



How to...

DID YOU KNOW?

The first color photograph was created in 1861 by James Maxwell, a Scottish scientist.



Take great photographs

Once you know a few basic tricks, you can snap better photos of anything.

It's fun to use a smartphone to take a selfie or capture your puppy doing something cute. But photography is also a creative art form that can be a great way to express yourself. Whether you're interested in learning new skills or you want to enter our photo contest (see the next page), here's how you can improve the shots you take.

Gear up

You will, of course, need a camera. If you have a smartphone or tablet, that can definitely work. Another option is to ask an adult if they have a digital camera you can borrow. These were popular before smartphones were invented, so there's a good chance an adult you know has one tucked away somewhere.

Choose a subject

A photograph is more interesting when it has a focal point. Your focal point can be a person (like your best friend) or an event, such as a parade of performers or a soccer game. It could also be an object, such as a vase of flowers or a cool building. (Our contest has a nature theme.)

Compose it

Now think about the composition of your photo. Composition is how the people and objects are

arranged. One tip is to follow the "rule of thirds." To get the hang of it, print out a photo or clip one from a magazine. Then use a ruler to draw two horizontal and two vertical lines across the photograph so the picture is split into nine equal rectangles. You want the focal point in your photo to be where the four lines intersect. This means that your subject is slightly off-center rather than right in the middle. When you take a photo, imagine where those lines would be in your frame.

Watch the light

The way the light looks in your photo is also key. Natural light from the sun creates the best photos. Taking photos outside is ideal. If you are inside, try to be near a window where sunlight shines through. The best time of day to capture sunlight in your photos is in the morning or right before sunset. The sun is low in the sky at these times, so it won't cast harsh shadows on your subject.

Practice often

The best way to improve is to keep snapping photos. Challenge yourself to take an interesting photo every day for a week. Try to mix up what type of photo you take. Play around with subjects, composition, and lighting to see what looks good to you. And don't forget to print out and display your favorites!



Get creative with your shots.

Get inspired!

Check out these master photographers known for their images of interesting topics.



Animals

Frans Lanting travels around the world to create incredible wildlife photos. Find out more at lanting.com.



Sports

Chris Burkard captures extreme sports against natural backdrops. Discover his style at chrisburkard.com.



Still life

Olivia Parker creates beautiful images of flowers, plants, and everyday objects. See her work at oliviaparker.com.



Beaches

Gray Malin is known for taking colorful overhead shots of beaches from a helicopter. Learn more at graymalin.com.