caption.
- The caption should give the viewer some basic context, the photo should tell the story.

Keep Yourself Right:

- Photos should be objective and highlight an issue in an unbiased way.
- When you are taking your photograph you should try not to influence it, moving objects or asking people to pose will mean that your phot is influenced.

Remember, your photos need to be able to tell a story on their own!

Getting Started with Photography:

As a starter with photography, try and experiment with equipment that you have to hand and is easily accessible such as a mobile phone. Have a think about your school grounds, how would you capture your school in one photo? How would you capture your school in a series of photos?

What to capture and when:

Think about the lighting for your photograph, try and take the photo in different light settings, practise using your flash and decide when you think its best to use or not use flash. Think about what might be in the background of your photo, do you want it there? Is there a better time to take the photo? How can you make your photo tell a story and stand out?