

Making Photo Slideshows

to upload to your own class channel on Youtube

Students need a point-and-shoot digital camera, access to photo editing software and to Powerpoint. They should have a basic knowledge of photo composition.

Day One – What to shoot

1. Intro: Write this prompt on the board and ask students to write the answer: *A photographer has been assigned to do your profile in pictures and captions. What 10 photos would work best?*
2. Ask for a volunteer to read their list of photos. As each one is read off, the class brainstorms how it would frame that shot. Work down the list of photos.
3. Explain that, in the golden age of photography in the 1930s, Life Magazine editors figured they could use a formula for getting the best photos. If they had one, they could send any photographer out on a story and be guaranteed to get good, usable photos every time. So they devised a list of 10 shots that every photographer was required to get, no matter what the assignment.
4. Go through the Life Magazine Shot List (listed on the final page of this plan), making sure everyone understands them:
Introductory
Medium
Closeup
Signature
Portrait
Interaction
Sequence (3 shots)
Clincher
5. Ask for another volunteer to read their list of photos from the intro exercise. This time, guide the class in attempting to fit the shots into the Life Mag Shot List. If they don't have at least one shot for each shot on the list, help them to imagine one. They'll need help in imagining closeups. Maybe they had a favorite stuffed animal. A close-up of it, with a cutline about it, would be a great way to fulfill the close-up requirement.
6. Explain the homework assignment: each student is to shoot photos tonight that they will use to make their first slideshows. They can shoot their parent cooking dinner; their little sister playing dolls; a trip to the supermarket, any evening event that lends itself to visual storytelling.

Project Requirements:

- a. They should shoot 25 frames, and whittle them down to the 15 best.
- b. They **MUST** re-size the 15 best photos. Some cameras shoot photos at 30 inches by 22 inches, which is way too big. The student must take each photo into a photo editing program, like Photoshop or whatever their computer has, and resize each photo to these specifications: 4-by-6-inch photo, 72 dpi.
- c. They should have a way to get their photos into school for tomorrow's lesson. They could e-mail them (if not too big) or put them on a flash drive. But it takes a very long time on some school e-mail systems. They should have a private e-mail account, which would likely be able to handle them. They can put the photos on the e-mail account, and then retrieve them when they get to school. **OR**, they could bring their camera and wires to school and download the photos into the computer. But you'll want them to do as much of the work at home as possible.

Day 2 – What to Write

1. Set up the PowerPoint entitled, "Captions" (available at gsspa.org) and display the first slide when students enter the classroom. It will show a photo of two children near a computer, holding a prescription acne drug. Assign a student to lead the class at the board in compiling a list of the 5 Ws. They should be creative, but not silly. It must be a plausible story. Try to get them to see a connection between the kids and their surroundings – the other storytelling elements in the photo (particularly the computer). You should read ahead to see what the story really is, but don't tell them until you get there as a class.
2. The exercise shows them how pictures really do tell a story, since they'll come close to getting the actual story. Explain that readers/viewers look at the photos first, and then consider whether they want to read the story. Most don't go to the story. So the photo captions become critically important stories by themselves.
3. View the rest of the PowerPoint, which gives to rules for writing captions for their photos. It also contains several captions to work on together or as a written assignment.
4. If they have computers, students should import their photos, check again to be sure they've resized them (a good number of them will *not* have followed directions), and ask them to place their edited photos in a safe folder for tomorrow.
5. Homework: Study for a short quiz on what we've learned so far: the Life Magazine Shot List and the How-to's of writing captions.

Day 3 – Assembling the Slideshow

1. Give the Photo Slide Show quiz.
2. Today, students will learn how to assemble a photo slide show in Microsoft PowerPoint.
 - a. First, everyone must check their photos once again, making sure they've been resized to 4x6, 72 dpi.
 - b. Next, they must write a caption for each photo, which they will cut and paste into the PowerPoint presentation. Ask them to write them on a Word doc. When they finish, they should exchange docs with each other. Students then edit the captions, making sure the caption rules have been followed. Every caption should give the reader new information. No glittering generalities. And don't forget – all captions must conform to AP Style. Spelling is particularly bad on this first project, so remind everyone to edit carefully.
 - c. Open up the PowerPoint program. To set up a slide show, set the pages to solid black (a'la New York Times slide shows) Import one photo to each page. Go to View, Slide Sorter to arrange the photos in the correct story order.
 - d. Time to import the captions. These must be copied and pasted on the correct slide (upper right side of the photo. Photo credit goes below. See example at gsspa.org – the PowerPoint entitled, “The Singer-Example.ppt.”
 - e. Set the transition time under Slide Show, Transitions. Direct them to set it to 10 to 12 seconds, so readers may look at the photo, then read the caption, and then look back at the photo before it changes to the next.
 - f. To make a moving slide show of the PowerPoint, do File, Save as Movie, Save. Now it's a QuickTime movie that can be uploaded to YouTube or School Tube or Facebook.
 - g. Homework: students should find music that can be laid into their slide show. The music must be free of copyright restrictions. It can be in the public domain (created by now-deceased artists, like Beethoven); or it can be taken from Creative Commons, a website that provides copyright-free music. Better yet, students can create their own soundtrack in Garage Band.

Day 4 – Adding Music

1. Return graded quizzes, discuss challenges.
2. Direct students to open their Powerpoints on the desktop. It's time to add sound. The PowerPoint program will accept WAV and MIDI sound files. If your student has an MP3 file or another type, they must convert it. Here are the directions:
 - a. Drag your sound file into iTunes.
 - b. Export as WAV. If you don't see the WAV prompt under the iTunes Export prompt, Go to iTunes Preferences, 'import settings,' WAV encoder, Exit Prefs.
 - c. Click Advanced, Create WAV.
3. Next step is to import the sound into the PowerPoint presentation. Students should know how long their photo slide show is by the number of photos times the amount of time it takes to see each one, plus the transition time. There are settings in PowerPoint for all of these things.

4. With the PowerPoint presentation open, go to **INSERT**

Sound and Music

From File (find your file)

Insert

How do you want music to start?

Click Automatically (A speaker will appear on the slide. Move it off the slide, just to the side, so it won't be seen.)

SLIDESHOW

Custom Animation

(Click on your sound file name. Lots of prompts open up)

Go down to Media Options

O After ___ slides (You put the total number of slides in the blank so music will go to the end).

X out of that panel

FILE

Save as Movie

Rename your show

Pick a location

Click Movie Options

Under Media Settings:

Background Soundtrack

Select Soundtrack

(find your sound file again) Choose, **OK.**

YOU ARE READY TO PUT YOUR .mov on YOUTUBE.

Day 5 – One in 8 Million

1. If necessary, finish slideshows.
2. Using your projector, go to the New York Times website and search for “One in 8 Million.” Set it up for the students to watch together. It’s a collection of photo profile stories. This will be your next project.
3. Explain that we’ve already done a photo slide show with captions. Now we’re losing the captions, and replacing them with audio narration or, if possible, the interview subject’s own words.
4. View a handful of the shows, discussing the unique qualities of each. Try to discuss photo composition and sound separately with each slide show, giving the students a sense of this two-part story form.
 - a. Discuss the audio. Where was the reporter? Why don’t we hear him/her? How would we do that in our interview? Can we tell the subject to wait a few seconds after the question is asked? Yes, so our words don’t fall on top of theirs.
 - b. The Focus – these stories did not list every fact about the person’s life. Each story took one theme in that life and developed a story around that one theme.
 - c. Natural sound – what else do they hear besides the subject’s voice? Natural sound will be heard on some, but not all of the slide shows. Do the students like it? Does it help or hurt the story?
 - d. Can they see the Life Magazine Shot List in these photo slide shows? Pay particular attention to the close-ups. They, more than anything else, give the slide shows an artistic feel.
5. Homework – assign each student to visit the “One in 8 Million” site on the New York Times and choose a slide show that you didn’t watch today. They should shop for one that they really like.

Assignment: On a Word doc or piece of paper, answer these questions in a comprehensive way:

 - what questions did the reporter ask to get the statements we heard?
 - what three photos did you like most and why? Address composition and technical aspects like focus and lighting.
 - what was great about the slide show you chose? Not so great?

Day 6 – Presentations

1. Students will show their favorite “One in 8 Million” slide show and discuss it with the class, answering the assigned questions.

Day 7 – One in ???

1. Discuss the next project – they must find a person within the school and do a photo slide show on them that you will call “One in 800,” or “One in 400,” or whatever the student population of the school is. They can choose a student, teacher, janitor, anyone who works or attends school in the building. The project has several parts.
 - a. The slide show must have a focus. It should not merely be a recitation of facts about the person. The student must find one focus or theme and report on it. Refer back to the One in 8 Million pieces. They all took one aspect of the subject’s life. Maybe a student’s little sister is a dance student, or she’s recovering from a serious illness, or she’s the youngest. The slide show should cover just one of these themes, while also giving us enough biographical information to get to know her.
 - b. The photos – students must shoot 10 to 15 pictures of their subject. They must be sized and color-corrected (auto corrections only). They should have the 10 Life Magazine shots included in their final 15 shots.
 - c. The sound could be a challenge. Apple computers have Garage Band and PCs have Audacity, so each student has a sound program on which to produce their WAV files. It’s getting the sound to put into the program that will be challenging. Some students have microphones. Some have mics on their laptops. Some have none. One option is to borrow a mic from the broadcast department, which students can use in the classroom, taping directly into one of the programs. Professional photographers use audio recorders. Olympus makes one for \$60 that’s great for photo slide shows.
 - d. Your “One in ???” slide shows should have a logo, a photo or illustration that students can use to advertise the stories. You can assign students to develop the logo while they wait for their turn at the mic.
 - e. Follow the same directions as were used on the first slide show, except this time, the audio file will be the student’s voice, or, if possible, the subject’s voice. Try to include as much natural sound as possible, too. When finished, put the stories up on YouTube.

Now, you’re ready to do photo slide shows that cover breaking or feature news. Good luck!

Life Magazine's Formula for Visual Variety in the Photo Story

For an assignment at the old Life Magazine, editors expected photographers to shoot at least eight basic types of photos to ensure complete coverage of the situation and to guarantee enough good pictures for any layout.

INTRODUCTORY or OVERALL – Usually a wide-angle or aerial shot to establish the scene.

MEDIUM – Focuses on one activity or one group.

CLOSE-UP – Zeroes in on one element, like a person's hands or an intricate detail of a building.

PORTRAIT – Usually either a dramatic, tight head shot or a person in his or her environmental setting.

INTERACTION – People conversing or in action.

SIGNATURE – Summarizes the situation with all the key storytelling elements in one photo – often called the decisive moment.

SEQUENCE – A how-to, before and after, or a series with a beginning, middle and end (the sequence gives the essay a sense of action).

CLINCHER – A closer that would end the story.