Taking Good Photographs

- Note the shots you need to take before you shoot them.
- Be sure you have adequate storage capability.
- Make sure flash and camera have fresh batteries. If you are using a rechargeable battery, be sure that it is fully charged.
  - Take spare batteries or your charger with you.
- Hold your camera steady.
- Properly focus each picture.
  - If the auto focus has difficulty finding the correct focal length, choose another spot about the same distance from the camera.
- If you can prepare your subjects before taking the photographs, encourage them to avoid wearing clothing with brand names or other types of logos.
- Ask people either to remove their hats or to tip them back so your flash can properly illuminate their faces. Ask people to remove sunglasses if they can. Not being able to see a subject’s eyes is distracting.
- Do not place your subjects with the sun directly behind them. This creates backlighting, and your subject will not be well exposed. Try to position subjects so the sun or other light source is not directly in front of them either. The light source should be at a 45-degree angle to their faces.
- Partly cloudy days provide excellent light diffusion. If you have a choice of shooting on a cloudless summer day or one that is partly cloudy, choose the partly cloudy day. You will avoid getting hot spots on glasses and other reflective surfaces.
- Avoid taking photos outside between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. if you can schedule the shoot for another time. Sunlight during these hours is almost directly overhead and can cause harsh shadows and a racoonlike mask effect. Early morning and late afternoon light are preferable.
- Compose your pictures. Get up close or zoom in on that part of the subject that conveys the most information. Then place it in a prominent part of the frame. Photos with the key elements always centered can be boring.
- Compose photos with adequate “look” space. For example, in a photo of a bike rider, compose the photo with space in front of the bike to enhance a feeling of movement.
- Look for colorful subjects.
- Explore different points of view.
  - Be creative.
  - Kneel on the ground.
  - Stand in the bed of a pickup truck or on a staircase.
- Get close to your subjects. Close-up shots direct viewers’ eyes to the most important elements of the photo.
- Keep the background and foreground simple so other elements won’t compete with the center of interest. Place subjects so objects such as trees and power poles do not appear to grow out of their heads.
- Shoot people in action. Avoid grip ‘n grin shots of people shaking hands or standing in lines. Avoid photos of meetings where the only action is a speaker talking to audience members seated in chairs.